

A J AYER AND LIFE AFTER DEATH

David Berman

Department of Philosophy

Trinity College Dublin

Dublin, Ireland

dberman@tcd.ie

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Abbreviations:

NDE = Near Death Experience

2WT = 2 World Theory

Rc = Reincarnation

UC = Underlying Character

Preface:

This book is about A. J. Ayer and his unusual mind, which was dramatically changed in 1988, when he had a Near Death Experience, i.e. NDE. The book is also about dreams, an area in which Ayer's unusual mind showed itself. But most important, this book is about whether there is life after bodily death.

Chapter one has two parts. In part one I examine what Ayer says about his NDE; which is contained in four documents: (1) a letter he wrote to the Spectator, published on 30 July 1988 (2) an article by him published in the Sunday Telegraph on 28 August 1988; (3) an article by him published in the Spectator, 15 October 1988. All these have hitherto been available to commentators; although the first is not as well known as the other two. However, the fourth item has not been hitherto available. This is (4) a letter Ayer wrote me on 15 March 1989, which contains probably his last pronouncement on his NDE and life after death. Having examined this evidence concerning Ayer's NDE in part one, my conclusion is that there is a puzzle, indeed a mystery, that of Ayer's double forgetting, which I believe I solve in part two. Going further, I try to show that my solution not only gives us an insight into Ayer's unusual mind, but also bears on the extent to which Ayer's NDE offers evidence for life after death.

Chapter two is on dreaming. It has three parts. Part one is on the understanding of dreams from earliest times to the present. Here I try to show that there have been four main phases: the primeval, the ancient, the modern, and the Freudian. Part two sets out what I call the 2 World Theory of dreams, or 2WT, according to which dreams constitute a second world, in addition to our material world. Here I also suggest that there is reason to believe that this second world, the dream world, is the next world, where dream selves exist, even when their material selves have died. Part three then looks again at Ayer's NDE, as described in Chapter One. It focuses on Ayer's earliest remarks to his French friend, which contain what, in Chapter One, I called the 'message'. What I try to show is that these remarks provide evidence that during his NDE Ayer was in the next world, and that he had his first visual dream, from which I think it is probable that the dream world is the next world.

Chapter 3 is on the theory of reincarnation as understood and defended by Plato especially as set out at the end of the Republic in the myth of Er, and John McTaggart, which he develops in his Human Immortality and Pre-existence, 1915, which I call the core argument.

I also bring in the defence of Rc by Ian Stevenson, and my own defence based on a new understanding of dementia.

Following Chapter 3, there is an Epilogue which describes a new game I devised, based on draughts, which illustrates my theory in chapter two.

The book also has 3 appendices, each relating to one of the three Chapters. The first prints a lecture I gave in 1988, called 'Ghosts, Souls and Immortality', which is a wide- ranging survey of the question of life after death. But it is also relevant in that I sent a copy of it to Ayer, which he comments on his 1989 letter to me. The second appendix, on chapter 2, examines

Kant's account of Emmanuel Swedenborg's two putative paranormal feats, which seemed to provide evidence that Swedenborg had gone in into the next world; which Kant discusses positively in his 1763 letter to Charlotte von Knobloch and then negatively, indeed scornfully, in his 1766 Dreams of a Spirit-seer.

The third appendix argues that Spinoza was a believer in reincarnation, even though he does not mention it in his Ethics. The third appendix puts forward the thesis that Spinoza accepted reincarnation, even though he does not even mention it in the Ethics.

As this book is mainly on life after death, I think it will be useful if I make the following points: By the death of a human being, I understand the death of the human body. But there is still the question whether something will survive. As this something is not the body, it must be what we call mind, or consciousness and what used to be called soul. So the question is: does the mind survive. I don't think anyone KNOWS if it does. But in this book I have put forward a case that the dream mind or self might too die, but it might be survived by what is deeper than both the body and dream self, which I call the UC, and that it does so through reincarnation. This is the theory of Plato and McT. Of course the prevailing view is that this is mistaken, that there is no survival at all. I think there is no justification for this total negative certainty. I think that the prevailing view is right to criticize specific arguments and supposed evidence that something will survive, but not that survival is impossible, that oblivion must follow the death of the body. No one can know this. To be sure, it might be so. That being so, there are two possibilities: that something might survive and nothing, so oblivion. This point was put forward by Socrates in Apology. Who thought this should be re-assuring, since he thinks there is reason to think that oblivion (which can be compared to dreamless sleep) is not a bad thing.

Chapter One: THE MYSTERY OF AYER'S DOUBLE FORGETTING:

This chapter is about A. J. Ayer's Near Death Experience, NDE, which occurred on 1 June 1988, when his heart stopped for four minutes. Ayer wrote an article on his NDE, published in the Sunday Telegraph, 28 August 1988, with the title: 'What I discovered when I died'. In part one of this Chapter, I examine what he says in his article, also his other written pronouncements on his NDE, at least one which has not been available to commentators. Having set out the available evidence, my conclusion is that there is a puzzle, indeed a mystery about his statements, which I call the mystery of his double forgetting; which I believe I solve in part two. And the solution bears on the extent to which Ayer's NDE offers evidence for life after death.

Part One: The story and the facts:

Are the lives of philosophers relevant to an understanding and assessment of their philosophies? Opinions differ. On the whole, the general opinion is No. And probably no one was as clear about this as A. J. Ayer. For as his biographer, Ben Rogers, notes: 'No philosopher, or at least no English-language philosopher, did more to insist that philosophy had little to do with life [than Ayer].' For 'As Ayer conceived it, philosophy is essentially a second-order discipline. It cannot discover anything about the world or life; only empirical science can do that.' And Ayer held this opinion very early on, in his early 20s. Thus in the Preface of his biography, writes Rogers:

Isaiah Berlin recalled walking with Ayer.. in Oxford, early in the 1930s... [and hearing Ayer say:] 'There is philosophy, which is about conceptual analysis- about the meaning of what we say- and there is all of this-- here making an excited sweep of his hands-- all of life.'

Ayer put this point nicely in his *Philosophy in the 20th-Century* – his continuation of Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*-- where he writes: 'One of the discoveries which has been made [in the 20th century by philosophers] is that it lacks the capital for setting up business on its own.' For 'philosophy takes its subject-matter from elsewhere, whether it be from one or other of the arts or sciences, or the pre-scientific beliefs and discourse of everyday life. Its standpoint is critical and explanatory.' (p. 15).

And yet for all that, on 1 June 1988 Ayer had an experience in which not just life but his own life became philosophically relevant, and which enabled him, indeed compelled him, to do philosophical business from his own resources. The occasion was his NDE, about which he wrote two articles. The first appeared in the Sunday Telegraph on 28 August 1988. The second was his 'Postscript to a Postmortem', which was published in the Spectator, 15 October 1988.¹ In the first he describes his NDE. In the second he mainly comments on his first article, and in both he discusses various philosophical issues arising from his NDE, among them personal identity and the existence of God.

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To begin, I need to say something about Ayer's attitude to life after death before his NDE. In short, he was a total disbeliever. Indeed he might be described as the acknowledged champion of disbelief in the afterlife. One piece of evidence for this concerns the novelist W. Somerset Maugham. The story is that shortly before his death in 1965, Maugham became anxious about whether he would survive his bodily death, and be punished in the afterlife for his wickedness in this life.² So he sent for Ayer, who, like himself, was living in France, for reassurance that there was no life after death. And Ayer gave Maugham the assurance he was looking for.

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I now turn to the background of Ayer's NDE, which Ayer sketches in his Sunday Telegraph article. Briefly, while on a visit to New York in late May 1988 Ayer came down with pneumonia, and spent ten days recovering in hospital. He was then discharged, as his doctors judged that he had recovered sufficiently. And shortly after leaving hospital Ayer left New York and returned to England.

Back in London, he 'plunged' into his usual 'hectic' social life, as he candidly confesses in his Telegraph article-- and 'retribution' soon followed. On 30 May, he suffered a relapse of pneumonia, and by 1 June, he became so seriously ill that he was rushed by ambulance to University Hospital, London. Here he did, once again, manage to recover. But as a result of 'carelessly tossing down a piece of smoked salmon', his condition became dangerous and he was rushed into the emergency ward, and for four minutes his heart stopped, which brought about his NDE.

What Ayer experienced during his NDE, and shortly after it, he describes in his Telegraph article. Thus he records that

'My first recorded utterance [after his NDE], which convinced those who heard it that I had not lost my wits, was the exclamation 'You are all mad.' The next thing which he tells us is the following:

'The earliest remarks of which I have any cognizance...were made several hours after my return to life. They were addressed to a French woman with whom I had been friends for over 15 years. I woke to find her seated by my bedside and started talking to her in French as soon as I recognized her. My French is fluent and I spoke rapidly, approximately as follows: 'Did you know that I was dead? The first time that I tried to cross the river I was frustrated, but my second attempt was successful. It was most extraordinary, my thoughts became persons.'

I call this the 'message'. Note that when Ayer says that these were the earliest remarks he had any cognizance, it is clear that he did not remember what he told his French friend. But she remembered and told him what he had said to her.

Now we come to Ayer's longest description of what happened during his NDE, which he did remember. Here is what he says:

The only memory I have of an experience, closely encompassing my death, is very vivid.

I was confronted by a red light, exceedingly bright, and also very painful even when I turned away from it. I was aware that this light was responsible for the government of the universe. Among its ministers were two creatures who had been put in charge of space.

These ministers periodically inspected space and had recently carried out such an inspection. They had, however, failed to do their work properly, with the result that space, like a badly fitting jigsaw puzzle, was slightly out of joint.

A further consequence was that the laws of nature had ceased to function as they should. I felt that it was up to me to put things right. I also had the motive of finding a way to extinguish the painful light. I assumed that it was signaling that space was awry and that it would switch itself off when order was restored.

Unfortunately, I had no idea where the guardians of space had gone and feared that even if I found them I should not be able to communicate with them. It then occurred to me that whereas, until the present century, physicists accepted the Newtonian severance of space and time, it had become customary, since the vindication of Einstein's general theory of relativity, to treat space-time as a single whole. Accordingly, I thought that I could cure space by operating on time.

I was vaguely aware that the ministers who had been given charge of time were in my neighborhood and proceeded to hail them. I was again frustrated. Either they did not hear me, or they chose to ignore me, or they did not understand me. I then hit upon the expedient of walking up and down, waving my watch, in the hope of drawing their attention not to my watch itself but to the time it measured. This elicited no response. I became more and more desperate, until the experience suddenly came to an end.

I call this the 'memory'; for Ayer is clear that he did remember this. About it, he then adds the following:

This experience could well have been delusive. A slight indication that it might have been veridical has been supplied by my French friend, or rather by her mother, who also underwent a heart arrest many years ago. When her daughter asked her what it had been like, she replied that all she remembered was that she must stay close to the red light.

Ayer then moves to an assessment of his NDE, so to its bearing on the question whether there is life after death.

On the face of it, [he writes] these experiences, on the assumption that the last one was veridical, are rather strong evidence that death does not put an end to consciousness.

Does it follow that there is a future life? Not necessarily. The trouble is that there are different criteria for being dead, which are indeed logically compatible but which may not always be satisfied together.

In this instance I am given to understand that the arrest of the heart does not entail, either logically or causally, the arrest of the brain. In view of the very strong evidence of the dependence of thoughts upon the brain, the most probable hypothesis is that my brain continued to function although my heart had stopped.

Ayer first seems to be suggesting here that his NDE contained strongish evidence that he did die, since, as he says, the experience encompassed his death; but that he continued to be conscious. Hence he seems to be saying that his NDE offered evidence for life or consciousness after bodily death. He also mentions here that the mother of his French friend had a similar experience to his own.

But then in the next paragraph, he questions whether his NDE was evidence that he did die and returned from the dead-- like Er, in Plato's famous Myth of Er-- and so was evidence for life after death. For, as he says, it is more probable that although his heart stopped functioning during his NDE, his brain was still functioning, hence he did not die.

Therefore, he says that this is the 'most probable' explanation of his experiences. Yet Ayer also seems clear that this does not entirely rule out that he did die and returned from the dead. But that, he believes, is much less probable.

That this was indeed Ayer's considered view of his NDE in his Telegraph article is confirmed by what he says in the final paragraph of the article, where he writes:

'So there it is. My recent experiences have slightly weakened my conviction that my genuine death, which is due fairly soon, will be the end of me, although I continue to hope it will be. They have not weakened my belief that there is no god. I trust that my remaining an atheist will allay the anxieties of my fellow supporters of the Humanist Association, the Rationalist Press, and the South Place Ethical Society.'

In short, while Ayer remained entirely convinced of the truth of atheism, his NDE did somewhat weaken his disbelief in life after death; although he still thought it was 'most probable' that there is no life or consciousness after bodily death.

But while this was Ayer's conclusion in his Telegraph article, which appeared on 28 August 1988, it was not long after this that he became dissatisfied with what he had written. For in the 15 October 1988 issue of the Spectator magazine there appeared an article by him with the witty title, 'Postscript to a Postmortem', in which he criticizes his conclusion in the Telegraph article. Here he says that he had been careless in expressing himself and giving the impression that his NDE had weakened his disbelief in life after death. For now in this 'Postscript', he asserts that his near death experiences 'have not and never did weaken' his 'conviction' that there is no life after bodily death. 'What I should have said [he writes] had I not been anxious to appear undogmatic, is that my experiences have weakened, not my belief that there is no life after death, but my inflexible attitude to that belief.' Now it might seem that with this clarification that is an end to the matter. But while this seems to be the opinion of most commentators, I believe it is not justified. For what most commentators seem not to have noticed, and which Ayer himself may have forgotten, is that there is another piece of evidence about his NDE. This is his first public statement on his NDE in a letter he sent to the Spectator, printed in its 30 July 1988 issue; so about a month before Ayer's article in the Telegraph. Here he begins by commenting on an article on his NDE, by the journalist, Peregrine Worsthorne. I now quote what Ayer says, with my comments in square brackets:

'I was too ill to be aware of the reference to myself by my friend Peregrine Worsthorne (in the Spectator, 16 July).... But I feel obliged to remark that he was mistaken on two points... First, I think it extremely improbable that I corrected my youngest step-daughter about the

duration of my death. ... [For] I was informed by one of my doctors that it lasted for four minutes and I have no reason to disbelieve him.

Secondly and more importantly, I do not have the gratification of knowing that I failed to find anything 'on the other side'. All that I do remember is having had a somewhat agonizing but very astonishing experience [This, I take it, is the 'memory']. If I am right in believing that the brain continues to function when the heart has stopped, it does not very much matter whether I had the experience during or just after the period of my heart arrest. Nevertheless the experience was interesting in itself and, since I value truth more than consistency, I intend to write an account of it. I intend also to include in my narrative a record of another remarkable experience which I am told I related to a friend [this, I take it, is what his French friend told, that is, to the 'message'] a day or two after I returned to life. I have no recollection either of it or my first reported utterance, an exclamation from which I can deduce nothing about the state of mind which prompted it. [This is surely his exclaiming that 'You are all mad.']

Now what is important in this letter is Ayer's saying that he intends to write an account of his experience 'since I value truth more than consistency'. For these words surely indicate that at this time, circa June-July 1988, he thought that his NDE did significantly conflict with his previous disbelief in life after death. But in the event, the account of his NDE which he published in the *Telegraph* does not go into this. For it only states that his NDE slightly weakened his disbelief in life after death.

However, what is of more significance in the letter is Ayer's saying that he intends 'to include in my narrative a record of another remarkable experience which I am told I related to a friend a day or two after my return to life'; which, he says, he has no recollection of'. This is clearly the 'memory', which in chapter three I argue Ayer gets closest to the truth about his NDE.

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Now I think it is clear, looking at Ayer's three publications about his NDE--i.e., (1) the letter in the *Spectator*, (2) the *Telegraph* article and (3) the 'Postscript' in the *Spectator*-- that as time went on Ayer became less and less positive about his NDE as providing any evidence for life after death. And that this was indeed their tendency is confirmed by a fourth piece of evidence from Ayer concerning his NDE, which has hitherto been unavailable to commentators. This is a private letter, which Ayer wrote to me, dated 15 March 1989; so

about three months before his death on 27 June 1989. For in this letter he is even more negative about his NDE being evidence for life after death than his 'Postscript'.

Ayer's letter, I need to mention, was occasioned by my sending him a copy of a lecture I had recently given to the South Place Ethical Society, on 19 February 1989, entitled 'Ghosts, Souls and Immortality', where, among other things, I gave an account of his NDE. Here is what I said in my lecture:

'In recent years... interest [in life after death] has moved from observing ghostly manifestations to examining accounts of those who have had out-of-body or near-death experiences, OBEs or NDEs, as they are called. The latter topic achieved wide media coverage some months ago when A. J. Ayer, probably the most eminent living philosopher, published an account of his near death experiences in the Sunday Telegraph (of August 28, 1988), with a sequel, "Postscript to a Postmortem" in The Spectator (October 15, 1988).Ayer took this experience seriously, and this was reinforced some days later when, as he says, he learned that a friend [i.e. her mother] had had a similar near death experience, all of which "she remembered was that she must stay close to the red light." Yet for all that, Ayer was by no means convinced that there is survival after death. For as he points out: "the arrest of the heart does not entail ... the arrest of the brain". Hence, [as he puts it]: "the most probable explanation of my experiences was that my brain had not ceased to function during the four minutes of my heart arrest. Ayer's conclusion, to quote his careful words in his 'Postscript' in The Spectator, is that: "...my experiences have weakened, not my belief that there is no life after death, but my inflexible attitude towards that belief.'3

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Having set out the context of Ayer's letter to me, I now print his hand-written letter, which was written while he was residing at his house in France:

March 15 1989

Dear Professor Berman,

Thank you for sending me your South Place Ethical Lecture which I enjoyed and approve of. Your reference to my Sunday Telegraph article was entirely fair, though it would appear that you missed the sequel to it entitled 'Postscript to a Postmortem' which I published in the Spectator in September. In that Postscript I reaffirmed my disbelief in personal survival, saying that the long-term effect of my near death experience had been only to give me a theoretical interest in the possibility. I explained that in the unlikely event of a lot of persons

'remembering' the experience of persons in other bodies as if they had been their own, when the experiences were such that they could not have known, we might be tempted to alter our concept of a person so as to give a sense to reincarnation. This was the only possibility that I countenanced, though even in that case I said that I thought it more likely that we would modify our concept of memory. I accounted for my near death experiences as due to the excitations of my brain, though so far as I know I had not been given any drugs.

Yours sincerely

Freddie Ayer

What this letter confirms, as mentioned above, is that Ayer became more negative that his NDE was evidence for life after death. For it goes further than even his 'Postscript'. For in his letter to me he says that 'In that Postscript I reaffirmed my disbelief in personal survival, saying that the long-term effect of my near death experience had been only to give me a theoretical interest in the possibility.' But this is not what Ayer actually says in the 'Postscript'. What he says that his NDE 'experiences have weakened, not my belief that there is no life after death, but my inflexible attitude towards that belief.' Hence what he says in his letter to me might be considered a postscript to his postscript, so minimizing even more the evidential significance of his NDE.

Now I want to call attention to what is most puzzling in Ayer's letter to me. This is that Ayer says that he read and enjoyed my lecture, and that what I said about his Telegraph article was 'entirely fair'. But then he writes that 'it would appear that you missed the sequel to it entitled 'Postscript to a Postmortem' which I published in the Spectator in September.' Yet how could Ayer have thought this, since in the account I gave of his NDE in my lecture I was entirely clear and indeed emphatic in describing his sequel, i.e. the 'Postscript', and quoting his main point in it?

I think Ayer's forgetting this in his letter to me is extraordinary, and is a puzzle indeed a mystery, which calls out for an explanation, and which I believe I explain in part two below. Moreover, I believe my explanation casts a new light on Ayer's NDE as evidence for life after death.

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Part Two:

What, then, is the explanation for Ayer's forgetting in his letter to me? Here I begin with a possible explanation, based on the fact that when Ayer wrote his letter he was an old man (of 77) and close to death. Now as is well-known, old people tend to be forgetful. Hence this might be a way of explaining his forgetting. However, while not entirely unreasonable, I think this explanation will not do. For it cannot explain how he could forget that in my lecture I had not only been clear about his 'Postscript' but emphasized its importance. So this forgetting was not normal. I should also note that that Ayer's letter is otherwise sharp and to the point and shows no signs of mental decline. And this is in accord with what we know of Ayer's state of mind at the time. Thus there is, for example, his last essay, his able 'A Defense of Empiricism', written at this time, and his radio interview with Ted Honderich.⁴

So how can the mystery of Ayer's double forgetting be solved? Now, as the classic detectives, such as Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, tell us, what we first need to know are the facts. And I think all of these are set out above in part one, and contained in the following four documents:

doc 1: Ayer's first public pronouncement on his NDE, in his letter of 30 July 1988, in the Spectator.

doc 2: Then there is his article in the Sunday Telegraph, 28 August 1988.

doc 3: Then his 'Postscript' in the Spectator, 15 October 1988.

doc 4: And finally there is his letter to me, 15 March 1989; which, as far as I am aware, was his last pronouncement on the subject.

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Now It might seem that my account of Ayer's NDE and its upshot, differs little from the general view which is based largely on docs 2 and 3; and that all I have contributed, by bringing docs 1 and 4 to light is to add more detail showing that Ayer's attitude was more positive, to begin with, and more negative finally, than was formerly thought to be the case.

However, I believe the addition of docs 1 and 4, when carefully examined, leads to a radically new conclusion.

To begin I need to make clear that Ayer was, and always remained, an honest and truth-loving philosopher, that as he indicates in doc 1, he valued truth even if it meant admitting

that he had been previously mistaken. So I think that Ayer never wavered in his commitment to telling what he believed to be true.

However, all human beings, even the best philosophers, are something more than conscious, reasoning human beings. They have beliefs, but they also have desires. And I think that one of Ayer's strongest desires was his desire, which he mentions in doc 2, was not to survive his bodily death.

But what happens if a powerful desire is opposed by a reasoned belief? What I think follows is that, in the case of a believer in truth, such as Ayer, the desire must give way to the truth. Yet it does not follow that the desire gives up. For, as we are taught by depth psychologists, it can go underground and become unconscious. And I think this is what happened when Ayer came to write up his account of his NDE in doc 2, and even more in docs 3 and 4. Thus there is no clear mention in doc 2 that what he holds about his NDE is 'inconsistent' with his previous disbelief. That bold assertion from doc 1 has been forgotten by Ayer, which, as I see it, shows the power of his desire not to survive his bodily death.

And his unconscious desire went further; for not long after doc 2, I think it prompted him to revise even that revision in doc 3. Nor was his unconscious desire satisfied even with that considerable victory. For it was itself revised in doc 4, thus producing his final attitude to his NDE, according to which it was of little or no significance in respect to the truth of life after death.

So my understanding of the trajectory from doc 1 to 2 to 3 to 4 is that, using the mechanism of forgetting, his unconscious desire engineered, by degrees, Ayer's final attitude--a return to the happy time, before his NDE, when Ayer's belief and desire concerning life after death were in perfect accord. So while the initial result of his NDE, as shown in doc 1, brought about a conflict, where his desire gave way to his love of truth, his desire was too strong for this to prevail.

And this brings me to Ayer's forgetting in doc 4, which I think is the most revealing. For as I interpret it, here Ayer's desire itself slipped. For by its double forgetting, it imprudently showed its hand. And this is how in many in classic detective stories, culprits reveal themselves to the detective by actions that aim at too much. The double forgetting was that Ayer forgot what he said in his 'Postscript' and also forgot that in my lecture I had mentioned, indeed emphasized, its importance, in my lecture.

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It is generally thought that all human beings fear death and desire to survive. But that this is incorrect is shown by what Ayer says about himself in his 'Telegraph' article, namely that he

hopes that his 'genuine death, which is due fairly soon, will be the end of me'. We also learn from the Maugham story that Maugham wished not to survive, for he feared that if he did survive he would be punished for his wickedness in this life. And in doc 2, Ayer mentions that the Cambridge philosopher C.D. Broad also hoped not to survive his bodily death. For, Ayer writes, Broad 'took the view that this world was very nasty and that there was a fair chance that the next world, if it existed, was even nastier. Consequentially, Broad had no compelling desire to survive.' But Ayer does not explain why he himself desired not to survive. Perhaps he had no reason. However, I suggest his desire not to survive can be explained by his being a monist. For monists, like Spinoza, desire to lose their their personal identity and merge into the one thing which exists, which Spinoza describes as God or Nature.⁵ And here I should note that in his letter to me Ayer says that in his 'Postscript', he had 'reaffirmed [his] disbelief in personal survival', which could suggest that he was not averse to some kind of impersonal existence after his bodily death.

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But the crucial question is: What is the philosophical upshot of Ayer's NDE episode? That is, how does it bear on whether there is life after death? Prima facie, it might seem to go against his NDE being evidence for the truth of the afterlife; since, it might seem, that the further Ayer thought and wrote about his NDE, as shown in docs 2, 3 and 4, the clearer he seems to have become that his NDE offered no grounds for believing in life after death. But, as I argue above, I think that is mistaken. For I believe that the trajectory from doc 1 to 4 shows not the power of Ayer's conscious disbelief in life after death, but the greater power of his desire that his bodily death should be the end of himself as a person.

In short, I think the upshot of Ayer's NDE, when carefully examined, is that it offers at least some support for a belief in life after death.

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Above, I argued that the way his unconscious desire sought to minimize the importance of his NDE was by means of the mechanism of forgetting; which showed itself in stages, beginning with doc 2. But according to the classic detective stories, there is another way that 'culprits' operate, which is by drawing attention away from the evidence. And this is the way I understand Ayer's discussion of reincarnation, which appears first in his 'Postscript', and was continued in Ayer's letter in the Spectator, 5 Nov 1988, in which he criticizes Antony Flew on the subject. It also dominates his letter to me.

In his discussion of reincarnation he seems to be showing that he is open and fair-minded about life after death. But most importantly the discussion has now nothing to do with his

NDE, but with the logic of reincarnation, which Ayer discusses in his usual judicious, impersonal and detached way.

Thus in his letter to me Ayer says that reincarnation

'was the only real possibility [of life after death] that I countenanced...' But how could he say that? How could he have forgotten that in doc 1 and 2 he had believed that his NDE offered at least some evidence for life after death, that it showed life after death was a possibility, although much less probable than oblivion. So here again this had been forgotten, occluded by his judicious discussion of reincarnation.

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Notes

1 All quotations from Ayer's two articles, from the Sunday Telegraph and The Spectator, are, unless otherwise stated, from the collection The Meaning of Life and other Essays [of A. J. Ayer, introduced by Ted Honderich (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990).

2 See Obituary of Ayer in the New York Times.

3 Note that my whole lecture was printed in The Ethical Record, May 1989, and is printed here in the Appendix.

4 The essay is printed in A. J. Ayer Memorial Essays (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991) edited by A. Phillips Griffiths. The radio interview with Honderich is printed in The Meaning of Life and other Essays, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990); edited and introduced by Honderich.

5 See my Consciousness from Descartes to Ayer, 2021, where I develop this in detail; and where I also describe Ayer as 'the complete monist'.

Chapter Two: DREAMS AND LIFE AFTER DEATH:

I think it is illuminating to see four main stages in the way dreaming has been understood in human history. These four phases are: (1) the primeval, (2) the ancient, (3) the scientific and (4) the Freudian. In Part Two, I then try to show how there was a crucial break between the first phase, as described in E. B. Tylor *Primitive Culture*, 1871, and the three following phases. Yet as far as I am aware, little or nothing of all this has been recognized by researchers on dreams. Thus there is no mention of it in the otherwise truly encyclopedic article on dreams in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

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The first and earliest phase in the understanding of dreams is described most fully by E. B. Tylor in his massive two- volume *Primitive Culture*, 1871, whose view was endorsed by Darwin in his *Descent of Man* (revised edition 1873). However, probably the most helpful summary of this first phase is in Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human*, 1878, section 11, where Nietzsche writes:

'In the ages of crude primeval culture man believed that in dreams he got to know another real world; here is the origin of all metaphysics. Without the dream one would have found no occasion for a division of the world. The separation of body and soul, too, is related to the most ancient conception of the dream; also the assumption of a quasi-body of the soul, which is the origin of the belief in spirits and probably also belief in gods. "The dead live on; for they appear to the living in dreams"; the inference went unchallenged for many thousands of years.'

Following this primeval understanding of dreams there is the second phase, that in ancient times of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, among others. Here dreams were regarded as valuable and important, but not as having the same deep and pervasive role as in the primeval stage. For the ancients did not believe that everyone's dreaming had the experience of enabling them to visit existing places and persons not present in their material environment, or enabled them to meet dead persons.

But the ancients did think that dreams could be valuable in revealing extraordinary things. Probably the best known example here is the story of Joseph and the Egyptian Pharaoh in the Old Testament, where the Pharaoh is described as having a prophetic dream, which Joseph was able to interpret, about the coming great famine.

The next, third phase begins with Descartes and is decidedly negative about dreams. So it opposes both earlier stages. The way Descartes brought about this radical change was through his skeptical argument in the first of his *Meditations*. Briefly, his argument is based on what probably everyone has experienced, namely waking from a dream, and realizing that in the dream he confidently (but wrongly) believed that he was awake and in the material world. That being so, Descartes argued that we can never be sure that we are awake and not dreaming. So, as Descartes writes, “I clearly perceived that there is no certain mark whereby the state of being awake can ever be distinguished from being asleep and dreaming.” This is a simple argument, but a powerful one. So now instead of dreaming being a means whereby we could learn important things, as in the earlier phases, dreaming became like a virus threatening to undermine our confidence in understanding the world, even in knowing that we have physical bodies. For if, as Descartes held, I have no way of knowing that I am not now dreaming, I cannot be sure that the body I believe I am now feeling is not a dream body. Hence by his simple but powerful argument Descartes initiated a new trajectory, in which dreaming was regarded as something that needed to be insulated against to prevent it infecting healthy, awake rational thinking. And Descartes was followed in his negative attitude to dreams by virtually all philosophers and scientists. As an example of the influence of Descartes’s negative attitude among philosophers I take two philosophers who are opposed to each other on nearly all other issues. These are Spinoza and Berkeley. Thus Spinoza uses dreams to justify his determinism in *Ethics* III. prop. 3, note 3, where he says that when we dream we believe we do things, or conceal things, by or through free will. But, as Spinoza says, no intelligent person believes that we are acting through free will in dreams. For everyone accepts that what occurs in dreams is illusory.

Moving to Berkeley, he also uses the illusory nature of dreams, in this case to support his famous denial of matter. This is worth going into, since I don’t think it has been appreciated even by experts on Berkeley’s philosophy. But Berkeley is clear about it. Briefly, his argument is that everyone believes that material objects exist independent of the mind, because they believe they perceive them existing. But, as Berkeley says in his *Principles*, section 42, and in the first of the *Three Dialogues*, in dreams we also believe we perceive material objects. Yet everyone (when they are awake) knows that this is an illusion, that there

are no real material objects in our dreams. So the fact that in our dreams we believe we perceive physical objects gives Berkeley an argument against this being true.

I now move to the fourth phase in the understanding of dreams. This can be dated to year 1900, when dreams were given a new lease on life by Freud in the publication of his *Interpretation of Dreams*, although I am not claiming that Freud was as positive about dreams as those in the first or second phases. Rather, the Freudian position presents a compromise between the positive first two phases and the negative third phase. On the positive side, Freud shows the therapeutic value of dreams in enabling psychologists to help those troubled by neurotic complaints, as well as helping healthy persons understand themselves by understanding their unconscious. But while Freud was close to the positive attitude toward dreams in these respects, he still accepted the anti-supernaturalist view of dreams by scientists and philosophers.

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I now turn to my suggestion that there was a radical break between the first phase in the understanding of dreams and the three later phases. Evidence that there was such a break is, I think, available in Tylor's work and is captured in Nietzsche's summary, quoted above, according to which primeval humans accepted that what they perceived in dreams existed just because they were perceived. On the other hand, those in the second and later phases did not accept this. Putting this somewhat differently, primeval humans were naïve realists regarding their dreams. That is, they believed that what they perceived in their dreams was no less real than what they perceived when awake in the material world. But this was not the view of those in the next phase and certainly not in the third or fourth phases.

That Tylor did think that the primeval animists were naïve realists about experiencing the soul comes out in the following quotation from his 1881 book, *Anthropology*, p. 344:

'What, then, is this soul or life which thus goes and comes in sleep, trance, and death? To the rude philosopher, the question seems to be answered by the very evidence of his senses. When the sleeper awakens from a dream, he believes he has really somehow been away, or that other people have come to him. As it is well known by experience that men's bodies do not go on these excursions, the natural explanation is that every man's living self or soul is his phantom or image [i.e. an image or representation of his body], which can go out of his body and see and be seen itself in dreams. Even waking men in broad daylight sometimes see these human phantoms, in what are called visions or hallucinations. They are further led to believe that the soul does not die with the body, but lives on after quitting it, for although

a man may be dead and buried, his phantom-figure continues to appear to the survivors in dreams and visions. That men have such unsubstantial images belonging to them is familiar in other ways to the savage philosopher, who has watched their reflexions in still water, or their shadows following them about, fading out of sight to reappear presently somewhere else, while sometimes for a moment he has seen their living breath as a faint cloud, vanishing though one can feel that it is still there. Here then in few words is the savage and barbaric theory of souls, where life, mind, breath, shadow, reflexion, dream, vision, come together and account for one another in some such vague confused way as satisfies the untaught reasoner..

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It was the Oxford Analytic philosopher, H. H. Price, who helped me to see the connection between dreams and life after death. He wrote a number of essays on the subject, the most important is 'Survival and the idea of another life', printed in J.R. Smythies (ed), Brain and Mind, 1965, pp. 1-24.

What Price tries to show in this essay is that our dreams provide the best understanding of what happens to human beings following their bodily death. This, according to Price, is that they find themselves in a dream, like the ones we go into nearly every night. Price supports this by pointing to the fact that in dreams we do not know we are in a dream, and that there is evidence from psychic research that when the recently dead die, they do not realize they are dead.¹

Now while I agree with Price's main idea, that dreams provide us with a credible way of understanding life after death, I go further. For I believe that dreams constitute another world, different from our material world, and that there is reason to believe this other world is the next world.

Before setting out my argument, it will be useful to have an example of a dream. So here is a little dream I recently had. I walked into my bedroom and saw that one of its walls was a shallow earthy cave.

Now I think it is clear that being in a dream, such as this one, is different from being in the material world; although when in a dream we wrongly believe we are in the material world; also that we are awake.. But while being in a dream is not the same as being in the material world, they are similar, which we know when we wake up, and which might be why we identify with the person in our dreams.

And here I think it would be helpful in the interests of clarity if I make use of a notation I have developed. This is that when I am talking about my living material self, as I now am, I

describe him as DB; whereas when I talk of my dream self, I refer to him as DB*. So it was DB*, and not DB, who went into his bedroom with its cave wall.

I now move to my first substantive point. This is that DB* thought there was nothing odd about his bedroom having an earthy cave wall; which I remembered upon waking up, when I also wondered how I, DB, could have dreamed such an odd thing. So there is a disparity of belief between what DB* believes and what DB believes, i.e. DB finds it strange what DB* believes. And I think this is typical of being in a dream, as against being in the material world, and is the basis of my main reason for holding that dreams constitute another world different from our material world. But we need to be clear about the meaning of the disparity between the belief of DB and that of DB*, a disparity to which Price also calls attention in his essay. Thus he writes that the objects which dream selves are aware of in dreams 'seem very queer to us when we wake up. The laws of their behavior are not the laws of physics. But however queer their behavior is, it does not at all disconcert us at the time', i.e. when we are dreaming (p. 4). But while Price is clear about the disparity, he does not try to explain it.² Whereas I think it cries out for an explanation. And I think the best, if not the only explanation, is that DB* was not surprised because that is the sort of thing which he is used to, so what normally happens in his experience [in the dream world]. But then it follows that DB* must be having more experience than I, DB; hence that DB* has been living his life, even when I, DB, am not dreaming. Therefore the world DB* is living in—the dreamworld—is different from our material world and not encompassed by it.

This, then, is my main argument for my claim that there is another world in addition to the material world in which living persons, such as DB, live; and that this other world, the dream world, is the world in which dream persons, such as DB*, live. I call this the 2 World Theory, or 2WT for short.

Moreover, apart from my main argument, I believe the 2WT is also supported by the fact that dreams stand significantly almost on their own in their relation to the material world, in that all the things we can do in the material world, our dream selves can also do in dreams, so in the dream world. Thus DB* can walk, talk, tell jokes, eat, smile, write articles, etc. However, as far as I am aware, this is only true of two other activities, namely imagining and remembering. But when remembering and imagining, we know we are in the material world. Whereas when we are dreaming, we, i.e. our dream selves, so DB*, believes he is in the material world. Of course, when we wake up we realize that we, i.e. our dream selves, were mistaken about this. However I think our dream selves are right that they are in a world, although not the material world, but the dream world.

And to this can be added a further reason in support of the 2WT. This is that the view that our material world is the only world, and that dreams do not constitute a world, is partisan, whereas the 2WT is not partisan. For the 2WT takes seriously not only the material world perspective but also the dream world perspective. And what makes this important is that, as Schopenhauer has pointed out in his *World as Will and Idea*, section 5, we cannot directly compare our awareness of the world when awake and our awareness in dreams. For in the case of the latter, we only have our recollection of being in dreams when we awake up. Hence there is no neutral perspective from which we can compare being in a dream and being awake in the material world. Therefore if we want to be fair-minded and get to the truth, we should take account and accept both perspectives. And while our 2WT does this, the opposing view does not. It is partisan.

To conclude, what I think I have shown here is that the dream self, DB*, goes on with his dream-life, even when the living person, DB, is not dreaming; and that DB* does so in the non-material dreamworld, which is different from the material world in which we living persons live in.

Now we come to the key question: What happens, given the truth of the 2WT, when living persons, such as DB, die? For given that DB* goes on with his life in the dream world, even when DB is not dreaming, it seems to follow that when DB dies, DB* will still continue to do so, hence that DB* will survive the death of DB. So have we proven life after death? I think we have moved closer to it, but not yet gotten there. For it is one thing to prove that the dream world is different from the material world, but it is quite another thing to prove that the dream world and dream persons are independent of the material world such that the dream person can survive the death of the material person. For how, it will be said, can the dream person exist without a living, material brain, which is gone with the death of DB?

And there is another difficulty. This is that since DB* is not the same as DB, it follows that it is not DB that survives when his body dies, but only DB*. So the question is how would someone feel if he knew that when he died, he would cease to exist but that his dream self would survive? Would that satisfy him? Would it lessen any fear or dread of death that he had?

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Now there are other important things which could and should be said about whether the dream self survives the death the living person. But first I want to make two final points. The first is that while the 2WT might seem abstrusely philosophical, its main idea was actually accepted by early, primeval human beings, as mentioned above in section one. As Nietzsche put it in his *Human all too Human*, 'In the ages of crude primeval culture man

believed that in dreams he got to know another real world... [that] 'The dead live on; for they appear to the living in dreams; the inference went unchallenged for many thousands of years.'

My other point is this. I suggest that the dream world is a viable way of understanding the world Plato describes in the Myth of Er; i.e. the middle world which souls go to between incarnations, where dream selves are judged or rewarded for their life on Earth, after which they choose a pattern for their next life on Earth. But it is not the dream self which is reincarnated. For according to Plato before going into a new body on Earth, the dream self also dies, which it does by the loss of all memories. So what is reincarnated is what underlies both the awake material self and the dream self. It is the substance of both.

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Section Three:

I now come to the bearing of Ayer's NDE on the nature of dreams.

First we need to recall what Ayer alludes to in doc 1, and describes in doc 2 as the 'earliest remarks of which I have any cognisance, which were made several hours after my return to life... addressed to a French friend, who was seated by his bedside, to whom I spoke approximately as follows:

'Did you know that I was dead? The first time that I tried to cross the river I was frustrated, but my second attempt was successful. It was most extraordinary, my thoughts became persons.'

From this, it seems clear that when Ayer spoke these words he thought he did die during his NDE. Hence he then thought that there was another world which, according to my 2WT, was the dream world. This is what I want to argue is the case; also that the person who got into the next world was not AJA, but AJA*. And what I base my argument on is his statement that 'It was most extraordinary, my thoughts became persons.'; which I take to be his description of what it was like being in the next world.

So what was it like for him? That IS the question, and it is one which Ayer did not know the answer when he wrote doc 1 or 2. For by then, he had forgotten what he meant when he spoke the words to his French friend. Therefore when Ayer wrote doc 2, he was in the same

position as we commentators. And as far as I am aware, no commentator has put forward a satisfactory account of what Ayer had in mind. Thus the commentator who has written at length on Ayer's NDE, Abigail Rosenthal, says in her article that she hasn't the faintest idea what Ayer meant. See her 'What Ayer saw when he was dead'; *Philosophy*, Oct. 2004.

Now I believe I know what Ayer meant. Putting it very directly: I believe that Ayer was describing the experience of mental imaging, an experience which he had hitherto not had. For as we know from Rogers's biography of him, he was a non-imager. Here I can draw on William James's *Principles of Psychology*, chap 18, and his account of the strong imager, the Merchant X. James says that X's imaging was so strong that

'He no sooner thought of persons or things, but features, forms, and colors arose with the same clearness, sharpness, and accuracy as if the objects stood before him.' I think Ayer's experience was like that. Hence for someone who never had mental images before, it must have been amazing; hence.

Of course, as mentioned above, Ayer did not realize he was in the dream world. However, what he was clear about was that his thoughts became persons and that it was amazing. Why was it extraordinary? My answer is because he had never had experienced mental images. More specifically, though he had had many dreams before, they were all of the non-visual auditory nature, where he told himself a story. But now for the first time he was having a visual dream; which is normal for 99% of human beings.. That Ayer never had a visual dream before his NDE is bound to seem incredible, so now, straightaway, I want to provide the evidence that it is so.

The most important evidence comes from H. H. Price, who was Ayer's Oxford colleague, also his predecessor as Wykham Professor of Logic.

In section two I discussed Price's article about dreaming being the best way of understanding the next life. This article was first printed in 1953, and reprinted by J.R. Smythies in a collection of essays called *Brain and Mind*, published in 1965. Now in this 1965 reprinting, there are comments by the volume's contributors on each other's essays. In one of his comments, pp. 31-2, Price discusses Smythies's idea that visual hallucinatory experiences are a way of getting to an understanding of the next world. Price first notes that such hallucinatory experiences are 'unfamiliar to nearly everyone, whereas dreaming is familiar to everyone.' But then Price questions whether this is really so, so whether dreaming is familiar to everyone. Price then says that around the time his essay first appeared, so circa 1953, he

'was dismayed to hear from two philosophical colleagues that their dreams were entirely verbal. They just told improbable stories to themselves. presumably by means of auditory

images or words. Confronted with these too-intellectual persons, I have no way of conveying to them [Price continues] the kind of 'other world which I was trying to describe. I can only tell them how much I pity them for the miserably empty lives they must lead in this present world. Even when they are asleep they cannot escape from the domination of words.'

As I was friendly with Smythies, I wrote to him around 2015, asking if he knew who Price was referring to, i.e. who the two 'philosophical colleagues' were. But Smythies said that Price never mentioned this to him, and he didn't know who Price had in mind.

Now I believe one of the two philosophical colleagues was almost certainly Ayer, and that the other was probably Gilbert Ryle. One reason I have for believing that Ayer was one of the philosophical colleagues was that Ayer was his successor as Whykham Professor of Logic at Oxford. It also fits with Ayer's having no mental imaging. But most important, it specifically fits what we learn from Rogers. Here I might quote Roger who in his biography writes that in the early 1950s Ayer

'was a frequent house guest of Ralph and Frances Partridge, whose house had been owned formerly by Lytton Strachey of the Bloomsbury group and was full of paintings. Ayer used to amuse his audience by insisting that what we think of as visual 'images' [i.e. mental images] are really just colourless, shapeless concepts- words in our heads. Ayer's inability to visualise places or people was often remarked upon in these imaginative, artistic circles, as was his complete indifference to nature.' (Rogers, p. 230).

In short, what Price says about his 'philosophical colleagues' is what Ayer himself held is the case for everyone, that what we take to be mental visual images 'are really just colourless, shapeless concepts- words in our heads.' So, according to Ayer, while people may say that when they dream they are 'seeing' images, they are mistaken. They are really just telling themselves stories in auditory words.

Now of course Ayer was mistaken. But I think what his remarks show is that that was his experience-- in waking life, and also in his dreams. And that is why I think we can be sure that he was one of the two philosophical colleagues Price was referring to.

What then is the philosophical upshot of this? That Ayer's experience of being in (or thinking he was in) the next world was being in a visual dream. This is most important, and I say more about it below. But before getting to that I need to be clear that I am not saying that Ayer knew this. For Ayer had never experienced mental images before. But I think we can be sure that that was what he was experiencing, given the evidence from Price and Rogers.

As to the other philosophical colleague, I think it was probably Gilbert Ryle. My reason for holding this what Ryle says about mental images in his Concept of Mind, chap. 18. For what Ryle says in chapter 8 makes it pretty certain that Ryle had, like Ayer, had no experience of images, even in his dreams.

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Supposing that the above is correct, it shows that dreams have been grossly under-estimated in two ways: (1) in not realizing that they constitute another world, and (2) that this other world is (or at least could well be) the next world. So dreams are doubly extraordinary.

Of course, for nearly all people-- with the possible exception of children-- dreams are not at all extraordinary. But in his NDE Ayer was aware, according to what he told his French friend, that his experience was 'extraordinary', more so than being dead and coming back to life. Hence my conclusion is that that Ayer's experience is evidence that Ayer was having his first visual dream, and that he thought that when having the experience he, AJA, was dead, yet somehow he was in the next world.

Here again I need to emphasize that Ayer does not say in doc 2 that he remembered the experience. Rather, his knowledge of the experience came from his 'earliest remarks' spoken to his French friend-- which by doc 2 he had forgotten. -- his first forgetting which continued in docs 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Now I think I have given the best and probably only feasible explanation of what Ayer experienced during his NDE, when he said that his thoughts became persons.

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Section: Anticipation and Transition to Chapter 3:

In this chapter, I have argued that DB* inhabits the Dream World which is different from this material world. I, DB, know DB* as I remember my dreams in which DB* does various things.

Supposing that DB* survives my death, he is cut off from me and my body and brain. Hence he is a non-bodily being. Here we can bring in the middle world of Plato's myth of Er, which

the souls of the dead go into to be judged for rewards or punishments, then choose the pattern of their next life. But for me it is the dream selves that go into this middle world. Then DB*, and that which underlies both DB and DB*, i.e. their UC, goes into a infant body on Earth. Here I am being guided by Plato's myth of Er. But it could be that when I die and DB* survives, that straightaway the UC goes into an infant body. This is a more economical account, which is put forward by McTaggart. And his justification for holding that this is the case, as we will see in the next chapter is what I call the core argument, whose main element is love at first sight.

Notes:

1 That the recent dead do not know they are dead also emerges in the writings of Swedenborg. Thus Swedenborg recorded in a note in Autumn 1751: 'Polhem died on a Monday and spoke with me on the following Thursday. As I was invited to his funeral, he saw his coffin and everyone present and the whole funeral procession and also how he was laid in his grave. While this was going on, he asked me why he was being buried when he was alive.' Quoted in Ernst Benz, Emmanuel Swedenborg, p. 395. For a key work on psychic research, see C. D. Broad's Cambridge Lectures on Psychical Research, 1962.

2 Hobbes was also aware of the disparity, for in Leviathan, Chapter 2, he says that when awake he often observes the absurdity of his dreams, but he never dreams of the absurdities of his waking thoughts, thus implying that when he, i.e. his dream self, is in a dream he does not think that what is going on is absurd. So like Price, Hobbes sees the disparity between his waking and dreaming condition, but he, too, does not try to explain it.

Chapter Three: REINCARNATION:

1 ABC: On McT's attitude to phil and to HIP. Shown in Memoir.

2 XYZ: Core argument

2a Broadening

3 Stevenson and Dementia

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1: McTaggart's attitude to Philosophy:

In chapter two I argued that dream selves survive with the death of living bodies. I also suggested that they survive in the middle world as understood by Plato in the myth of Er, where they are first rewarded or punished for their lives in the material world. After that, according to Plato, they choose the kind, or pattern, of the life they will next have in the material world. Plato says that after choosing the patterns for their next lives on earth, the souls, i.e. dream selves, are marched through dry country, reaching the river of forgetting, whose water they are compelled to drink a certain amount, which makes them forget all that has happened to them in their material lives and also their life in the middle world. It is in this way that the dream self dies. Yet, something survives, according to the Plato, who says that after the souls have drunk from the river of forgetting, they fall asleep and are awoken by a clap of thunder and shot into their new infant bodies. So it seems that underlying both the material and dream selves is something else, which Plato thinks is what we really are. And this, as I shall show below, is also the view of the Cambridge philosopher John McTaggart's view, who argues for it, however, rather than putting it forward as myth, as Plato does. And here I might mention that as Price was the initial and great influence of my view of dreams, so was McTaggart the initial and great influence of my views on Rc.

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One of the curious features of the history of reincarnation is that few philosophers in the West have had anything significant to say about it. In fact, I think that the only two are Plato and John McTaggart. Plato is, of course, well known, but not for his discussion of

reincarnation. Indeed, nowadays, it seems to be a source of embarrassment to those who take him seriously in other matters. By comparison, McT is little known, and even less his work on reincarnation is hardly known at all, although he is known to many philosophers for his views on time. Yet he published a work on Rc, much of which is on Rc, This is his Human Immortality and Pre-Existence, 1915, or HIP. In my view, the HIP is his most important philosophical work; which view I try to justify here. It contains the best case for reincarnation, that Rc is fact; which I set out below and call the core argument.

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I think that McT's account and defense of Rc has not been appreciated because he did not present it as clearly as he might have. And I think he did not present it clearly because of a number of factors. Perhaps the most important was that he thought that the right way of doing philosophy was shown by Spinoza in his Ethics, i.e. axioms then deduction. This method was the one McT pursued in his Nature of Existence, where his aim was to prove the truth of Rc, among other things, in a rigorous metaphysical way, but which he never completed, publishing only one volume (19.). The remaining volume was left to be 'completed' by his friend C D Broad, who edited the ms McTaggart left, doing the best he could to realize McTaggart's intentions. This posthumous volume was published. Yet surprisingly, as I believe can be shown, I think McTaggart himself believed he knew and was certain that Rc was true. This comes out in the 1931 Memoir of him; but probably most clearly in the Postscript to HIP 1915.

McTaggart himself does not mention these experiences in any of his publications because he believed they were not relevant or appropriate to be mentioned in a philosophical work. But while McTaggart does not mention them explicitly, they come out to a great extent in his HIP, and can be made clearer; which I try to do here. Put in another way, he thought that what he says in HIP was appropriate for an intelligent reader, but not for a rigorous philosopher, but was appropriate for an intelligent reader. I do not agree this condescending attitude, shown again and again in IIIP, where he disparages what he is doing, saying that it needs to be proved by metaphysical demonstration, which he thinks can be done and which he is working on. Here he is clearly alluding to his Nature of Existence.

Now I think McTaggart was wrong. For I think he is at his best in the more popular HIP, which he did not think highly of.

I think there is considerable evidence that McTaggart had the experience of personal true love at first sight and its explanation, which made him so confident of the truth of pre-existence and Rc.

But as a matter of fact, he does not bring in his experiences in any of his philosophical writings. Why? Because he did not think it was appropriate to bring in his own private experience in a work of philosophy. He thought philosophy should be done in a conceptual systematic way, as found in Spinoza's Ethics, or in Hegel's works, which is how McT himself proceeds in his last work, *The Nature of Existence*, one volume which he published in 1921, leaving the remaining volume uncompleted, which was edited by Broad and published posthumously in 1927.

So while he was unable to demonstrate the truth of Rc, this did not stop him from believing it was true.. And this comes out not only in what we find in the Memoir, but, as mentioned above most clearly in McT's Postscript to HIP, where he says:

'I have become more firmly convinced that the nature of reality can be shown to be such as to justify a belief both in immortality and pre-existence.' For note that he says 'shown', which I think implies that he knew it already, i.e. intuitively knew and was certain of its truth.'

And here I think it is appropriate to say a word about what McT himself thought of the HIP. Perhaps surprisingly, he had a low opinion of it as philosophy. He thought it was very far from containing an understanding of Rc or a proof for it, which he thought was most important in philosophy. This is something that he says again and again in the HIP, no less than times. He regarded the HIP as a popular work, appropriate for intelligent readers but not good enough for serious philosophers who have devoted their lives to philosophy. But here I believe he was wrong. For I think the more relaxed way of the HIP was superior to the method of the *Nature of Existence*, able to get his readers closer to the truth than the elaborate conceptual demonstrations of the later *Nature of Existence*, which he favoured, which I think he saw as best represented by Spinoza's Ethics.

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The Memoir:

That McTaggart thought it was not appropriate for a philosopher to bring in his private experiences and intuitions in his writings comes out in the 1931 Memoir of him by his friend Lowes Dickinson, who writes: 'From the time of his marriage onward McTaggart's main object was to accomplish the task he had set himself of demonstrating by reason the truth which he already had believed.' (p. 47). Also, see the Memoir, pp. 95-6, where Lowes Dickinson tells us that McTaggart said to a friend: 'Love--just the love of one person for another-- is the highest [experience] of all.' And 'It is clear, from this statement' [writes Lowes Dickinson]...that it involved a direct perception that Love is the essence of Reality.'

...

Chapter IV of the Memoir, written by Basil Williams, is also important here, especially pp. 77-8, for its description of the deep nature of McTaggart's love for 'several' people. For it is evidence that his experience was close to Montaigne's description of his love for Etienne La Boetie at first sight, which I present above

Now in fact we learn very little about Williams from the Memoir. We are only told by Lowes Dickinson in the Preface of the Memoir that he was from Edinburgh, and that he had a 'very complete collection' of McTaggart's letters. But whether these were letters to him, Lowes Dickinson does not say. In fact they were, which we know because Williams donated them to the Cambridge Library in 1938. We also know he was a historian, and one of McTaggart's true friends; for McTaggart's letters to him were sent fortnightly, and we know that it was McTaggart's custom was to send letters to his true friends, either once a week or once every two weeks. Curiously, Williams says nothing in chapter iv about his own relations with McTaggart; but he says important things about the nature of McTaggart's friendships. And I take it that these must be largely based on his own friendship with McTaggart. Thus Williams writes:

'To a few fortunate men and women, scattered about in the world, he was chiefly known as the most loving, the most faithful and the most tolerant of friends....For not the least part of his creed was his belief in a possible communion between individuals, each from an understanding of the other's essential nature, a communion that could transcend individual actions and fix itself only on the personality [Character?], of which actions are often merely dim and delusive representations. His idea of heaven, or rather of the ultimate destiny of mankind, was a state in which such understanding would have developed into a complete comprehension of others, so that there would be no ignorance, no misunderstandings, but a knowledge so great as to merge into all all-embracing charity. [I am not sure that McTaggart

accepted this universalizing; nor does it seem to fit with what Williams says below of McTaggart's idea of true love being with 'several' people.] It was part of his belief that even in our present stage of glimmerings of such complete comprehension are possible in certain cases, as he explained in his early pamphlet *The Further Determination of the Absolute*, and more amply in the second (posthumous) volume of *The Nature of Existence*.

He had several friends whom he felt he knew in this almost transcendental way, a knowledge which, in his belief, came from a complete and loving understanding of their natures. Most of these friendships dated from early years and once made were permanent, being subject to no chances or changes of circumstances.' (pp. 77-78)

.....

Sect: The Core Argument:

According to McTaggart' when someone dies, he will not die fully. For something of him will continue after the death of his body. In this McTaggart agrees with Plato. But he does not agree with Plato that the self which survives goes into a middle world. Nor does either philosopher hold that the self that survives the death of its body is the dream self. That is my theory. Hence I need to state straight-away that that the theory of life after death I am defending here is a synthesis of the views of Plato's, McTaggart's and my own. But much of my contribution is eliminating conflicts between Plato and McTaggart. Although on the whole there is much agreement between Plato and McTaggart. Thus they agree when what Plato calls the soul and McTaggart the underlying character or UC is reincarnated in an infant body and grows up, it does not remember that it had a previous body and personality. They also agree that what is reincarnated is deeper than a person. Hence their common theory can be described as impersonal reincarnation, which differs from reincarnation of personality, which is how most people understand reincarnation.

But what is the justification for believing that this account of reincarnation is true? For this we must turn to McTaggart, whose answer is based on the phenomenon called true love at first sight. McT first notes that true love is normally reached between two people over a long period of time, through various kinds of advances in affection, etc. But there are some rare cases where it manifests itself straightaway, at first sight, and as truly as in the normal, slow way. The question is: What is the explanation for this. McTaggart believes that the answer is reincarnation. In short, that the two persons had fallen in love in the slow way in their previous lives and that this is activated in their present incarnation straightaway, i.e. at first sight. McTaggart also believes that this is only feasible explanation for true love at first

sight, which has been known since ancient times, but never, before McTaggart, used in philosophy. And I think this is his great contribution --which I think he came to because there is evidence that he experienced it himself and 'several' times, as I described above.

According to McT the attainment of true love at first sight is the thing of the greatest value. As he writes:

The most important of these features is to be found in personal relations. Two people who have seen but little of each other are often drawn together by a force equal to that which is generated in other cases by years of mutual trust and mutual assistance.

The significance of this fact has been, I think, very much underrated. It is generally explained, when any attempt at explanation is made, by the capriciousness of sexual desire. This explanation is inadequate, because the fact to be explained is found with as great proportional frequency in friendships which have no connexion with sexual desire.

On the theory of pre-existence such relations would naturally be explained by the friendships of past lives. The love which comes at first sight, and the love which grows up through many years in this life, would be referred to similar causes, whose similarity would account for the similarity of the effects. Each would have arisen through long intimacy, and the only difference between them would be that in one case the intimacy had been suspended by death and re-birth.

But there are also two other things of comparable value: the moral and intellectual, so doing what is right and knowing what exists. And McT also focusses on these in presenting his case for reincarnation. So just as true love can be attained either in the normal or slow way, or straightaway, so can the attainment of moral and intellectual values. See HIP pp 106—109.

...as a man grows up certain tendencies [and talents] and qualities make themselves manifest in him. They cannot be entirely due to his environment, for they are often very different in people whose environment has been very similar. We call these the man's natural character [NB], and assume that he came into life with it. Such tendencies and qualities, since they are not due to anything which happens after birth may be called innate, as far as the present life is concerned.

Now when we look at the natural characters of men, we find that in many cases they possess qualities strongly resembling those which, as we learn by direct experience, can be produced in the course of a single life. One man seems to start with an impotence to resist some particular temptation which exactly resembles the impotence which has been produced in another man by continual yielding to the same temptation. [So a bad character trait.] One man, again, has through life a calm and serene virtue which another gains only by years of strenuous effort. Others again have innate powers

of judging character, or of acting with decision in emergencies, which give them, while yet inexperienced, advantages to which less fortunate men attain, if they attain to them at all, only by the experience of years. Here then we have characteristics which are born with us, and which closely resemble characteristics which, in other cases, we know to be due to the condensed results of experience [the culminating state of the slow way]. If we hold the doctrine of pre-existence, we shall naturally explain these also as being the condensed results of experience in this case, of experience in an earlier life.

But, it may be said, can we not explain these features of our life quite as well by means of the theory of heredity, without accepting pre-existence?

In the case of personal relations [especially that of love for another person], I do not see that heredity would help us at all. I have admitted that it is not impossible to explain the facts otherwise than by pre-existence. The attraction may be simply due to something in the character of each of the two persons, though in many cases we cannot see what that something could be. And then it is possible that the element in question has been produced by heredity. But there is nothing in heredity which should make it likely that it should produce this result rather than another, and so the abstract possibility that the attraction is due to some undetected element in the two characters is not increased by the suggestion that the characters were produced by heredity [so it is pure chance]. On the theory of pre-existence, however, we can regard the

effects as produced by a course which would be likely to produce this result rather than another that is, by relations formed in an earlier life.

Heredity, however, can produce a more satisfactory explanation of innate aptitudes. My ancestors can not if pre-existence is false have loved my friend, and therefore there is nothing in the fact that I inherit from them that explains my loving him at first sight. But my ancestors may have yielded to certain sins, or resisted them, or practiced certain activities, and then, supposing that I can inherit the results which they have acquired, there would be a reason why I should have an innate strength or weakness in certain directions, which closely resembled similar characteristics which other men have acquired by their own action in the course of their present lives.

But there is, according to McTaggart, a crucial difference between the case of the moral and intellectual values. For the explanation for true love at first sight cannot lie heredity. For, as McT acutely observes: 'My ancestors cannot... have loved my friend, and therefore there is nothing in the fact that I inherit from them that explains my loving him at first sight.' (HIP, p. 123). Thus reincarnation is the only feasible explanation for love at first sight. This then is the foundation of McT's case for reincarnation.

There are, however, two difficulties with it that need to be mentioned. The first is that McTaggart does not mention any actual case of true love at first sight. However, this difficulty can be overcome, and I do so below by bringing in Montaigne's famous case of himself and Etienne. The second problem is that McTaggart's argument, while it proves that reincarnation is a fact, and that those who have had true love at first sight have had a previous life, I am not sure it proves that everyone else, so all human beings, have had a previous life. However, I think there is a way of dealing with this difficulty, which I present in the section below called 'Broadening'.

.....

Here then is what Montaigne says in his famous essay on Friendship of his meeting with Etienne::

...at our first meeting, which happened by chance at a great feast and gathering in the city, we found ourselves so captivated, so familiar, so bound to one another, that from that time nothing was closer to either than the other....Such a friendship has no model but itself, and can only be compared with itself...

Again:

No action of his could be put before me in any aspect that I should not immediately discern its motive. Our souls travelled so unitedly together...[and] saw into the very depths of each other's heart, that not only did I know his as well as my own, but I should certainly have trusted myself more freely to him than to myself.

Montaigne was clear that this relationship required unusual qualities; for as he says, '...where a man commits himself from the depths of his heart, keeping nothing back, it is essential that all the springs of action be perfectly clean and reliable.'

Here then we have a case of two minds in extraordinary rapport straightaway and prodigiously, which I think can only be accounted for by supposing that it was the activation of a relationship that had developed into love in a previous life or lives. Montaigne himself does not consider this possibility of explaining his extraordinary friendship. Rather he more or less concedes that he has no explanation, for he speaks of it as 'some mysterious quintessence'. But I think we have, with McTaggart's help, the explanation. And importantly, our account comes from a man who was famous as a sceptic; and whose account would be accepted.

Putting McTaggart's case somewhat differently: suppose you were in love with X, and then suffered from an amnesia in which you forgot everything of your relationship with her, but you nonetheless continued to feel in love with her. The loss of memory is regrettable. But if your present love is genuine and will continue-- as it did between Montaigne and Etienne, until the latter's death, then doesn't it remain valuable despite your loss of memory? And isn't this just the other side, or vice versa, of love at first sight?

So I think we have with the case of Montaigne and Etienne La Boate, undeniable proof of pre-e and reincarnation, that it is a fact, real and actual. And I think this should be accepted by those open to reason and evidence. But the problem, as mentioned above, is that it seems to have limited practical importance, because the great majority of people have never had such an experience. Hence it is not clear that they too have a previous life or lives,

However, as mentioned, I think this problem can be overcome, at least to some extent, by what I call Broadening.

.....

In broadening we do not have the certainty about pre-existence and reincarnation, which we have with core argument, exemplified in the case of Montaigne and Etienne. But what we have gets close to it, more or less, and shows that it is highly probable that all human beings have had a previous life or lives. So broadening is able to make reincarnation more understandable and relevant to all human beings. And in showing this I think I make my own most important contribution.

More specifically, the broadening includes not just love of another person at first sight but love of and/or capacity for of an activity at first sight, or more or less at first sight.

.....

What then is reincarnated and goes into a new infant body and develops a new personality. It is what McT calls the Character or the 'self'. But what, then, does McTaggart understand by the self? It is deeper than personality. In sect 100, he defines the self as a substance with attributes [that] has no nature in itself except to express its attributes'.* But what are its attributes? I think traits and tendencies. Among the most important of these are its being a dualist or monist. But McTaggart does not mention this, but I do because it is my main idea, the Dualist Monist Typology, which I discuss in my three recent books, published in the last four years. What McT talks about are the intellectual and moral character traits or tendencies, which have been developed in the slow way in the previous life or lives, but which could appear straightaway.

.....

Now when the self goes into a new infant body and develops a new personality, it will encounter things and people, some of which might activate recollection of loves in a previous life, which expresses itself as love at first sight or an ability to do things

straightaway (to the extent that these have been attained either in its previous life in the normal, slow ways. But the present personality will also be experiencing and doing things in the normal slow ways itself. And it seems very unlikely is that he or she will experience love at first sight of another person as did Montaigne. But as I describe above they will experience broadening of it.

But there is a problem here. For what does the person remember? Not the face or speech of his previous lover, since his previous lover has a new body. [I think I try to deal with this in a long note on the Activation problem.]

.....

Section: Broadening:

My contribution is to build on the foundation laid by McTaggart's core argument, which needs to be combined with Montaigne account of his experience of love at first and his own, which we combine with McTaggart's own experience of true love or friendship, as described above.

This section is concerned with the various kinds of broadening, which is crucial because without it the crucial argument of sect 94 would only prove that Montaigne and those who have had the experience of true personal love at first sight have a previous life, not that all human beings have one. So here I am going further than McTaggart.

I begin with my own experience, for I believe that I had a love at first sight experience, in the broader sense, when I took my first course in philosophy at the University of Bridgeport in 1962. Following this is an example of broadening from my friend, Timo Airoksinen, Emeritus Professor of Practical Philosophy at the University of Helsinki, who, when he first found out about being an academic, he straightaway desired to become one, which he did. My conclusion is that both cases can be best explained by supposing that Timo and I had gone a long way, in realizing how valuable being a philosopher, in my case, and an academic, in his case, in a previous, and in the slow way, which activated our desires straightaway in our present lives.

I had been a history major at the University of Bridgeport, and was entering my second year. And while most of the courses I was taking were on history, I also had to take what was called an elective. And the one I decided to take was on Philosophy, about which I had only the haziest idea. But to my amazement, before I knew it, I fell passionately and truly in love with it. Of course, this didn't happen immediately when the lecturer, a Dutchman called Vanderkroef, first started to lecture, or even after the first lecture. It took a few lectures. But I think that qualifies as love at first sight in the broader way. Moreover, I think what was important was that Vanderkroef presented philosophy in a clear way through its history, beginning with the Pre-Socratics.

So I think that the best explanation for this is that in a previous life I had worked slowly and hard in philosophy, and the condensed result of this work was activated when I encountered philosophy in clear, historical way Vanderkroef presented it. On this, compare what Plato says in Meno about how Socrates presented/asked the slave boy the right question about geometry.

.....

Timo's full account of his broadening is to be found in a book published in Finnish. But he has kindly summarized it for me in the following account in English:

My Slow Path to Philosophy:

As early as I can remember, I wanted to be a "researcher," or an academic person who deals with knowledge and produces more knowledge. It was my natural identity, and I knew it from the beginning. It was, of course very hazy idea because in my hometown of Vaasa we had no university, nor were any family members or relatives academic people. Nevertheless, I had a firm belief that I wanted to study and learn about things. What things? Originally I wanted to be a zoologist, and I read a bunch of relevant books with pictures. At school, I was not a very good student, but I had a keen interest in literature, the history of science, and zoology.

I did not fall in love with learning and research. It was in me from the beginning. I had a goal and purpose in life, and I went on to realize them. No one taught it to me, because my family environment was not academic at all.

I entered the University of Turku as a psychology student and specialized in the experimental psychology of perception. However, I noticed I do not want to design experiments and write technical reports on them. I took philosophy classes and noticed this

was something I wanted to do. In my free time, I read through most of the main classics and realized this is what I was supposed to do – and I did it. I noticed I need a life with books.

I had always been interested in philosophy books, but I realized I could not understand much of them in Vaasa, except for some rather elementary history of philosophy volumes that I read. But they gave me an idea of what I could and should learn. I did not want to start my studies directly in philosophy because I could not be sure I would be successful and wanted to secure a job in some academic field. However, once I realized I could be successful, I turned to philosophy where I found my academic home. It was not love at first sight. I was always convinced of my identity as an academic researcher. Next, I flirted with philosophy early on, and I tried some other fields. After I started understanding it, found philosophy to be like a home to me, and I moved in. I have found philosophy to be very identity-forming, which makes it, for me, impossible to do anything else, even after my retirement.

.....

Another and different kind of broadening is to be found, I believe, in Edgar Rice Burroughs, who had a prodigious ability straightaway for writing great novels. This comes out in an autobiographical piece Burroughs wrote, entitled 'How I became an author'. It was published in the Chicago Examiner, 4 April 1918, and, with some minor fchanges, in the Washington Post, 27 Oct 1929, with the title 'How I wrote the Tarzan Stories'. Here Burroughs describes how up until 1912, he had tried to make a living in a variety of jobs, mostly in business, but had been unsuccessful. Then, quite desperate, he decided to try writing, having never before written a story. I quote Burroughs 1929 article:

When I started [writing] I was 35 and had failed in every enterprize I ever attempted... At last I got placed as an agent for a lead pencil sharpener. I borrowed office space, and while sub agents were out, trying unsuccessfully to sell the sharpeners, I started to write my first story.

I had good reason for thinking I could sell what I wrote. I had gone thoroughly through some of the All-Fiction magazines and made up my mind that if if people were paid for writing such rot as I read I could write stories just as rotten. Although I had never written a story, I knew absolutely that I could write stories just as entertaining and probably a lot more so than any I chanced to read in those magazines. I knew nothing about the technique of story writing, and now, after eighteen years of writing, I still know nothing about the

technique, although with the publication of my new 'Tarzan and the lost empire', there are 31 books on my list.

...I was not writing [my first stories] because of any urge to write. I was writing because I had a wife and two babies, a combination which does not work well without money.

So when Burroughs was 35, in 1912, having never written a story, wrote two novels that straightaway became best sellers and are now classics, his Princess of Mars, the first of his Barsoom books, and Tarzan of the Apes. These two books have sold millions of copies.

But Burroughs was a most unliterary writer. As he says, his interest in his books was to make money. Yet they have had huge literary impact.

In fact, I think his books have more literary value than he gives them credit for. They are not 'rot'. But my main point is that Burroughs fits with McTaggart's general idea of love at first sight as being strong evidence of reincarnation. In Burrough's case, it is his great talent which manifests itself prodigiously and magnificently- at first try. So I believe it wasn't his first try in writing fiction. Rather, he had developed that talent for imaginative writing in previous incarnations, and through hard, slow work, persistence and effort. That, I think, is the best explanation for its appearance in 1912. And this fits with his being absolutely sure that he could write successful stories. Why? Not because he remembered having done so in a previous life or lives, but because he had a sense or intuition (cp Spinoza in Appendix) of doing so, or what Plato calls a recollection, which is different from a memory, and concerns Character not personality.

Here I might mention another writer who fits with Burroughs, although not quite in the same way. This is G.B. Shaw. Talking on the BBC on 24 July 1946, Shaw said that

the one thing I never wanted was to be a writer. And the reason was that I was a born writer. The thing was as natural to me as the taste of water in my mouth. It has no taste because it is always there. At least it is always there in my mouth.

Shaw does not say, as Burroughs does, that he was uninterested in writing, or had no desire for it. But his description of himself as 'a born writer' fits with Burroughs.

All of these cases go some way to justify my thesis that they, and all humans have had a former life and will continue to be reincarnated.

But it must be conceded that these experiences do not justify the belief in the core argument in HIP sects 94--96. For one thing in these broadening cases- there is another feasible explanation, i.e. heredity rather than reincarnation, which McTaggart discusses in section

So here there is no rigorous proof of reincarnation, as I the core argument but something weaker.

.....

The core argument plus Montaigne; then Broadening constitutes my positive case for Rc.

.....

Sect: Memory: McTaggart's HIP is important for dealing with what is seen as a major problem for Rc, namely the problem of memory.

He says in HIP that memory has always been recognized as the main problem in accepting reincarnation. This is so because McTaggart confirms- what is evident to virtually everyone- that no one remembers having had a previous life. But if so, then why believe that one has had a previous life?

The answer is that while nothing of an individual's previous personality survives. But this is not to say that nothing survives. What does survive and goes into the next life, as mentioned is the self as in its attributes, which slowly evolves as it moves from life to life.

[Plato would say 'Soul', or Souche, but I think McTaggart rightly says in the chap on immortality that the term 'Soul' is not longer suitable. It has acquired too much baggage, especially from Christian philosophers.

So the question is: Can McTaggart justify this claim that what is reincarnated is deeper and more important than personality and that it should be of interest to a rational person?

McT shows that the memory problem takes a number of specific forms, and he responds carefully to each of them in turn. However it is at the end of sect 103 and in the following sections, that he presents what I think is his most original and forceful response to the memory problem, and it is this that I now quote in his own words.

I think I shall be in agreement with most people [writes McTaggart] when I say that memory is chiefly of value in our lives

in three ways. In the first place, it may make us wiser. The events which we have seen, and the

conclusions at which we have arrived, may be preserved in memory, and so add to our present knowledge.

In the second place, it may make us more virtuous. The memory of a temptation, whether it has been resisted or successful, may under various circumstances help us in resisting present temptation.

In the third place, it may tell us that people with whom we are now related are the people whom we have loved in the past, and this may enter as an element into our present love of them.

The value of memory, then, is that by its means the past may serve the wisdom, the virtue, and the love of the present. [But] If the past could help the present in a like manner without the aid of memory, the absence of memory need not destroy the chance of an improvement spreading over many lives.

And it is this which McTaggart then goes on to argue is the case, namely that ‘the absence of memory need not destroy the chance of an improvement’.

104 Let us consider wisdom first. Can we be wiser by reason of something which we have forgotten? Unquestionably we can. Wisdom is not merely, or chiefly, amassed facts, or even recorded judgments. It depends primarily on a mind qualified to deal with facts, and to form judgments. Now the acquisition of knowledge and experience, if wisely conducted, may strengthen the mind. Of that we have sufficient evidence in this life. And so a man who dies after acquiring knowledge --and all men acquire some-- might enter his new life, deprived indeed of his knowledge, but not deprived of the increased strength and delicacy of mind which he had gained in acquiring the knowledge [and so the capacities that constitute

Character]. And, if so, he will be wiser in the second life because of what has happened in the first.

McTaggart then continues, conceding that

Of course he loses something in losing the actual

knowledge. But it is sufficient if he does not lose all.

Most progress is like the advance of a tide, whose

waves advance and retreat, but do not retreat as far as

they advanced. And is not even this loss [of factual knowledge] really a gain?

For the mere accumulation of knowledge, if memory

never ceased, would soon become overwhelming, and

worse than useless. What better fate could we wish for than to leave such accumulations behind us, preserving their greatest value in the mental faculties which have been strengthened

by their acquisition.

I think McTaggart's point is psychologically acute: that ultimately the forgetting that occurs in reincarnation is probably an advantage, for too much specific knowledge would not leave room for the development of intellectual Character.

So loss of memory per se does not rule out the inheritance or continuation of wisdom or wise character. However, I think that a critic could say that this only shows it is possible. What evidence, he could ask, is there that such wisdom, which one does not remember acquiring, is actually carried over into a next life?

And here I think McTaggart could answer by bringing in cases of precocious and prodigious wise individuals, and probably the best example is J.S. Mill, who was certainly a philosophical prodigy, yet he might have inherited this from his father, James Mill, who was also a notable philosopher. So a gene for philosophical ability does not seem implausible.

However, here we can go to the most crucial, central thing personal love at first sight, where a gene does not seem plausible. Here I now quote what McTaggart says about how someone

might forget why he loves X, yet nonetheless feels love for X, and feel that his love was valuable.

Now we know that present love can be stronger and deeper because of past love which we have forgotten. Much has been

forgotten in any friendship which has lasted for several years within the limits of a single life-- many confidences, many services, many hours of happiness and sorrow. But they have not passed away without leaving their mark on the present. They contribute, though they are forgotten, to the present love which is not forgotten. In the same way, if the whole memory of the love of a life is swept away at death, its value is not lost if the same love is stronger in a new life because of what passed before.

Thus what is won in one life may *[my italics]* be preserved in another, if the people who love in the first life love the same people in the second, and if their love is greater in the second because it was there in the first.

.....

And that this not only MAY be so, but was actually so, we have shown above, I think, in the case of Montaigne.

.....

I conclude by mentioning that one important contribution of the Plato-McT theory of reincarnation is that it offers an ultimate purpose of human beings: this is to become, as Plato holds, demigods, as wise and good as possible--to which McT in true love with a number of individuals.

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Section: Stevenson and Dementia:

I think McTaggart's core argument plus broadening is the best defence of Rc. But there are 2 other important defences which need to be examined: that of Ian Stevenson's study of young children who believe they have had previous lives and what I call the dementia defence.

Between 1966 and his death in 2007 Ian Stevenson published more than ten books and two hundred articles on reincarnation. Unlike McTaggart, Stevenson was a psychiatrist, not a philosopher, and his work on reincarnation has a very narrow focus. For nearly all of it aims to show that the spontaneous, involuntary memories of some very young children provides solid scientific evidence for reincarnation. Stevenson's account is important because it shows that Rc is feasible, although his idea of Rc is personal Rc, so the breakdown of genuine Rc.

The other defence is based on my understanding of dementia. In short, I think that the condition of a dementia patient [= dp]. Thus dementia usually occurs very late in life, when the personality is being eroded, but where there is still enough of it so that the dp, like Stevenson's young children, can talk, and let others understand their troubled condition. So the young children and dp [=dementia patient] are at opposite ends of human life, one just getting into it, the other going out of it. More specifically, both are suffering from a personality disorder where there are two selves, vying with each other: one normal, the other not so. Thus in the case of young children, the non-normal one is their previous personality, supposing Stevenson's evidence is credible. In the case of the dp, it is the infant personality he is prematurely going into. But my overall thesis is that, taken together, S's young children and dp are both best understood according to the circular idea of human life, where birth and dying are closer to each other than to the intermediate stages of life, such as middle age.

This circularity is what we see each day in the way that morning is followed by afternoon, then evening, then night, then morning again. It is also seen in the circularity of seasons, also in the life of some plants- where, I think, we can, in some instances, also observe premature but usually stunted growth. Here I need to note that I am not saying that all activity is circular; thus I believe that some activity is linear. But I think there is strong evidence that human life is circular.

Here I could quote, as evidence, Stevenson, 2001, p. 94, also possibly pp. 196 and 210, also see pp. 57, 60, 107, 110. That his children have not shed their previous life and continue to remember being the person they were. And yet at the same time as they are developing as a new young person. And this seems to be so because their previous life has not been

satisfactorily terminated, or that there is unfinished business that it needed to attend to. Similarly, the dp is trying to move on to a new birth and infancy, but cannot because he, the dp, is being kept alive, probably by medical interventions.

So, in short, it is in these two pathological conditions where, according to a linear model of human life, they would be most distant from each other, whereas in our understanding of them, they are most close, in accordance with the circular model of human life. And this comes out in respect to language. Most of the young children being very young, and had just sufficient language to give their evidence (2001, see 109-10), and the dp are moving close to losing all language (Alzheimer's disease).

What both S's children and dp also show, I believe, is that what underlies both conditions is Underlying Character, or UC, which is what is reincarnated in reincarnation, according to Plato and McTaggart. And in fact a good deal of what S describes as behavioral memories comes close to, or points to the traits or dispositions of UC. See pp. 26, 116, 123, 186-7.

Now I want to refer to some of the more striking evidence from S's 2001 work, which supports my main thesis that his young children are suffering from the breakdown or aberration of genuine Rc. For

(1) those who remember their previous lives are discontent, often miserable. And this is so because

(2) they are in a state of confusion, not knowing who they are, hence in an untenable psychological condition, in being cs of being two persons, which would become increasingly untenable if it went on- but fortunately it does not, because

(3) usually before they are eight they lose their memory of their past life and become normal.

Here are the specific references in S 2001 for 1, 2 and 3 above:

1: 217 and 92 should be quoted, also see 60-63, 281, note 15.

2: 9, 70, 108 could be quoted; also see 11-13, 63, 68, 92, 108, 194-5.

3: 58, 60, 64, 68, 88, 124, 196.

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SECTION: THE DEMENTIA ARGUMENT:

I hold that those suffering from dementia, the dp, have lived too long and are moving prematurely, in accordance with the circularity of human life, into their next phase, which is being newborn infants. So they are partly an old person, close to death and an infant.

So both dementia and Stevenson's children shows that human life is circular, not linear. This account of human life as circular also explains, or at least fits with, why reincarnation has been accepted more widely in the East than in the West. This is because the Eastern mind typically thinks of time and life as circular (see Northrop, *Meeting of East and West*); whereas the Western mind thinks in a more linear way. It looks for beginnings and ends. So it sees the birth of an infant as a beginning; then youth, then middle age, then old age, then, finally, death, which is an end.

Again I am not saying that the circular understanding is true of all things, for some things develop in a linear way. But I think human life should be understood in a circular way.

Thus the normal infant has virtually no memory, and the extreme dp has lost his memory. This is crucial in the diagnosis of dementia, according to the main reference work in psychiatry, the DSM 4, which regards failure of memory as the one necessary condition for a diagnosis of dementia. And no one would doubt that the normal infant has no memory.

In the case of the dp, there is an old body, with deterioration of the brain and mind, so that the dp has lost much of his memory and much of his personal self. So he has become- as is often said- like a young child, but in an old body. Because natural death has not occurred, his life has been unnaturally prolonged, probably by medical interventions, with the loss of memory and personality being filled- nature abhorring a vacuum- by the premature emergence of what could or would have been his next natural development had he died naturally, namely his birth as an infant.

In my account above, I have been drawing heavily on the DSM 4, for it provides a clear, precise and generally accepted statement of the essential criteria for diagnosing dementia. This is that it must involve the loss of memory, but then at least one of the following three other elements, namely (1) loss of executive or central function, (2) apraxia and (3) aphasia. And here the crucial thing to observe is that they are all the normal characteristics of infancy and early childhood. So just as the DSM 4 states the criteria for identifying dementia, they also state (of course without intending it) the criteria for identifying normal infancy.

Why hasn't this been seen? One reason is because our normal understanding of infancy, at least in the West, is that it is the furthest away from old age. But this, as mentioned above, is because in the West our idea of human life is linear and not circular. More specifically the dp looks so different from a baby, his body especially looks so different. Also, he still has some functions of normal old age, which is another reason why the similarity with infancy has not been noticed. Yet both the infant and extreme dp are entirely or very dependent for their well-being on adult helpers.

And in the more extreme dementia, the dp becomes even more like an infant than a child in being totally helpless; so at some point losing even language (aphasia).

Here I might note that my account of dementia fits with the key point that Giordano Bruno made long ago in his *Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, 1584- trans by A. Imerti, 1992- that memory SHOULD be lost so that the reincarnated person is not caught between two existences. So an individual should shed his memory and personality before reincarnation. For it wouldn't do to have two bodies or bits of two bodies, the deceased and new one; so it doesn't do for someone to be between one's present life and his past. This is also McT's view, as noted above, see

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Practical CONCLUSION:

§§ Dementia can be considered in a descriptive or normative way. I have dealt with the descriptive above. Now I want to focus on the normative or practical implications alone, esp on our present-day attitude to medical science, euthanasia and suicide. We are still generally positive about medical science in the way that we used to be about industrial technology, before climate change. We like the way that it can keep us physically alive and healthy for longer than ever before.

But if Rc is true, and the final condition of the individual in this life is going to be reincarnated, then when that is in a flawed state, as with the dp, his next incarnation is very likely to begin flawed. That at least would be the case if Rc is combined with theory that there is an intermediary world which people go to after bodily death, where they retain their memories, and so their personalities, as well as character. This combined theory is developed by Plato at the end of his *Republic* in the myth of Er, where souls choose the pattern their next lives, prior to being reincarnated. But if the person is a dp, then it would

seem to follow that he is choosing his next life in a deteriorated state. Then the reincarnated person would not only have suffered that awful condition at the end of his previous life, but would also be inheriting and starting his life in a flawed condition. So the dp would be doubly unfortunate, unfortunate in this life and his next.

And dementia is likely to become more prevalent the longer we humans are kept alive by medical technology. This is making it likely that many people are going to live to 100 and beyond in the not so distant future, at least in the richer parts of the world. Yet there is surely an age, whether it is 80 or 90 or even 100 when most people go into serious decline, either physically or mentally of both.

Now I think most thoughtful persons would agree that having a relatively healthy body but an impaired mind, either intellectually or morally or both, is horrible, and should be avoided if possible. For even if the human body can be kept relatively healthy by medical science, there is going to be a time, when the mind deteriorates.

In short, if the account of Rc I have given here is sound, then it seems to follow that the developments in medical science are pushing human beings downhill and upsetting a natural eugenic balance and rythem of nature. And while medical science would also wish to keep the personality and character healthy, its physical methods are less effective in doing so. That is bad but it is made worse, as I see it, by society, which, apart from a few exceptions- Switzerland being one- has a hostile to suicide and euthanasia. Whereas, I think it is too positive about long life or life per se being valuable, and too negative about death (esp if Rc is true.).

[Here I might just note a theme, derived from Hume, which I consider elsewhere, that the medical profession has replaced the theological profession as having found the fixed Archimedian point to move the world, which is now that this life at any cost is the highest good.]

Where dementia becomes not just a theoretical but an urgent practical matter is that it is a threat that we might all face. There seems to be no guarantee against it. I know that some present-day psychologists say that if the mind is kept active, that this provides considerable insurance against it. But consider two cases of very active philosophers, one from the recent, the other from the more distant past, namely Iris Murdoch and Kant- both of whom

suffered from dementia in their last years. And it was Schopenhauer's view about Kant, that his dementia resulted from TOO MUCH mental activity.

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The evidence of dementia is like S's evidence in that both conditions generally make for confusion and unhappiness. And just as S says that his evidence is strong evidence because it is involuntary, so I can say the same of the evidence of dementia, indeed if anything it is even moreso, since there is little reason for a dp to pretend to be in a demented condition. And as non-voluntary it can be trusted. There is no deception.

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Long Note: The doctrine I am examining here has a variety of names, among them 'reincarnation', transmigration, pre-existence, metempsychosis, re-birth (Buddhism), Samsara (Hinduism). A useful distinction is made between those terms which look to the past, as does pre-existence, and those that look to the future, so reincarnation. Transmigration is neutral between these. But since this essay is on McT's theory, and as the term he uses is 'pre-existence', or pre-e, for short, that is the term I mainly use in this essay.

Long Note:

Our account of reincarnation is that what is reincarnated is not the person but the Character, UC, which is deeper. Therefore what is reincarnated is impersonal. But according to many critics of life after death, such a theory is hardly worth criticising. Why? Because a rational person is not interested in such impersonal survival. His interest is the survival of the specific person he knows himself to be. Probably the most recent statement of this criticism is made by Keith Augustine, one of the two editors of *The Myth of the Afterlife: The Case against life after death*, 2015. In the book's Introduction, Keith Augustine writes:

Do individuals continue to have experiences at any time after their biological demise? And if so, do they survive largely intact, or are their minds so radically altered by death that whatever might survive hardly deserves to be considered the survival of the same individuals known during earthly life? (p. 1)

Hence, Augustine says, such 'Impersonal forms of 'survival' ...are not our concern here', since few if any persons take them seriously.

But McTaggart has an answer to this, namely that if we can attain without any memory of being the person X and doing what we, X, did, etc, then memory and hence continuing personality is irrelevant.

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LONG NOTE:

And here I think it might be useful if I mention that what we find implicit in Plato and explicit in McTaggart, on the memory question, and which is not present in other Western philosophers, is to be found in the Vedantist philosophers of the East, as shown in a work by the Vedantist philosopher, Pandit T on the understanding of why it is not important in getting to our deep, true nature. And as he presents his argument with admirable concision, I quote it here. It is at the end of sect vii, of his essay Pandit T writes:

.. if, in our present life, we have to lose and gain constantly in consequence of actions which we have utterly forgotten, but which have, nevertheless left lasting effects on our Character there can be no injustice in our enjoying or suffering the fruit of actions done in previous lives, and which, though forgotten now, have yet made us what we are.

So what we truly are for Pandit T, as for Plato and McTaggart, is deeper than the person we remember ourselves to be.

Long note: Activation problem: Here I might mention that there is a problem concerning how the exp of true love at first sight is activated. For with impersonal reincarnation, as accepted by Plato, McT and myself, the person does not remember his previous life and what or who he love. So what is it that activates his experience? Perhaps I can say that just as Levitan was sure in his meeting with X that X was essentially the same, had the same Soul, that lovers can also be aware of that, which activates their previous love.

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Long note on LEVITAN.

Another approach to understanding the UC. Here I draw on a recent article on amnesia by Levitan, a scientific journalist, in the Atlantic .

The article is entitled ‘Amnesia and the self that remains when memory is lost’. It tells the story of Tom, who had been a fellow psychology student with Tom, who lost all his memory

as a result of a tumor. One of their teachers was a psychiatrist, 'Professor Pribram [who, Levitan writes] felt that when we lose our memory, we lose our entire sense of self.' Levitan wanted to see how far this was confirmed by Tom, who by then had lost all his memories. So Levitan visited Tom, who had to remind Tom of everything they had in common, so Levitan could see how total was Tom's loss of memory, and yet Levitan concludes his article by stating his opinion that 'When I saw Tom, something fundamentally Tom was still there. Some of us call it personality, or essence. Some call it the soul. Whatever it is, the tumor that took Tom's memory had not touched it.'

But while Levitan's article is helpful, it is far from being rigorously scientific. It is only anecdotal, but it is the anecdote of a scientific journalist of apparently some standing.

The article also does not suggest that Tom's soul will continue with his bodily death, or that it existed before Tom's birth. So it does not get into full and genuine reincarnation. But it is a clear and simple way of getting to the UC.

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EPILOGUE: DEMIGODS: A PHILOSOPHICAL GAME:

In this Epilogue I set out a new game I devised, which illustrates my position on dreams in chapter 3, that dreams constitute another world, which, there is reason to believe, is the next world.

My new game is based on draughts, and its two most distinctive features are using the light coloured squares and introducing a new piece which moves on them, which I call demigods. So the light coloured squares are used in my game and represent the dream world as the other or next world, where, in ancient times, the gods and demigods were thought to reside and act on human beings in the mundane world, which is represented by the dark squares.

Now in present-day draughts. the light squares are not used. So, in effect, they do not exist, but they do-- in a sense-- in my game. That sounds paradoxical, but I think it is captured in Shakespeare's striking description of the next world as 'the undiscovered country'--- which was the title Ayer wanted to use for his 'Telegraph article.

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Now it is generally known that draughts goes back to Ancient Greece, where it was called Petteia (the Greek word for pebbles). However, what is not generally known, is that our best understanding of Petteia comes from Plato's Republic, 487, where Plato uses Petteia to describe Socrates's way of doing philosophy. Up to this section, Socrates had been summing up the main thesis of the Republic, according to which there will be no happiness in the state until either kings become philosophers or philosophers become kings. At this point Adeimantus enters the dialogue and says:

...to your statements, Socrates, no one can offer a reply; but when you talk in this way, a strange feeling passes over your hearers: They fancy that they are led astray a little at each step in the argument, owing to their want of skill in asking and answering questions; and these little steps accumulate, so at the end of the discussion they are found to have sustained a mighty overthrow; just as unskillful players of Petteia are at last defeated, because immobilized by their more skillful adversaries, having no move make...so are defeated in this new game of dialectics, where words are the pieces.

Now this is precisely the way our new game is won, i.e. by one player stalemating the other player; so that he is unable to move any of his pieces. However, our game begins just as draughts does; the crucial change occurring when one player gets a King and then manages to get that King back to his baseline-- the squares closest to him. For then he moves the King onto the nearest light square, gets a second crown and becomes a Demigod. And once on a light square remains on them, moving diagonally. However, it can also move vertically or horizontally, if there is an opponent's piece on a dark square contiguous with it. Then the Demigod can jump and take the piece, while landing on a light square. So while a Demigod cannot move and remain on a dark square, it can act on those pieces in that realm. And this is the way that Homer describes the gods as acting on humans in the mundane world in his Iliad and Odyssey. Similarly, while a Demigod can take an opponent's ordinary pieces, it cannot be taken by them. Only a Demigod can take another Demigod.

Having described the way the new game uses the light squares and also the way that these hitherto unused squares represent the other world, I now need to describe the ways of winning in our game.

As mentioned above, it is when one player stalemates his opponent, i.e. makes it impossible for the opposing player to move any of his pieces, which was, according to Plato, how Socrates defeated his opponents in argument. However, there is also a second way of winning, which is a variation of the first. The difference is that successful stalemating does not, as such, bring about victory, but is an element in it. For in this second way of winning, winning is a matter of the pieces still remaining on the board when stalemating occurs. Then there is a calculation of points, where stalemating counts for 5 points, and the pieces remaining on the board are assigned points as follows: 2 points for an ordinary piece, 3 points for a King and 4 for a Demigod. Then when the calculation is made, the player who has the most points is deemed to have won.

And there is also a third way of winning, similar to the second, but which goes one step further. Here it is the player who gets 100 points or more who wins. From this it follows that more than one game must be played, because no player can get 100 points in one game. Hence this third way of winning brings our game closer to the underlying Platonic philosophy. Why? Because it brings in reincarnation, which Plato sets out at the end of the Republic in the Myth of Er. In short, this third way of winning is becoming a fully eternal being and not just a Demigod, requiring further reincarnations. And as this is the highest condition that can be attained, so it is the most perfect way of winning our game.

However, there is another way of winning which is the opposite of the third way, because it is the easiest way to win our game. Here the game is won by the first player to get

a King to his baseline. Then he wins because he has attained his goal, which is getting into the Heavenly next world and enjoying endless bliss. This is the Christian-Islamic way, since according to Christianity and Islam, that is the highest good, and it can be achieved in one life on earth. For the Platonist, however- as well as for the Hindu and Buddhist- that is facile, since according to them the highest good is too high and good to be achieved in one life.*

However, the Christian-Islamic idea is useful, as showing the easiest way to play the game, which, I suggest, is the way those learning to play should begin. But whichever way the players decide to play, they need to agree on it before beginning a game.

One final historical observation. This is that our game can be seen as completing a trajectory which started with Petteia and evolved into the modern game of draughts through the mediation of chess in the Middle Ages. For it was then that chess's checkered board was added, as well as its division of pawns and noble pieces; although draughts simplified the division, using only that between pawns and the King. Moreover, it has been suggested by Yuri Averbakh, the great chess master and historian, that chess itself was profoundly influenced by Petteia. For it was only when, Averbakh suggests, Alexander the Great's soldiers brought Petteia to India, in their conquests, that chess ceased being a game of chance, played with dice, and became, like Petteia, a game of skill.

APPENDIX ONE TO CHAPTER ONE

GHOSTS, SOULS AND IMMORTALITY

Lecture delivered on Sunday, February 19, 1989 Printed in the Ethical Record, 1989 pp

DR JOHNSON ONCE SAID THAT THE QUESTION whether ghosts exist has never been settled, although it is "one of the most important (questions) that can come before the human understanding." I am inclined to agree with Johnson, at least about the potential importance of the topic. Why is it so important? Because we should then have a way of coping with the fear of death. In my view, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to be realistic or naturalistic about death. In this, death is like our self-images. Some days we believe we are heroes, other days we despise ourselves. A similar unrealism is evident with death. Thus the Stoics held that it was the most important topic for a philosopher, whereas SPINOZA said that a wise "man thinks of nothing less than of death ..." Some claim to despise death, others desire it as the door to eternal felicity; most others are terrified by it. Early man, we are told by anthropologists, did not believe in it—at least not consciously. Modern man (particularly in the past two or three hundred years) seems to be in a confused, transitional phase. The confusion is nicely exemplified in a story BERTRAND RUSSELL tells about a man who was asked at a "dinner [party] what he thought would happen to him when he died. The man tried to ignore the question, but, on being pressed, replied: "Oh well, I suppose I shall inherit eternal bliss, but I wish you wouldn't talk about such unpleasant subjects." We are still a long way off from facing death in a naturalistic way—without either fantasy, denial or terror. Until then death will continue to be a fertile source for the supernatural. Indeed, according 10 ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, it is not God but survival that is most important for the religious mind; "if we could guarantee the dogma of immortality to them in some other way, (writes Schopenhauer) the lively ardour for their gods would at once cool."

Certainly, fear of death makes many people wish for an otherworldly existence, and one form this might take is as ghosts, phantoms, shades, spirits, astral bodies. According to this view, when we die something of us continues to live, something which is less solid and gross than our present bodies, more shadowy, more aetherial, but nonetheless like them. Such ghostly beings may be visible at least some of the time to at least some people. They can also

occasionally produce bumps, bangs and rattling of chains. They can also speak to the living—as in the case of Hamlet's father's ghost. The more recent, spiritualist, view is that they manifest themselves generally through a medium. According to Dr. Johnson, "all reason is against [the existence of ghosts], all belief is for it". Whether this is still the case, I do not know. Perhaps belief in ghosts is now more like belief in SANTA CLAUS—operative at a certain time, in this case Halloween, rather than Christmas. Yet if so, this sceptical attitude represents an enormous change in our human cultural history. For as the anthropologist EDWARD TYLOR persuasively argues, belief in ghosts or spirits was virtually universal in man's long early history and is still the basic religion of primitive man. Now animism, as Tylor calls this primordial religion, is the union of two ideas: (1) that human beings are infused with life, which is largely identified with breath, and (2) that after death, the deceased person is seen in dreams as a phantom. For the animist, according to Tylor, it is natural to combine the life and the phantom. "As both belong to the body, why should they not also belong to one another, and be manifestations of one and the same soul? This ["ghost] corresponds with the actual conception of the personal soul or spirit among the lower races. . . ." For animism, then, this shadowy dreamlike being is still alive, still infused with breath, even though he is maternally more feeble. Because he is seen, it is obvious that he still lives. In a sense the animist agrees with GEORGE BERKELEY'S doctrine that "esse is percipi", to be is to be perceived. For the animist, it is mortality rather than immortality which seems absurd and needs proving. But this probably meant that early man lived, in some degree, in a dream world, in a world where there was no clear-cut division between appearance and reality. For if he believed that his deceased father, say, was still alive (as a ghost) because he saw him in a dream, then presumably he must also have believed that the other phantoms and objects he saw in a dream were also alive or real in a ghostly way. There are, of course, many modes of animism, as Tylor shows. Thus the primitive "Tongas imagined the human [spirit] to be the finer part of the body, which leaves it suddenly at the moment of death; something comparable to the perfume of a flower. . . ." Some tribes, like the Caribs, think the spirit is "thin like a purified body", others suppose it to be "misty". The essential similarity between our present bodies and our future ghostly ones is brought out by the Australian aborigine who after he has "slain his enemy will cut off the right thumb of the corpse, so that the hostile ghost will be unable to throw a shadowy spear with its mutilated hand...." This may seem extremely naive, but it is not essentially different from spiritualism, as advocated, for example, by A. CONAN DOYLE. But nowadays there are relatively few spiritualists or indeed any sort of animists. Animism was ousted from its long-held dominant position about two thousand years ago. It was superseded by two rival otherworldly conceptions, which arose, one might say, by a process of splitting from animism itself. The

first rival conception is most often associated with PLATO, who held that the soul is an indivisible, immaterial being, and hence incapable of decay and death. For only a complex bit of matter, like an apple, is subject to decay. The Platonic soul is a spiritual atom; it is indestructable, at least by any physical means. This theory of immortality was taken up eagerly by Christian philosophers, particularly (in early modern times) by DESCARTES. The soul, he argued, was naturally immortal; its destruction could only come about by supernatural annihilation. Although Plato and Descartes are the two great champions of this theory of immortality, they are not in complete agreement. For Plato believed in the prenatal existence of souls. For him the soul is fully immortal, in both directions, so to speak, past and future. Such a view, issuing as it does in transmigration of souls, was unacceptable to loyal Christians, such as Descartes. For him, the soul has only one life on earth, and on the basis of that it will, after death, spend an eternity in either Heaven, or Hell (with a possible spell in Purgatory). Yet this would be untenable if Plato were right, since if the soul of JUDAS, say, was reincarnated as a pious or virtuous person, then it would have to reside eternally in both Heaven and Hell, which is absurd. The second afterlife theory which superseded animism was presented most notably in the New Testament and then later in the Koran. Whereas the Platonic theory de-materialised the ghosts of animism, the Gospel account gave the ghosts flesh and blood. For according to the Gospel, Christ has redeemed man from death; there will be a general resurrection of bodies following the Last Judgment. Just as there are variations in the Platonic soul theory, so there are permutations in the Gospel resurrection account. Thus the resurrection has sometimes been given a somewhat deistic gloss, which is nicely expressed in the epitaph of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, a founding father of both American democracy and printing. His epitaph reads: "The body of B. Franklin, Printer, Like the Cover of an old Book, its Contents torn out, And stript of its Lettering and Gilding, Lies here, Food for Worms But the work shall not be lost; for it will, as he believ'd, appear once more in a new and more elegant Edition Corrected and improved By the Author." Now I have been talking about two ideas of immortality which split from and superseded the primordial belief in ghosts. For convenience, I will call these the Platonic theory and the Resurrection account. But, some of you are no doubt asking, are there really two? Didn't Christianity unite the two? Yes, historically the two ideas were wedded, starting in the second century, although the union had many fits, starts, and controversies, as between Christian Platonists and Christian Aristotelians. And it is still a question, for example, whether and to what extent a Platonic idea of soul is present in the New Testament. Suffice to say that many saw the two conceptions as ideal partners. The Platonic theory enabled one to prove immortality by pure reason, the Gospel justified it by faith. The Platonic soul theory also assisted the Resurrection account in bridging the gap between a

person's death and the future general resurrection. For how else is one to explain Benjamin Franklin's existence between his death in 1790 and his future Corrected Edition, except as an immaterial soul? If this is not accepted, won't we have to say that he has been asleep or annihilated since 1790? So the philosophical approach shows that we are immortal, the Gospel account tells us what form this immortality will take. The importance of a non-Revelatory belief in immortality for Christianity was stressed by Archbishop William KING of Dublin in a revealing letter of 1709, in which he wrote: "that which inclines the world to believe revelation is the 'belief that their souls are immortal and being immortal they could not imagine what would come of them, if revelation did not discover it to them and I believe it will be found that Christianity is grafted on this belief and owes its great success in the world in great measure to it." Christianity's great success can also be seen as the triumph or vindication of the animistic ghost theory, I would suggest, since Christianity's union of the Resurrection and Platonic theories reunites animism, although in a richer, synthesized form. But difficulties emerged which seemed to show that the two theories, whether combined or taken singly, were in fact less formidable, logically, than the old animistic conception they ousted. Let us consider difficulties in the combined theory. First of all the idea of resurrection is of the whole living man or woman; it is of a material being, living forever. Whereas the Platonic naturally immortal soul cannot be a living, material being: it is an immaterial, indivisible substance—a thinking thing, existing eternally. And as the latter idea of immortality is inconceivable with a living body, so the former is unimaginable without one. For unlike an immaterial substance, a living body naturally changes, grows, decay and dies. But without a living body how can the damned experience the infernal heat and other torments promised in the Scriptures? So the combined conception seems to involve a contradiction: that we exist immortally with and without a body. But if it is contradictory, it is impossible. Again, if we are naturally immortal, then what need is there of a resurrection of the body? In order to be resurrected from the dead, one must first have been dead; but according to the Platonic theory, we cannot really die. But if we cannot die, then the Gospel promise that we shall rise from the dead, and that Christ has abolished death, are idle and empty. Also, if we are naturally immortal, then after death—which is only the separation of our immortal souls from our mortal bodies—our souls will go to heaven, hell or (perhaps) purgatory. But that means that all souls who die before the Day of Judgment have already been judged, that is, pre-judged, thereby making a farce of the Last Judgment. So while the Platonic and Resurrection ideas of immortality have been long wedded, they are not logically very compatible. Indeed, they seem to be mutually destructive. But can they function independently? Is resurrection of the body feasible on its own? One problem is that if the old frayed Ben Franklin is now the worms of worms, then can the new and improved

Franklin be the same, that is, the same person? Surely it will be only a reconstituted replica. But if so, it isn't the same. And if so, why should anyone care about a future replica of himself? Nor is it fair that a replica should be rewarded or punished in an afterlife for the actions of the original in this life. This is a logical objection (drawn largely from ANTONY FLEW'S *Logic of Mortality*), but there is also a problem of evidence. When VOLTAIRE was on his deathbed, a priest, we are told, came to give the great freethinker the last rites. Upon making his intention known, the priest was asked by Voltaire: "From whom do you come?" To this the priest replied: "From the Almighty", to which Voltaire retorted: "Your credentials, please!" This is the question that we also must ask. What are the credentials for the account of resurrection preached in the Gospels or expected by Benjamin Franklin? To say that the, or a, Christian church vouches for the Gospel account leads to the question: who vouches for that church? Nor will it do to say the Bible, for one will then be arguing in a circle. One will need to produce some very strong evidence to justify rational belief in a document that makes a supernatural claim, such as for the general resurrection of bodies. Clearly, though, I cannot here go into the question whether the Bible is supported by such evidence. However, I imagine that some may question whether such an effort would in any case be misguided, since really it is a matter of faith, not evidence. But there are grave difficulties with this fideistic move; for there are many supernatural alternatives to choose between, most of which are mutually incompatible. And a belief which is embraced gratuitously, by pure faith, can also be rejected gratuitously, by mere denial. There are also powerful moral objections to the traditional Gospel idea of immortality, according to which it is belief in Christ that entitles one to heavenly rewards. For there were millions of people born before Christ and the Gospel; but why should so many virtuous heathen be given less of a chance to earn everlasting bliss, just because they happened to be born at a certain time? That seems extremely unjust. Now Franklin's deistic gloss aims to get around this difficulty. For his expectation of resurrection is based not on revelation, but on universally accessible reason, namely, that a just, omnipotent deity will reward the virtuous in a future life, particularly those who have suffered in this life. But if some virtuous people have suffered in this life, then we have strong evidence against the existence of a just, omnipotent deity—which undermines Franklin's argument. Nor has the Platonic idea of immortality fared much better. Thus JOHN LOCKE persuasively argued that a Platonic or Cartesian soul could not be an adequate vehicle for personal immortality, not only because it is lacking in empirical content, but also because it can give rise to two distinct personalities, as in the (literary) case of Dr JEKYLL and Mr HYDE. Since the work of IMMANUEL KANT there has been a growing recognition amongst philosophers that the idea of an indivisible, immaterial substance is empty and meaningless, like a smile on a face that has no mouth, no eyes or

nose. Most philosophers now reject the Cartesian ghost in the machine, as GILBERT RYLE called it. My conclusion, then, is that the resurrection and Platonic theories are less tenable, whether taken either together or singly, than the ghostly conception of immortality. For ghosts, since they have, or can have, some continuing physical qualities, will allow for personal identity. We can imagine a continuity between our present bodies and our future ghostly ones. So it is ironic that the animistic ghost theory, which represents the oldest form of immortality, is also the strongest logically. But although there are no insuperable logical problems, as with the other two conceptions, there are evidential ones. For if there is post mortem existence as ghostly beings, then there must be billions upon billions of them. But why haven't at least some of them come back and conclusively established their existence? One answer, common in the 18th century, was that if "they are in a state of happiness, it would be a punishment to them to return to this world; and if they are in a state of misery, it would be giving them respite." But surely this is begging the question, as well as pushing it back to the credentials of the Gospel. There is a story that one Medieval German emperor, perhaps FREDERICK BARBAROSA, tried to determine whether people survived death by drowning some of his subjects in a pool and looking closely to see whether an ethereal ghostly bubble rose to the surface. This may well strike us as cruel but it is not absurd. Because if* we do survive as ghosts, then shouldn't there be some such trace? It is an empirical matter, not a matter of pure reason or concepts (as is the Platonic theory), or faith—as with the Resurrection idea. There was a great interest in testing claims of ghostly or spiritualistic manifestations in the early part of this century. A number of leading psychologists and philosophers were active, among them WILLIAM JAMES and HENRI BERGSON. But nothing conclusive emerged. Spiritualism reached something of a highpoint following the First World War. Because so many had recently died, it was thought that there was a greater number of ghosts hovering between our world and the next. But despite the valiant efforts of investigators like A. CONAN DOYLE, nothing, again, was decisively established. Another difficulty is that, even if they do survive as ghosts, that will not guarantee that we will survive eternally. We may peter out after a few hundred years. And if ghostly bodies are like ours, then some termination seems highly probable. Post mortem ghostly existence may also be a dreary continuation of our present life. As it goes on, it may become more and more feeble and boring. For this reason, C. D. BROUWER, the philosopher and psychic investigator, hoped that there would be no survival of death, even though he thought there was a 50-50 chance that there might be. So while the Platonic and resurrection conceptions are logically flawed, they at least could—unlike the ghostly conception—guarantee immortality, rather than mere post mortem survival. On the other hand, hell might be living for ever as a ghost, becoming more and more drivelling and senile. Spiritualism, as

one writer put it, has added a new terror to death. In recent years, however, interest has moved from observing ghostly manifestations to examining accounts of those who have had out-of-body or near-death experiences, OBEs or NDEs, as they are called.

[NB:]

The latter topic achieved wide media coverage some months ago when A. J. AYER, probably the most eminent living philosopher, published an account of his near death experiences in the Sunday Telegraph (of August 28, 1988), with a sequel, "Postscript to a Postmortem" in The Spectator (October 15, 1988). Because of severe pneumonia, Ayer was put in intensive care at University College Hospital, London, where, for "four minutes" his heart stopped beating. Ayer recovered, however, with a "vivid" memory, part of which he describes as follows: "I was confronted by a red light, exceedingly bright, and also very painful even. when I turned away from it. I was aware that this light was responsible for the government of the universe ..." Ayer took this experience seriously, and this was reinforced some days later when he learned that a friend had had a similar near death experience, all of which "she remembered was that she must stay close to the red light." Yet for all that, Ayer was by no means convinced that there is survival after death. For as he points out: "the arrest of the heart does not entail ... the arrest of the brain"; hence: "the most probable explanation of my experiences was that my brain had not ceased to function during the four minutes ..." So we don't have evidence for disembodied existence or disembodied experience. And Ayer emphasizes that it is hard to make sense of Platonic or Cartesian souls, that is, of the existence of a thinking substance without a body. Ayer's conclusion, to quote his careful words in The Spectator, is: ". . my experiences have weakened not my belief that there is no life after death, but my inflexible attitude towards that belief." Yet NDEs, which weakened Ayer's attitude, have shattered the disbelief of numerous others, as the many recent studies show. But the question is: how evidentially significant are such experiences? One thing should be noted at the outset, a deathbed with all its pain and distress is hardly the place to get a cool judgment. But that shouldn't make us dismiss them out of court. Now some psychologists who have studied such experiences have pointed out that they are remarkably similar to drug induced hallucinations. Thus an American psychologist, RONALD SIEGEL, records these accounts of drug induced hallucinations: "My awareness of the room dimmed, and the world immediately around me became like a tunnel with 'Valls that glowed like a slight orange-red, reflected light" And another: "I'm moving through some kind of train tunnel. There are all sorts of light and colours." Bright light and tunnel experiences are most common in NDEs, and they are also common in hallucinations. But what is their source? As to the physical source of the bright lights, Seigel argues that they are

"probably caused by phosphenes, which are visual sensations arising from the discharge of neurons in the structures of the eyes." The deeper source, however, seems to be that both NDEs and hallucinatory drugs "trigger a flashback or retrieval of an equally dramatic and emotional memory of the birth experience"—for probably the baby's earliest post-natal experience would be of emerging through the tunnelly uterus and being overwhelmed by light. What, then, shall we conclude? Given that NDEs do seem amenable to a naturalistic explanation, it is tempting to accept that explanation. Still for those, like Ayer, who have had the experiences, that may be difficult, for it is, in effect to explain them away. We may have a sort of duck-rabbit illusion or situation. One can see either the duck or the rabbit, either a hallucination based on memory of birth, or a glance at the afterlife. Seeing one thing or the other may depend on one's interests, values and personality. Yet I should point out that we still have the problem of determining what sort of thing will survive death. And, as I have argued, the three leading candidates—ghosts, Platonic souls and resurrected bodies—all have serious difficulties. A more recent and plausible candidate, which I have not considered, is the notion of the self as a bundle of ideas and emotions united by memory. For many philosophers hold that that sort of self could, logically, exist disembodied. Hence such a theory might make sense of near-death and out-of-body experiences. One might even speculate that this might represent a new splitting, comparable to that of Platonism. We could then trace the development from animism in this way: Animism Platonic Soul Resurrection theory of body Christianity NDEs and OBEs; bundle theory of mind But (to continue our speculation) what would be the new bodily counterpart, comparable to resurrection of body? And (even more questionable), what could be the new synthesis? I should point out that the bundle and memory theory of self has come under heavy attack by Flew, for example, particularly as a way of justifying disembodied survival. And as Bishop BUTLER observed many years ago, memory is the way we know personal identity; it cannot be that which constitutes it. And in any case, such a theory of mind could not guarantee immortality, even if it could make sense of post mortem existence; for memory will in time decay thereby causing the self's disintegration. Yet, despite all I have said, I am not anxious to rule out mystery or wonder. I feel myself that there is something mystical about the world, about death, which seems to bathe our naturalistic understanding. But if there are more things in heaven or earth than are dreamt in our philosophy, then they are also probably more mysterious than ghosts, souls, resurrected bodies, or a disembodied bundle of ideas.

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APPENDIX Two, to Chapter Two: Kant and Swedenborg

Abbreviations:

ES=Emmanuel Swedenborg

QS=Queen's Secret

HR=Hidden Receipt

In this Appendix, I offer further evidence for the truth that the next world is the dream world, so for what I also call the radical 2 World Theory. The evidence concerns the one-time natural scientist and later seer and visionary, Emmanuel Swedenborg, i.e. ES. The evidence is contained in Kant's 1766 book entitled *The Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* --the spirit seer being ES. But Kant's fullest account of Swedenborg is in a letter Kant wrote, circa 1763, to a female correspondent, Charlotte von Knobloch. In this letter, Kant says that up until hearing about ES, he had not believed that there was any solid evidence that anyone could make contact with deceased spirits. Kant then describes the evidence which had opened Kant to the extraordinary possibility that ES had done so. The evidence concerns two specific occasions when ES was, apparently, able to do this. The two are generally referred to as the Hidden Receipt [= HR], and the Queen's Secret [= QS]. Rather than quoting Kant's letter, I am now going to describe the two incidents in my own words, beginning with the HR.

Very briefly, the wife of the recently deceased Dutch ambassador to Sweden consulted ES, because she was being pressed by a silver smith to pay for a valuable silver set for which she believed her deceased husband had already paid. But unfortunately she could not find the receipt. So desperate and knowing of ES's reputation for being able to make contact with the dead, she asked ES if he could contact her husband's spirit in the next world and ask him where the missing receipt could be found. Then, after three days, according to Kant's letter to Knobloch, ES visited the widow with the information she had requested. He said that her deceased husband had concealed the receipt in his desk. The widow was in company when ES visited her, and told ES that she had already searched the desk. However ES was not daunted by this, and accompanied by the widow and her company, went to the desk, where ES found the receipt in a hidden compartment in the desk to the amazement of the company.

ES's other paranormal feat occurred in June 1761. It concerned the Queen of Sweden, who also hearing of ES's ability to go into the next world, challenged ES, who was then at court, to tell her an intimate secret which only she and her dead brother knew. ES said he would do so. And some time later appeared in court. When the Queen asked him whether he could tell her the secret, ES requested that he should whisper it in the Queen's ear, and, upon doing so, the Queen was observed to nearly faint in surprize, which was observed by those at court.

Now from what Kant says in his letter to Knobloch, it seems that both cases were widely known. Kant was clear that if even one of these cases was true, then it would have staggering world significance. For it would, for the first time, be solid empirical evidence of life after death. By 'solid empirical evidence', I think it is clear that Kant meant the kind of evidence sought by those noted scientists and philosophers who set up the London Society for Psychical Research in the late 19th century, to finally settle the question of life after death, either positively or negatively.

[Note: Kant's 1763 letter is printed in Gregory Johnson (editor), *Kant on Swedenborg*, 2002, pp. 67—72.]

An indication that Kant took the two cases seriously is that he himself had both cases investigated further in various ways, which he details in his letter. Thus Kant also wrote directly to ES asking for more information about his paranormal ability and the evidence for it. Although ES did not write back to Kant, he sent a reply to Kant, saying he was about to publish a work in London which would contain all the information Kant desired.

So at this time, i.e. when Kant had written his letter to Knobloch in 1763, Kant was not just open-minded but inclined to believe that ES's two paranormal feats were credible. But this is not to say that Kant was convinced they were true. For he thought that additional evidence was required for that. But still he thought, at this time, circa 1763, that it was probable or at least feasible that Kant, with his astute and critical intellect, believed that it was probable or at least feasible that ES performed the two paranormal feats. It is crucial for the reader to understand this, and not to be influenced by later developments, especially what Kant says in his 1766 work.

With this stated, I now need to continue the story of Kant and ES, and how Kant came to disbelieve that ES had performed the two paranormal feats. The main blow to Kant's confidence was that the London work, which ES had indicated was to contain what Kant desired, failed to be published in 1764. And what ES did publish on the next world

contained no empirical justification, such as the HS and QS, so the kind of solid empirical evidence Kant believed was essential. Kant was also disappointed that ES did not write to Kant, answering his questions. In short, Kant's attitude to ES switched from being open and positive, as it had been when he wrote his 1763 letter, to being negative and hostile. This comes out clearly in his *Dreams of Spirit Seer*, 1766. And it is this later attitude to ES and his putative paranormal feats that have been taken seriously.

Now I want to state what is my main point in this Appendix. This is that there is reason to believe that Kant was mistaken in turning against ES; hence that his positive attitude in his letter to Knobloch was right. And if this is the case, then we have strong *prima facie* evidence that ES's two paranormal feats were true.

But here straightaway I need to issue a caveat, i.e. that I am not saying that ES went into the next world as generally understood; also that ES did not interview the departed Dutch ambassador and the brother of the Queen. Yet, how else, it will be asked, could ES have obtained the information concerning the Hidden Receipt and Queen's Secret? My answer is in accordance the radical 2WT, which I have argued for in Chapter three. For unlike the next world as generally understood, I think I have shown that there is another world which is the dream world and that there is evidence that it is the world which our dream selves go to following the death of their bodies. So it is not the next world believed in by Christians and Muslims, and believed in by ES himself.

More specifically, I think that ES somehow found a way of directing his dream self to make contact with the dream-selves of the Ambassador and Queen's brother.

But before getting to that, the first thing I need to do is counter or neutralize the reason which caused Kant to lose confidence in ES. So. here the key question is: Why ES did not provide Kant with the further empirical verification, such as is contained in the accounts of his HS and QS? So why was the work he apparently intended to publish in London, which was to satisfy Kant, never published? Understandably, Kant thought the reason was that ES did not have the information. But there is another explanation, although this has not been recognized by commentators. It is that ES did not publish the London work, which was to present additional empirical evidence of his going into the next world, because he was not permitted to do so. That this is feasible is clear from what ES says in section 447 of his *Arcana Coelestia*. Thus he writes:

A certain novice spirit, on hearing me speak about the spirit, asked, "What is a spirit?" supposing himself to be a man [and still alive]. And when I told him that there is a spirit in every man, and that in respect to his life a man is a spirit; that the body is merely to enable a man to live on the earth, and that the flesh and bones, that is, the body, does not live or think at all; seeing that he was at a loss, I asked him whether he had ever heard of the soul. "What is a soul?" he replied, "I do not know what a soul is". I was then permitted to tell him [my italics] that he himself was now a soul, or spirit, as he might know from the fact that he was over my head, and was not standing on the earth. I asked him whether he could not perceive this, and he then fled away in terror, crying out, "I am a spirit! I am a spirit!"

So there were things that ES, the seer, was not permitted to do, and which he required permission to do. But then a natural question is: Why would he not be permitted to give further empirical evidence, such as contained in the HS and QS? While there seems to be no definitive answer to this question in ES's writings, I think there are a number of possibilities. One is that it might have made life after death too probable, so doing away with faith. Another is that it would encourage people to take their lives too readily if disagreeable.

.....

I now want to say something more about my suggestion above move that ES found a way of making contact with the dream selves of departed persons, such as that of the Dutch Ambassador and Queen's brother. To be sure, ES was convinced that he had made contact not with dream-selves but the actual departed selves and not in a dream world but the actual next world, as believed by Christians, as described in his Arcana and Heaven & Hell. I hold that he was mistaken about this-- but not entirely mistaken. For I think that, in accordance with my 2 World Theory, in making contact with dream selves of departed persons, so he was making contact with the selves of previously living persons—as DB* is to some extent like DB, as explained in Chapter Three. So ES found a way of getting his dream self, ES*, into that part of the dream world, where the dream selves of dead persons lived their lives. But he did not recognize this. He interpreted his experience in accordance with his Christian belief.

But is there any evidence, then, about how ES developed this ability to direct his dream-self, without realizing he was doing so, rather believing that he or his inner self was going into the next world? My answer is: There is some evidence. For we know that in 1745 ES was working on and with his dreams in an intense and sometimes agonizing way. This is evident from his so-called Dream Journal of that year, which, according to its editor, is 'probably the

oldest and longest series of dreams available in any language'. Why exactly he kept this journal, no one seems to know, but it suggests that he expected some important outcome from his dreams.

Now my suggestion is that by focussing intensely on his dreams he was working in the right direction for getting into the next life, as I understand it. Thus in one of his extant notes, circa 1746, which he wrote following the occasion when, he believed, God had granted him the ability to travel into the next world, ES writes: 'The Kingdom of God was first shown me in the repose of sleep, but afterwards sometimes in the middle of the day, or in a time of wakefulness.' [Quoted in the entry on ES, in the ES Concordance, p. 114.]

That ES was driving himself to extremes circa 1745, is shown in Dream Journal, which suggests that he was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with his previous scientific interests in a way suggestive of a mid-life crisis. This is, arguably, the dominant theme in his Dream Journal. So he was looking for something more important than what he had found as a natural scientist. And what could be more important than going into the next world and becoming its first scientific observer.

But the key evidence for my thesis is his two paranormal feats, the QS and HR, as described in Kant's 1763 letter to Charlotte von Knobloch, which in 1763 Kant believed were feasible and credible. This then is the evidence that ES did get into the next world and into contact with the Queen's brother and Dutch ambassador—but not as understood by Christians, but in accord with my radical 2WT.

Moreover I think there is supporting evidence for this, which relates to and brings in Ayer and his NDE. This is what Ayer told his French friend, that his thoughts became persons, and that it was extraordinary. In Chapter three, drawing on the evidence of Charcot's famous patient X, I interpreted this as showing that Ayer was having his first mental images and first visual dream.

Now in his Arcana and Heaven & Hell, ES says that the way departed souls make contact with each other is by thinking about that person, and desiring to be in contact with them. In short, what I believe we have here is striking agreement between Ayer and ES about what the next world is like, which supports my radical 2WT and my understanding of ES's two paranormal experiences.

Finally, there is the irony which should be mentioned. This is that if my account here is correct, then Kant was right in the title of his 1766 book. In short, that way ES was a spirit seer was through his dreams.

APPENDIX THREE TO CHAPTER THREE: SPINOZA:

Rc=reincarnation;

Spn=Spinoza; Ch=Character;

McT=McTaggart.

Why does Spn not mention Rc in the Ethics? It could be because he does not believe in Rc. But I think that is profoundly mistaken, although it seems to be the accepted view, for I believe Spinoza did believe in two ways Rc can be understood. One of which was most important, which can be understood by reason and intuition. The other by 'sense' or 'experience'. Spn discusses this second way in Ethics pt 5, proposition 33 and its note. The problem is that it is not clear what Spn is getting at here. Hence commentators, such as Parkinson, are puzzled. (see note 171.) Whereas the more important Rc is discussed in a number of propositions, and is quite clear. See Ethics .

Another problem with the unimportant way is that I think he recognized that it was not hard to make it clear, but that talking about could encourage superstitious thinking.

Spn first begins to discuss reincarnation is in Ethics IV, 39 note. And it is his final sentence in the note that he indicates how his worry in talking about it openly. Here he writes: 'But lest I gather material for the superstitious to raise questions about, I had rather leave this question without further discussion.' Now the broader question he has been discussing concerns personal identity, so how an infant can be regarded as the same person when he becomes an adult, and whether someone who suffers from amnesia can be the same. Here he is being unusually empirical.

What distinguishes the 2 forms of Rc is that the important form is eternal, the unimportant one in time. So it is empirical. So Spn believes he experienced or sensed it—this being that his mind is eternal-- more specifically that he senses that he, i.e. Spn, living in Holland, had a previous existence.

This is different from the important kind of Rc, which is known by reason or intuition, and not empirically. Thus we know by reason or intuition that to the extent that 'the mind's knowledge is clear and distinct' – i.e. of the third kind-- death is desirable; because having

attained true understanding or knowledge by reason or intuition, it becomes more perfect. For death does not destroy such clear and distinct knowledge. It 'remains'.

Spn makes this clearest in the note to proposition . For this reason I now quote the whole of that note:

... human bodies that are capable of the greatest number of activities... may be understood as minds possessing a great knowledge of themselves and of God, and whereof the greatest or chief part is eternal, and, therefore, that they should scarcely fear death. But, in order that this may be understood more clearly, we must recognize that we live in a state of perpetual variation, and, according as we are changed for the better or the worse, we are called happy or unhappy. So he, who, from being an infant or a child, becomes a corpse, is called unhappy; whereas we are happy if we have been able to live through the whole period of life with a sound mind in a sound body. And, in reality, he, who, as in the case of an infant or a child, has a body capable of very few activities, and depending, for the most part, on external causes, has a mind which, considered in itself alone, is scarcely conscious of itself, or of God, or of things; whereas, he, who has a body capable of very many activities, has a mind which, considered in itself alone, is highly conscious of itself, of God, and of things. In this life, therefore, our primary endeavour-- what Spn calls 'conatus'-- should be to bring it about, that the body of a child, in so far as its nature allows and conduces thereto, may be changed into something else capable of very many activities, and so qua mind is most conscious of itself, of God, and of things; so we should desire that part of our mind which concerns imagination and memory may become insignificant, in comparison with its intellect, as I have already said in the note to the previous Proposition.

Here it is appropriate to mention that there is external evidence that my interpretation of Spn is correct. This is an extant note by Leibnitz of a conversation he had with Baron Tschirnhaus, who was a student of Spn's in the 1670s. See the Cambridge University Press Companion to Spinoza, 'Spinoza's Life and works', pp. 46-7. Here is Leibniz's note:

'Baron Tschirnhaus, told me that Spinoza thought that we will forget most things when we die and retain only those things that we know with the kind of knowledge which Spn calls intuitive, which only a few are conscious. Because knowledge is either sensual, or imaginative or intuitive.....

Baron T also told me that Spinoza 'held a kind of Pythagoreanism, implying that souls in a certain sense transmigrate from one form of matter to another. This idea is not entirely alien

to the theory of the mind's eternity, based on the adequate ideas of the fixed and eternal things of extension. It is likely that the comparison with Pythagoras's theory originates with Spinoza himself.'

As far as I am aware, no scholar has taken these statements seriously enough to try to fill them in with what Spinoza says in the Ethics. I believe I am the first who has tried to do this.