

Second Paper – General Notes



Structure of the paper:

- Introduction
 - Topic: What is the question?
 - Thesis: What is your answer?
 - Synopsis: Outline how you are going to argue for your thesis.
- Body
 - What's (minimally) required for post-mortem survival?
 - Substance dualism vs. physicalism
 - The duplication problem
 - For physicalism
 - For substance dualism
 - Consideration of possible solutions
- Conclusion
 - Recap highlights and restate thesis.
 - Suggest possible further implications or lines of inquiry.

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1. Don't worry about the distinction between reductive and non-reductive physicalism.
2. Try to come up with *plausible* and *relevant* duplication scenarios..
3. Be explicit about why the *mere possibility* of duplication (i.e., of there coming to be more than one future-person with equal claim to be the legitimate successor of some present-person) is incompatible with the idea that preserving trans-temporal *identity* is necessary for survival.
4. Consider possible solutions
 - Can we give a principled argument against the *possibility* of one or both duplication scenarios? Why or why not?
 - Can we coherently deny that preserving trans-temporal *identity* is necessary for survival? Why or why not?:
 - If neither, then we must *reject* the possibility of survival (on either physicalist assumptions, substance dualist assumptions, or both).

Near-Death Experiences



Many, maybe even the vast majority of NDE reports can probably be explained away on physicalist or naturalist assumptions.

- Hallucinations due to drugs, high fever, oxygen deprivation, temporal lobe stimulation, seizure, or endorphin release
- Psychological detachment, wishful thinking, dreams, vivid imagination, or altered states of consciousness
- Faulty memory
- Deliberate fabrication of data
- Research bias
- NDE content was obtainable by the patient via conventional means
- Telepathy or ESP
- Influence of non-physical being (e.g., demons!)

Near-Death Experiences



But, some NDEs are very hard to explain away. Factors weighing in favor of the veracity of at least some NDE reports include:

- Cross-cultural consistency of NDE reports
- Radical (and generally positive) personal transformations
- Flat EEG cases
- Corroborated, veridical, 7 conventionally inexplicable perceptions
 - Encounters with persons who were not known to have died
 - Blind persons reporting colors and designs
 - Reports of things and events far away from the NDErs location (e.g., the blue shoe case)

Reincarnation



Reincarnation = the belief that sometime after death the soul takes on another body to live another earthly life :

Variations include

- How soon after death reincarnation occurs
- What happens in between different incarnations
- Whether a soul can reincarnate in a body of a different species
- Whether and if so how the cycle of birth and rebirth can be brought to an end

Arguments for reincarnation include

- Plato's recollection argument
- Déjà vu
- Moral arguments, need to pay off one's karmic debt and achieve enlightenment
- Detailed first-person reports of previous person's lives