

# Self and Will

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## Abstract

When do two mental items belong to the same life? We could be content with the answer – just when they have certain volitional qualities in common. An affinity is noted between that theory and Berkeley's early doctrine of the self. Some rivals of the volitional theory invoke a spiritual or physical owner of mental items. They run a risk either of empty formality or of causal superstition. Other rivals postulate a non-transitive and symmetrical relation in the set of mental items. They must allow in consequence either for joint ownership of one and the same mental item, or for incompatible simultaneous decisions by one and the same person, or for new forms of death. This makes them disquieting. Another rival invokes a transitive and symmetrical relation defined in terms of co-consciousness. Even that allows for incongruous simultaneities. The volitional theory is free from such disadvantages.

**Keywords:** self; will; personal identity; voluntarism; metaphysics

... I consider my selfbeing, my consciousness and feeling of myself, that taste of myself, of *I* and *me* above and in all things, which is more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnut-leaf or camphor, and is incommunicable by any means to another man (as when I was a child I used to ask myself: What must it be like to be someone else?)

(Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Sermons and Devotional Writings*,  
p. 123)

When do two mental items belong to the same human life? Not a good question, if it is our ordinary concept of a mental biography that the answer is supposed to describe. For why assume that there is one and only one such ordinary concept? But efforts to answer the question have nevertheless unfolded a rich array of biographical concepts, ordinary or

extraordinary, and with this before you there is a better question that you can put. It is the question of which if any concept of a mental biography you can easily believe to be exclusively self-applicable. I mean that you can try to find a concept such that both (a) you can believe without flying in the face of evidence that there are indeed mental items related as the concept specifies, and (b) you would not be especially unhappy to have no life but one containing all and only those mental items which the concept would make yours. If no concept met both of these conditions, that in itself would have a certain black significance. If on the other hand there were a concept which met both conditions then pragmatic considerations might induce you thus to conceive of your own experience, even if you had no positive evidence that the concept actually applied.

Mental biography concepts can be divided into the externalizing and the internalizing kinds. Externalizing concepts make two mental items belong to the same life if and only if each is related to the same non-mental thing. So for example each must be related to the same brain, or to the same body, or the same spiritual substance, or each must be related to some member or other of a certain particular series of brains or bodies or spiritual substances. Internalizing concepts of a mental biography are describable in terms of a relation in the set of mental items which can be specified without reference to anything of a non-mental kind. An internalizing concept might for example make two mental items belong to the same life if and only if their contents are in a certain respect similar, and one is in a certain way causally dependent on the other. In the first section of what follows I survey some more or less familiar internalizing concepts, none of which you can easily believe to be exclusively self-applicable. In the third section I sketch an internalizing concept which does seem to meet this condition. It makes two mental items belong to the same life if and only if they stand in a symmetrical and transitive relation which is defined in terms of certain volitional properties. Why bother with such novelties? Aren't there ordinary enough externalizing concepts which will equally well save us from metaphysical frustration? Some difficulties with such alternatives are briefly discussed in section two.

### I

Consider relations in the set of mental items which are not functions and which are symmetrical and non-transitive. Call them SNT-relations. For any SNT-relation a case is possible of the kind that Figure 1 depicts. Here the dots stand for mental items, and that one dot is to the right of another indicates that the mental item represented by the first dot is later than that indicated by the second. That two dots are joined by a solid unbroken line indicates that the mental items represented by these dots

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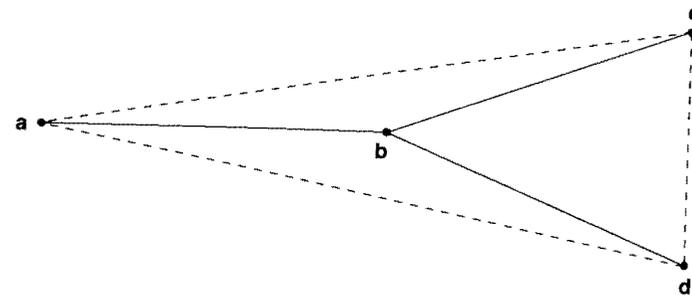


Figure 1

are SNT-related, and that two dots are joined by a broken line indicates that the represented mental items are not SNT-related. Thus mental item **a** is SNT-related to mental item **b**, but not to mental item **c**. SNT-concepts are those internalizing concepts of a mental biography which invoke SNT-relations. With **R** as an SNT-relation, we can distinguish three kinds of SNT-concepts. ASTN-concepts make mental items **x** and **y** belong to the same life if and only if  $xRy$ . BSNT-concepts make mental items **x** and **y** belong to the same life if and only if (i)  $xRy$ , and (ii) there are no other mental items **w** and **z** such that  $yRw$  and  $yRz$  but neither  $wRz$  nor  $zRw$ . CSNT-concepts make two mental items belong to the same life if and only if they both belong to an aggregate of mental items to each member of which some other member is **R**-related. I suggest that because of the possibility depicted by Figure 1, no SNT-concept of any of these three kinds is one which you can easily believe to be exclusively self-applicable.

ASNT-concepts make mental items **x** and **y** belong to the same life if and only if  $xRy$ . So in the case depicted by Figure 1, **b** would belong to the same life as **c**, and **b** would belong to the same life as **d**. And since **c** and **d** would not belong to the same life, it follows that **b** would belong to two different lives.

You will be reminded of the notion of a person which David Lewis describes in his 'Survival and Identity', a notion on which, as he nonchalantly explains, one and the same person-stage can belong to different temporally extended persons. What exactly is the relation between two person-stages which Lewis's concept makes necessary and sufficient for them to be stages of the same person? Lewis doesn't say

Perhaps my emphasis should be on *connectedness*: direct relations of similarity and causal dependence between my present mental state and each of its successors; or perhaps I should rather emphasise *continuity*: the existence of step by step paths from here to there, with extremely strong local connectedness from each stage to the next.

Perhaps a special place should be given to the special kinds of continuity and connectedness which constitute memory; or perhaps not. Perhaps the "mental" should be construed narrowly, perhaps broadly. Perhaps nonmental continuity and connectedness – my appearance and voice, for instance – also should have at least some weight.<sup>1</sup>

But if non-mental continuity can have some weight then person-stages may not be wholly mental items, and Lewis's concept will not be quite equivalent to an ASNT-concept of mental ownership.

However this may be, ASNT-concepts seem not to meet our condition. Suppose you wish that X was non-self-interestedly concerned with your life taken as a whole. How could she be if she believed that some of the mental events in your life were numerically identical with mental events in hers? And if you too believed that there were such identities, you would think that she could sustain the concern you crave only by not seeing you as you are. It is true of course that there is nothing alarming in the mere logical possibility of something's happening that one wants not to happen. One may after all be certain that actually it never will. Lives as demarcated by ASNT-concepts do not have to overlap. But on the other hand, we don't have evidence that there will never be such overlapping lives, and we can imagine having evidence that there are.

Now consider BSNT-concepts. These make mental items *x* and *y* belong to the same life if and only if (i)  $xRy$ , and (ii) there are no other mental items *w* and *z* such that  $yRw$  and  $yRz$  but neither  $wRz$  nor  $zRw$ . Suppose that in the case depicted by Figure 1 *b* is the only mental item later than *a* to which *a* is S-related. Then a BSNT-concept makes *a* the last mental item in any life to which it belongs. *a* is R-related to *b*, and hence satisfies the first condition for belonging to the same life as *b*. But it doesn't satisfy the second condition. For while *b* is R-related to both *c* and to *d*, there is no SNT-relation between *c* and *d*. I suggest that because in the case depicted by Figure 1 a BSNT concept would make a life containing *a* end relatively soon, and because of the evidential situation with respect to this possibility, BSNT-concepts are also not ones which you can easily believe to be exclusively self-applicable.

A negative attitude to this possibility of death by branching may seem to collide with Parfit's thesis that "identity is not what matters in survival".<sup>2</sup> If the SNT-relation is one of psychological continuity then on Parfit's view it would not matter that in the case depicted you do not literally survive *a*, are not strictly identical with any later person. For any life which ends with *a* will still be closely related to the two lives which respectively contain *c* and *d*; you will still have two Parfitian survivors. And on Parfit's view you will not on reflection value literal survival except as a means to having at least one Parfitian survivor. It does indeed seem to be true that if you want *x* only for the sake of *y* then your desire evaporates if you come to

believe that you have *y* anyway. But the question arises of what it is for the sake of which you want even Parfitian survival. You might well want this not for its own sake but just for the sake of its being the case that there is a set of mental events, which your own life either is or forms a part of, and which is unified in the sense that most of the main decisions it contains are carried out and few or none are nullified by simultaneous decisions also belonging to the set. In this case you might want Parfitian survival only for the sake of something which you believe is more likely to be the case if you literally survive. For if *S* is a relation of psychological continuity then a set of mental events containing two or more simultaneous mental events, to each of which a single mental event is S-related, is less likely to have the volitional unity you desire than one in which no two simultaneous mental events are both related to the same mental event. A branching structure is less likely to have volitional unity than one of a linear kind.

Lastly, CSNT-concepts. These make two mental items belong to the same life if and only if they both belong to an aggregate of mental items to each member of which some other member is SNT-related. So in the case depicted by Figure 1, all the mental items belong to the same life. Suppose however that the two simultaneous mental items represented in Figure 1 were decisions which couldn't both be carried out – such as a decision to spend your declining years in Tuscany, and a decision to spend them in Morecambe. On the CSNT-concept, the possible drawbacks of merely Parfitian survival become possible drawbacks of your actual life. So, given the evidential situation, the CSNT-concept is also one which you cannot easily believe to be exclusively self-applicable.

SNT-concepts make ownership a matter of symmetrical and non-transitive relations between mental items. What then of internalizing ownership concepts for which the unifying relations are transitive as well as symmetrical? Call these ST-concepts, and consider again the figure with which I began. If it is an ST-relation whose presence or absence the figure is taken to represent, then it no longer represents a logically possible case. For if *b* is ST-related both to *c* and to *d*, then *c* and *d* are ST-related to each other. AST-concepts, on which two mental items belong to the same life if and only if they are ST-related, do not then face the life-overlap difficulty which afflicts ASNT-concepts. Nor do BST-concepts face the death by branching difficulty which afflicts BSNT-concepts. But an ST-concept will not necessarily escape the difficulty faced by CSNT-concepts. Some ST-relations hold between simultaneous mental items, and so some ST-concepts, whether of the A B or C kind, allow simultaneous mental items to belong to the same life.

What is there of an ST kind in our existing array of internalizing concepts? Something of this kind can perhaps be extrapolated from John Foster's treatment of personal identity. In fact, Foster accepts a Cartesian

doctrine of selfhood, and believes that it is logically necessary and sufficient for two mental items to belong to the same personal biography that they are owned by the same spiritual self. But he does nevertheless also believe that it is possible to define the co-personality of experiences without reference to their attachment to the same self or subject. His definition does not cover the co-personality of 'propositional attitudes (beliefs, desires, hopes and so on) and propositional acts (judgements, thoughts, decisions, and so forth)'.<sup>3</sup> but perhaps there is a way of generalizing his concept so that it remains internalizing and yet also covers mental items which are not experiences.

Foster's concept makes two experiences belong to the same life if and only if they are C-related. The C-relation is defined in terms of the relation of strict co-consciousness. Two experiences are strictly co-conscious if they are parts of a single experience. If a single experience is extended in real time, its temporal parts are strictly co-conscious. And if non-simultaneous experiences can contain a common component, experience E1 can be strictly co-conscious with experience E2 and the latter can be strictly co-conscious with experience E3, even though experience E1 is not strictly co-conscious with experience E3. In this case, E1 and E2 stand in the relation which Foster calls serial co-consciousness; more generally, serial co-consciousness is the ancestral of the relation of strict co-consciousness.<sup>4</sup> Next, Foster defines potential co-consciousness, in such a way that this relation can hold between two experiences which belong to streams of experience that are not linked to each other by the relation of serial co-consciousness, such as for example streams interrupted by a period of dreamless sleep. And finally, he stipulates that two experiences are C-related if and only if they are actually or potentially serially co-conscious.

To illustrate strict co-consciousness, Foster takes the case of hearing someone play the scale of C major, with no pauses between successive notes. There is a single experience whose content is silence-before-C-before-D-before E before . . . , and so on. The content of this experience is a temporal spread of phenomena, and the experience itself extends over a period of real time in a way which exactly matches the phenomenal period presented in the content of the experience. The experience itself can accordingly be divided into further temporally overlapping experiences, such as the experience whose content is silence-followed-by-C, the experience whose content is C-before-D, and so on. These temporally overlapping experiences are strictly co-conscious.

It isn't perhaps entirely clear that Foster's concept is genuinely internalizing, that his C-relation can really be specified without reference to a non-mental subject. A single experience, for Foster, seems to be the same as what he calls a total experience, 'one which is not part of any larger experience'.<sup>5</sup> But for an experience not to be part of any larger

experience it must end, and unless we make it necessary for an experience to have an end that it occupies a period immediately succeeded by a period in which there are no experiences at all, it is hard to see how, without referring to a non-mental owner, the circularity can be avoided of saying that an experience comes to an end only if it has a part with which no later experience is strictly co-conscious. One may also doubt whether potential serial co-consciousness can be understood except in terms of powers or dispositions housed in a non-mental subject. But suppose that Foster's concept is genuinely internalizing, and indeed that there is a genuinely internalizing ST-concept of mental ownership, similar to his concept but covering relations between propositional acts and attitudes as well as experiences. Then conflicting but simultaneous decisions could stand in this more general ST-relation. We might indeed be prevented from easily believing that the concept was exclusively self-applicable just by considering the evidential situation with respect to certain purely experiential possibilities. The experience whose content was exhausted by vision of an adder in the grass could be confusingly co-personal with a simultaneous and C-related experience as of nothing but an owl in the apple tree. Barry Dainton, who (in for the most part, still unpublished work) has developed a doctrine rather like Foster's, has canvassed a notion of personal time such that experiences C-related just by virtue of their serial C-relations to a single earlier experience cannot in fact be simultaneous. But I am not sure that even this would make the co-personality of incongruous experiences any more attractive.<sup>6</sup> Is there some other way out?

Further speculation would however be superfluous if it were sufficiently easy to believe in the exclusive self-applicability of an externalizing concept. A word then on that possibility, before I go further.

## II

The simplest externalizing concepts make two mental items belong to the same life if and only if both items are owned by the same brain or body, or if and only if both are owned by the same spiritual substance. Or instead of speaking of persisting physical or spiritual owners of mental items, 'wholly present' at each moment of a human life, we may prefer to speak of temporally extended physical or spiritual states or processes, the stages or temporal parts of which own the mental items with which they are simultaneous. It won't however be easy to believe that an externalizing concept is exclusively self-applicable until questions have been answered about the identity over time of the extramental owners themselves, or about what makes two physical or spiritual stages belong to the same temporally extended state or process. Are such stages linked just by their relations to each other, or are they linked by their common relations to

yet a further temporally extended state or process? If the latter, a similar question arises about this further entity. To avoid an infinite regress, and in the interests of simplicity, one would want to say that the physical or spiritual stages are linked just by their relations to each other. The problem of specifying the link is difficult enough to encourage the search for a satisfactory internalizing concept. And certainly no one has made any progress in specifying the nature of the link between spiritual stages. It is easy to say that two spiritual stages are temporal parts of the same temporally extended spiritual entity if and only if they have the same quality and that no two simultaneous spiritual events have the same quality. But in the absence of any positive conception of what, in this context 'spiritual' actually means, this is just to assert that somehow there exists a satisfactory non-physical externalizing concept. One contemporary traditionalist is indeed prepared to talk of spiritual substances as 'indivisible chunks of soul-stuff'.<sup>7</sup> But what are the qualities of soul-stuff?

There is a further difficulty which may help to move at least some people in an internalizing direction. Consider those externalizing concepts of mental ownership which make two mental events belong to the same life if and only if both are owned by the same brain or body, or both are owned by physical events which are temporal parts of the same temporally extended physical entity. Assume a Humean or demodalized view of causation, and consider what it is for a physical event to own a mental event. 'Mental event *a* is owned by physical event *b*' can mean either (i) '*a* is caused by *b*' or (ii) '*a* cannot exist without *b*'. Suppose ownership is taken in the causal way. You will not presumably be happy to have no life but one containing mental events which are owned by more than one brain or body. But how many mental events are there for which you can confidently believe that no two simultaneous events occurring in different brains or bodies, are both in the Humean sense causally necessary and sufficient?<sup>8</sup> Suppose then that ownership is taken in the existential dependence way. On a Humean view of causation the ownership of a mental event by a temporal part of a bodily or cerebral process will again be hard to reconcile with what may well be true of the causal relations between mental and physical events. Imagine a sequence of mental events M1, M2, M3, . . . , and a sequence of brain events B1, B2, B3, . . . , such that M1 and B1 are simultaneous, M2 and B2 simultaneous, and so on. And suppose we hope to say that in the existential dependence sense B1 owns M1, B2 owns M2, and so on. It does not seem at all unlikely that in any such sequence B1 is causally sufficient for B2 and causally necessary for M2, B2 causally sufficient for B3 and causally necessary for M3, and so on. But if B1 is causally sufficient for B2 and causally necessary for M2 then on a Humean view of causation it is *contingently* true that events like M2 occur only if events like B2 occur simultaneously. But if M2 is owned by B2, in the sense that it *cannot* occur unless B2 occurs, then it is not contingently true

that events like M2 occur only if events like B2 occur simultaneously. I agree that even if the Humean assumption is granted, this last difficulty applies only if mental and physical event-tokens are not identical and only if the former are not constituted by the latter. But it does not beg the question against such forms of physicalism, because physicalism is not entailed by the thesis that two mental items belong to the same life if and only if they have the same physical owner.

### III

Somewhat encouraged by this externalizing diversion, I return to mental biography concepts of the internalizing kind. ST-concepts are internalizing concepts which invoke symmetrical and transitive relations among mental items, and I considered the ST-concept on which two mental items events belong to the same life if and only if they stand in a generalized form of Foster's C-relation. We saw that it is logically possible for two simultaneous mental items to stand in this relation, that we don't have evidence that this possibility won't be realized, and that we can perfectly well imagine having evidence that it is. The consequence was that you can't easily believe that the C-relation-based ST-concept is exclusively self-applicable. Will some other ST-concept meet this condition?

If two mental items both possess the same property this makes for a symmetrical and transitive relation between them. Think then of an indefinitely large set of properties, some member or other of which is possessed by each mental item, and no member of which is possessed by any two simultaneous mental items. Let us say that two mental items are Q-related if they share a property from such a set, and let a Q-concept of a mental biography be one on which two mental events belong to the same life if and only if they are Q-related. Now think of a Q-concept whose corresponding set of properties has this feature: every property in the set such that though it is logically possible for two simultaneous mental items both to have that property, you cannot imagine having evidence that this is the case. I think that if there were a Q-concept like this then it would be one which you could easily believe to be exclusively self-applicable. It wouldn't, like ASNT- or BSNT-concepts, allow for overlapping lives or death by branching. And it wouldn't, like the C-relation-based ST-concept, be disqualified by our evidential position with respect to the possibility of simultaneous ST-related mental items.

Timothy Sprigge has made the attractive suggestion that

in early infancy an individual style of experiencing the world is established which will be present all along the series of moments of consciousness constituting my subsequent conscious life and can be called my personal essence.<sup>9</sup>

He describes this essence as 'a style of feeling'.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps styles of feeling are manifested by mental items of every type, by propositional acts and attitudes as well as by experiences. And perhaps we are unable to imagine having evidence that two simultaneous mental items manifest the same style of feeling. If so, then a Q-concept determined by an indefinitely large set of styles of feeling might be what we are looking for. I would like however to propose a rather different Q-concept, which is determined by essentially volitional properties.

I begin with the question of how two volitions might share a property which no two simultaneous volitions ever share. The property could hardly be a property of *what* is willed, for obviously there are simultaneous volitions in which one and the same thing is willed. You will the orange to stop rolling before it reaches the edge of the table, and so at the same time do I. But consider the quality, distinct from their common content, which makes both our volitions volitions. Is it not possible that this property is a determinable, a given determinate of which is shared by some non-simultaneous volitions, but never by volitions which are simultaneous? Suppose that when I introspect or remember a volition it is a determinate of the determinable volitional quality of which I am aware. I cannot imagine having evidence that two simultaneous volitions both have the same such determinate quality. I could not gain such evidence by comparing the quality of my own volitions with what somebody else told me about the quality of his own simultaneous volitions, for there is nothing here that is verbally describable at all. To gain such evidence I would need an introspective or memory experience of two distinct but simultaneous volitions which revealed the identity of their determinate volitional qualities. But in fact I have no introspective or memory experience of distinct but simultaneous instances of a determinable volitional quality. I remember deciding to go to Shropshire and walk up Corndon Hill. Perhaps there is a way of individuating decisions by contents on which I can say that I made two decisions then. But I do not remember two distinct and simultaneous instances of a determinable volitional quality, one associated with going to Shropshire and the other with walking up Corndon Hill, I realize that at this point someone will say that actually there is no such thing as volitional experience at all, no experience of the quality even of a single volition: all volitional qualities are mythical. But perhaps I can be allowed simply to reject this extreme position; it is less orthodox than it used to be, and I have tried to argue against it somewhere else.<sup>11</sup>

Now let me consider mental items which we would not initially be inclined to call volitional. What property can they share only when they are non-simultaneous? Take experiences. Experiences are it seems transparent, seem not to have any qualities but those which can be attributed to them via their contents. To find a property which some non-simultaneous but no simultaneous experiences share we must re-evaluate

the ostensible introspective datum that in experience a content is presented to a subject. 'Presented to' is I think a little weak: it isn't as if the content is something that can be taken or left. 'Impressed upon' might be better. The will is affected. We might even call it a case of constraint. Experiencing has we might say, a passively volitional nature which can be contrasted with the actively volitional nature of attending, deciding or putting forth an effort. Now consider again what you are dimly aware of when, say, you are aware of experiencing something scarlet. Is it precisely a subject that you are aware of, or is it just a something distinct from yet intimately related to the content 'something scarlet'? If, as I think, the latter, may not the something be just the quality of the passive volition which *is* experiencing? And may not this not be a volitional quality which some non-simultaneous experiencings share, but which no two simultaneous experiencings ever both possess? I suggested that any two simultaneous decisions share a determinable volitional quality, but that there is a determinate of that quality which simultaneous decisions never share. But let us now say that there is a generic volitional quality shared not only by decisions and other active volitions, but also by passive volitions. Then two simultaneous active volitions can share a species of that generic quality, as can two simultaneous passive volitions. But in each case the shared species will itself have sub-species which cannot be shared by any simultaneous volitions, whether active or passive. That there is a sub-species of volitional quality shared by some non-simultaneous active and passive volitions but not shared by any simultaneous active or passive volitions is a speculation. But again, I cannot imagine having evidence that two simultaneous volitions both have the same sub-species of the generic volitional quality. Just as I have no introspective or memory experience of distinct but simultaneous active volitions which reveals an identity precisely in their species of volitional quality, so I have no such experience of two simultaneous volitions both of which are passive, or of two simultaneous volitions, one passive and the other active. I remember an experience whose content was the sound of a flute and the smell of a cigar, but I do not remember being impressed with the sound of a flute, and separately yet simultaneously impressed with the smell of a cigar.<sup>12</sup>

Now suppose then that all occurrent mental items, propositional attitudes as well as experiences and propositional acts, are actively or passively volitional, and that all of them conform to the same restriction so far as concerns their simultaneity and their ultimately specific volitional qualities. And consider that concept on which two occurrent mental items belong to the same life if and only if they have the same ultimately specific but non-simultaneously possessed volitional quality. The evidential situation with respect to the logical possibility of a simultaneously possessed, ultimately specific volitional quality is favourable. Do we have here the Q-concept for which we are searching?

Perhaps not quite, because Q-concepts give necessary and sufficient conditions for mental items in general to belong to a single life, and not just conditions applicable to occurrent mental items. But perhaps we can say that dispositions which are manifested in occurrent mental items have the volitional qualities of their manifestations. Can any genuinely internalizing concept of a mental biography cover dispositional mental items? Isn't it necessary for a disposition to be housed, and how can it be housed in anything but a non-mental object? On this I will say only that if internalizing concepts of a mental biography can cover only occurrent mental items, a Q-concept thus restricted would at least have the advantage of being able to allow a single life to contain periods of unconsciousness. To allow for this possibility Foster had to introduce a relation of serial co-consciousness, and the doubt arose that this couldn't be understood except in terms of powers or dispositions – the housing of which would compromise the internalizing nature of his concept. No such problem arises for Q-concepts: two occurrent mental items can share a property even if they are separated by a period in which there is no consciousness whatsoever.

Someone may now object that of necessity active volitions have agents and that since the agent is a non-mental entity, no concept of mental ownership which applies to active volitions can be genuinely internalizing. We could resist that conclusion by re-evaluating the ostensible introspective datum on which the intuition of the necessity for an agent is supposed to be based. What, other than a physical or spiritual agent could the dimly introspectible something be, which in experiencing or having an impression as of actively willing, is distinct from yet intimately related both to what is willed and to the quality of the willing? Our answer can be that it is an introspected quality of that selfsame passive volition which is the experiencing as of active willing. If experiencing as of active willing does thus have an introspected quality, as well as a content as of active willing, won't there also be a dimly introspectible subject of the introspection? Perhaps. But if so, it too will be a introspected volitional quality of an experiencing. For every dimly introspected subject or agent, we can substitute an introspected volitional quality.<sup>13</sup>

Berkeley hinted at a voluntaristic internalizing concept of the self in his *Philosophical Commentaries*:

Substance of a Spirit is that it acts, causes, wills, operates, or if you please (to avoid the quibble yt may be made on ye word it) to act, cause, will operate.<sup>14</sup>

So I think did Gerard Manley Hopkins, in the text from which I took my epigraph.<sup>15</sup> In thought and experience, as well as in action, you may taste

a volitional property, which is not at the same time instantiated by any other mental item, and makes your mentality yours.<sup>16</sup>

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### Notes

- 1 Lewis, D. 'Survival and Identity', *Philosophical Papers*, I (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 56.
- 2 Parfit, D. *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).
- 3 Foster, J. 'In Self-Defence', in G. MacDonald (ed.) *Perceptions and Identity* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 175.
- 4 Foster, J. *The Immaterial Self* (London: Routledge, p. 250). The ancestral of a relation is that relation which stands to it in the way that *being an ancestor of* stands to *being a parent of*.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 248.
- 6 See Dainton, B.F. 'Time and Division', *Ratio* NS 5 (1992), pp. 102–28. While Foster accepts an act-object account of experience, Dainton's C-relation is formulated in terms of something like the paradoxical view which Russell expressed when he said that 'the occurrence of the content of a thought constitutes the occurrence of the thought'. *The Analysis of Mind* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1921), p. 2). For other aspects of Dainton's C-relation see 'Survival and Experience', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 96 (1995–6), pp. 17–36.
- 7 Swinburne, R.G. *The Evolution of the Soul* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 154.
- 8 Cf. Foster (1985), pp. 254–263.
- 9 Sprigge, T.L.S. 'Personal and Impersonal Identity', *Mind*, 97 (1988).
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 48.
- 11 In his excellent book *On Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) Carl Ginet remarks that the recent trend among philosophers to deny volition 'was a hangover from the excesses of philosophical behaviourism. In the rejection of introspectionist psychology and the older philosophy of mind, volition was one of the babies thrown out with the bathwater (subjective sense experience in perception was another one)'. p. 24 n. 3. I agree, and have tried to support this verdict in *Will and World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), ch. 8.
- 12 I mistakenly canvassed a purely active internalizing concept in *Will and World*.
- 13 The argument is unaffected if immediate retrospection is substituted for introspection. And indeed we must make that substitution if we want to say both that no two simultaneous mental items have the same ultimately specific volitional quality, and that both a mental item and the experiencing of that item have that quality. There are, anyway, independent grounds for the substitution. Rapt attention to a content leaves no attention over for the simultaneous introspection of the attention. Brentano was right to note the strangeness of 'subsequently coming to have a recollection of something which we had not noticed when it was present' *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* trans. London L. McAlister (London: Routledge, 1973), p. 126n. But there is a greater mystery in his own substitute for introspection, an act of inner perception whose secondary object is that whole act itself.

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- 14 Berkeley, *Philosophical Commentaries* in A.A. Luce and T.E. Jessop (eds) *The Works of George Berkeley* (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1948–57), 829. Cf. Lloyd, A.C. 'The Self in Berkeley's Philosophy', in J. Foster and H. Robinson (eds) *Essays on Berkeley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).
- 15 ... the thread or chain of such pitches of 'doing-be's, prior to nature's being overlaid, is self.' (Hopkins, G.M. in C. Devlin (ed.) *Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 151. Cf. Nathan, N.M.L. 'Hopkins's Selfless Self of Self', *Literature and Theology*, 7 (1993), pp. 397–402.
- 16 My thanks for comments to Barry Bainton, several referees of this journal, and members of the Sheffield University Philosophy Department Seminar.