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THE DISCERNIBILITY OF IDENTICALS

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ABSTRACT: I argue via examples that there are cases in which things that are not two distinct things qualitatively differ without contradiction. In other words, there are cases in which something differs from itself. Standard responses to such cases are to divide the thing into distinct parts, or to conceive of the thing under different descriptions, or to appeal to different times, or to deny that the property had is the property lacked. I show these responses to be unsatisfactory. I then gather and systematize available ways of talking about such cases with phrases like 'insofar as', 'qua', 'to the extent that', 'in some respect', etc., while paying special attention to the scope of 'not' when used with these phrases. This allows me to show how we can speak of self-differing without contradiction.

1.

Montaigne observes that "there is as much difference between us and ourselves as between us and others."[1] Surely there is some truth to this. Consider mixed feelings. Are you glad for the good fortune of a rival? Yes and no. To some extent you are expansive and can appreciate the happiness the good fortune brings, but to some extent you are envious and a little bitter.[2] You are glad and you are not. You differ from yourself: You have a property and lack it. But this seems a contradiction. Is it possible to agree with Montaigne that we differ from ourselves, without assenting to a contradiction?

A time-honored approach from Plato through Freud is to think of a person as having parts. One part has a property that the other lacks. For instance, a foolish part desires what the wise part does not desire but rather avoids. This way of thinking of oneself has passed into ordinary usage: "Do you want to go?" "Part of me does; part of me doesn't." So maybe one part is glad for your rival and another part is not.

But the trouble is, we don't have such parts. Even if we did, I will argue that this appeal to parts is not yet an answer to the problem.[3] If one's parts differ, does one differ from oneself? If yes then the appeal to parts does not solve the apparent contradiction, but reaffirms it. If no then the appeal to parts is not relevant. For precisely what is being asked for is an explanation how it is that one differs from oneself.[4] How then to resolve the apparent contradiction?

2. Perhaps the answer is to notice that we sometimes conceive of the same object under different descriptions. As a result there are cases in which *apparently* an object differs from itself, but not *really*. For example as rational animal, one reasons; as featherless biped, one doesn't. This apparent self-differing is not such at all. The grammatical form of these clauses misleads as to logical form. The first clause is made true by the fact that falling under the first description—'rational animal'—entails that or explains why one is rational. The second clause is made true by the fact that falling under the second description—'featherless biped'—neither entails nor explains why one is rational. That's all there is to it.

Unfortunately for this answer, that is not all there is to other claims of apparent self-difference. For example, take Hume, a self-differer *par excellence*. When enquiring into the basis of the inference from past to future in the first *Enquiry* he says, "As an agent I am quite satisfied in the point; but as a philosopher . . . I want to learn the foundation of this inference."[5] As an agent Hume is satisfied; as a philosopher he is not. This differing is not a result of conceiving of Hume under different descriptions. Suppose being an agent entailed or explained his satisfaction. Suppose being a philosopher neither entailed nor explained his satisfaction. Then is he satisfied? Yes, because he is an agent. Why then does he continue the philosophical enquiry? It is not just that he is conceivable under a description which fails to entail or explain his satisfaction. As philosopher he *lacks* the satisfaction that would halt the enquiry. So he is both satisfied and not, since he is both agent and philosopher. He differs from himself in a way not resolvable by appeal to conceiving him under different descriptions.[6]

Without a familiar way to resolve the apparent contradiction, it is tempting to dismiss it: Hume is misdescribing himself; Montaigne's pronouncement is hyperbole—effective but not literally true. However I will argue by example that sometimes we do differ from ourselves.

Perhaps there are sufficient and familiar examples already. Sartre's discussion of bad faith contains examples in which "I must know in my capacity as deceiver the truth which is hidden from me in my capacity as the one deceived."[7] Sartre is clear that the one who knows and the one who does not know are one and the same thing. He criticizes Freud for addressing the apparent contradiction by a theory in which he "has cut the psychic whole into two."[8]

Unfortunately, however, Sartre does not clearly establish that 'know' is used univocally here. It is tempting to think it is not, especially under the influence

of Fingarette's illuminating discussion of self-deception. Fingarette suggests that someone flirting in bad faith *knows* she is flirting in the sense that she is skillfully executing a project of which she is pre-reflectively aware, but *does not know* she is flirting in the sense that in disavowing responsibility for the project she does not "spell-out" to herself what is involved in engaging in it.[9] These are distinct senses of 'know'. If Sartre's examples of bad faith have the structure Fingarette suggests, then they are not examples in which someone literally differs from himself. The possibility that Fingarette is right makes cases of bad faith or self-deception less clearly suited to my purposes.

I will give a different sort of example that will call for a theory of how something can differ from itself without contradiction—a theory of the discernibility of identicals.[10]

I

3. Theorists should take seriously the fact that people often answer a question by saying "Yes and no." In ordinary discourse we allow a way for an object to have and to lack a property. This need not be attributed to insensitivity to contradiction. For example: A person can have and lack a property in virtue of playing different roles.

Roles have requisite properties. A salesman needs some glibness. A lawyer needs reasoning ability. A commercial pilot needs good eyesight. An essayist needs to be able to revise.

Some roles require characteristics that other roles forbid. Being a good friend requires willingness to help one's friends. Being a good public servant forbids it. I will call such pairs of roles "conflicting roles."

It is possible for the same person to play conflicting roles. The same person can be a good friend and a good public servant. Take Sam, for instance. As good friend he is willing to help his friends. As good public servant he is not willing to help his friends. He values both roles greatly. At night sometimes he hopes no conflict of interest will arise.

Note that I am not characterizing Sam as willing to help his friends and willing not to help his friends. So characterized, Sam is willing to do either. No conflict actual or potential is involved. Rather I am characterizing him as both willing to help his friends and not willing to help his friends, depending on role. That is why he worries about conflict.

Being a good friend requires a mental and emotional readiness to help one's friends. As good friend Sam evinces that readiness—he is willing to help. Being a good public servant requires lacking this readiness. It does not require positive unwillingness to help. Prejudice against ones friends is not requisite, though at times it might be prudent. Rather the role requires a dispassionate approach to friends just as to others. As good public servant Sam evinces that lack of readiness. In that role he is not willing to help his friends.

Is Sam willing to help his friends? Yes and no.

4. Someone might argue to the contrary in two different ways: first by relativizing willingness to help friends to time, second by relativizing it to role. Either way the objector then argues that what is really in question is the relativized property, and there is no way in which Sam differs from himself. I will rebut both these proposals.

The objector cannot say that sometimes Sam is willing to help his friends and sometimes he is not. At what time is he not willing? The answer cannot be, when he is in his official capacity. While waiting to speak at a meeting Sam may well try to figure out what is wrong with his neighbor's car. He is on stage in an official capacity, but is helping a friend. *A fortiori* he is willing to help his friend at that time. At home eating dinner he may decide not personally to inform his brother-in-law about the bidding for a public works project. He is not in his official capacity but is not willing to help a friend. It does not work to try to relativize willingness to help to times.

Furthermore his willingness does not wobble from presence to absence from time to time. At all times he is willing and not willing, for at all times he plays both roles.

The objector might press the point as follows: Sam does not differ from himself. Insofar as Sam is a good friend he is willing to help his friends. Insofar as he is a good public servant he is not. He only seemed to differ from himself when the two properties being discussed seemed to be (i) ___is willing to help his friends, and (ii) ___is not willing to help his friends. But actually the two properties being discussed were: (i') Insofar as he is a good friend ___is willing to help his friends, and (ii') Insofar as he is a good public servant ___is not willing to help his friends. It is a fact that both these properties apply. There is no conflict between them.

This reply ignores Sam's occasional night worries. To see the problem consider a worry come true.

Suppose Sam's best friend owns a construction company that lost hundreds of thousands of dollars to an embezzler. Only a lucrative contract will save the company and Sam is in a position to hand out a lucrative contract. His friend's company is a reliable one, but it can't afford to give a low enough bid. Yet Sam would hate to see his friend lose everything. Should Sam give the contract to his friend's company or should he legitimately take bids? That is a hard question. But another question must be settled before Sam can act, whether morally or not. That question is, what is he willing to do?

Is Sam willing to help his friend? Yes and no. Now he is immobilized because he takes both roles equally seriously. He is in a conflict that cannot be resolved by saying that willingness to help his friend is really not the property in question. It precisely is the property in question. The objector's relativized properties are not relevant. Sam insofar as he is a good friend and Sam insofar as he is a good public servant are both Sam. Sam can't act until the conflict is decided. He has to give up one of the roles in this case, or at least identify himself more strongly with one. As it is, though, Sam differs from

himself about whether he is willing to help his friend. And both sides of him are of equal strength. That is the problem. That is why Sam is immobilized. The objector ignores the fact that Sam insofar as he plays a role is still Sam.

5. Why is appeal to roles a good way to give an example of someone differing from himself? Playing a role most effectively requires wholeheartedly identifying oneself with the role. In other words, it requires one to be as one would if all one's interests and obligations were subordinated to the role. One must in effect try to make one side of him be all of him. Thus differing sides will come into conflict. One will be torn over how to feel and act. We observers can notice and empathize with such conflict, and so will not overlook that the individual is differing from himself.

I claim that roles require full allegiance. Repellent cases of someone very effectively playing a role show this clearly. Consider the executive who never abandons his role of maximizing stockholder profits, even though he is compounding the moral enormity his company has just committed. He plays his role admirably well, doing just exactly what he is paid to do. But we are repelled by him. Other sides of him—the compassionate, the public-spirited—should not be subordinated to this role in such a situation. The role requires that they be, but they should not be. Roles require such allegiance. Thus a career person with primary responsibility for a child, feels so torn. Loyalty to each role undermines loyalty to the other. Yet one is intensely loyal to both.

The same person can play conflicting roles. When roles conflict one role requires a characteristic that the other forbids. In Sam's case being a good friend requires willingness to help his friend. Being a good public servant forbids it. Sam plays both roles and in doing so differs from himself on whether he is willing to help his friend.

6. The fact that people can play conflicting roles reflects the well-known fact that people can have conflicting obligations. What is not well known is that playing conflicting roles sometimes entails both having and lacking a property. Is such a conflict confined to things capable of having obligations? No. Non-persons can also play conflicting roles. For example:

Suppose Tommy's favorite activity is pretending that he is Captain Bob while listening to "The Space Adventures of Captain Bob" on the radio. For props he uses a cardboard box. When Captain Bob is traveling between planets, Tommy sits in the box and pretends that it is a spaceship. When Captain Bob puts on his space helmet and leaves his ship, Tommy puts the box on his head and pretends that it is a space helmet. For Tommy the box plays two roles—pretend spaceship and pretend space helmet.

These roles conflict. Tommy finds that out when on one episode: "Chased by Mondaloo, Captain Bob speeds deeper into the asteroid belt. Skillfully he pilots the Reliant into the treacherous area, dodging space rocks." Tommy is

madly rocking the box trying not to hit asteroids. "Suddenly from nowhere the Reliant is hit—pierced! 'Losing pressure,' Captain Bob gasps. He grabs his space helmet, jamming it on his head with one hand while steering with the other . . . " Tommy blinks. What does he do with the box? It is a pretend helmet, so it goes on his head. It is a pretend spaceship, so it does not go on his head. Because the box plays two roles it has and lacks the following property: ___goes on Tommy's head.

This conflict cannot be made unreal by pointing out that the box really is a box and so neither goes on Tommy's head nor does not go on Tommy's head. Tommy really pretends that the box is a spaceship, and really pretends that the box is a space helmet. So the box really is a pretend space helmet and really is a pretend spaceship. If something is a pretend space helmet then it goes on one's head. If something is a pretend spaceship then it does not go on one's head. So the box really plays conflicting roles, and so really has and lacks a property.

Roles are such that they can conflict. Conflicting roles are such that something which instantiates both, both has and lacks a property.

II

7. It happens that an individual differs from itself. How do we make sense of this? On my view, to do metaphysics is to gather and systematize available and accepted ways of talking. Metaphysicians revise ordinary claims so as to make their meaning clearer.[11] It is revision according to the standards of improvement that govern the revision of philosophical essays. Thus I see my task as this: To resolve the apparent contradictions I ought to work accepted paraphrases of them into a theory that explains how they really are consistent. First, then, I will collect ways to elaborate on claims like "It is and it isn't."

Consider something that is bittersweet, for example, bittersweet chocolate. If something is bitter it is not sweet. So bittersweet chocolate is sweet and not sweet. To avoid apparent contradiction we often say that the chocolate is partly sweet and partly bitter. So it is partly sweet and partly not sweet. Note that to be partly some way is not necessarily to have a part that is wholly that way. Suppose it were. Then something bittersweet would have a part that was wholly sweet and a part that was wholly not sweet. But this contradicts the plain fact that no part of bittersweet chocolate (that has taste at all) is wholly sweet. Every part (that has taste at all) is partly bitter and partly sweet. Discourse using 'partly' and 'wholly' cannot be dispensed with wholly in favor of discourse using 'part' and 'whole'.

Sometimes however these sorts of discourse are used interchangeably, even when only the former seems proper. Consider when someone is ambivalent, has mixed feelings. He might say "I partly want to go and partly want to stay." But he also might say, "Part of me wants to go and part of me wants to stay."

What is the purpose of this second way of putting things? Just as in the bittersweet example, it is a plain fact that there is no part of the person that wholly wants to go, nor any part that wholly wants to stay. I take it that the ordinary person would consider speaking of parts here metaphorical. Why is the metaphorical usage so well entrenched?

I suggest the reason is that the metaphorical usage allows us to capture something that the 'partly' sort of usage does not. Consider the resemblance between bittersweet chocolate and sweet and sour sauce. One might say, "Sweet and sour sauce resembles the chocolate." But, for a start, this is ambiguous between whether the chocolate wholly or partly resembles the sauce. Suppose one says, "Sweet and sour sauce partly resembles the chocolate." This is still ambiguous. Is the resemblance because the sauce is partly bittersweet, or because it is partly sweet? One seeming way to clear up the ambiguity is to say, "Sweet and sour sauce partly resembles with respect to sweetness bittersweet chocolate." This ploy attaches a modifier to 'resembles'. But there is still an ambiguity. The sentence implies that the chocolate is sweet. (After all, the things are said to resemble with respect to sweetness.) But the chocolate is only partly sweet. There should be a way to make this clear. But how? What seems called for but doesn't work is something like, "Sweet and sour sauce partly resembles with respect to sweetness the chocolate partly."

Here is where the metaphorical usage involving parts comes in. We might say "The sweet part of the sweet and sour sauce resembles the sweet part of the bittersweet chocolate." (Actually in this case we would probably say, "The sweet part *of the taste* of the sweet and sour sauce resembles the sweet part *of the taste* of the bittersweet chocolate." This avoids seeming commitment to a literally sweet part.) This appeal to "parts" also allows us to dispense with the phrase modifying 'resembles'. The respect of resemblance is obvious. Anyway this talk of parts helps us express the apparent complexity of things which have a variety of properties. We are often especially aware of that complexity in ourselves and thus easily use expressions like "Part of me wants to," even when aware that they are metaphorical.

The problem with this talk of parts is again that there is no sweet part of the chocolate. Every part is bittersweet. Likewise there is no part of you that wants to go which is numerically distinct from any part which wants to stay.

There are other ways to accomplish what the metaphorical appeal to parts did. "The bittersweet chocolate is partly sweet" could be said, "The chocolate insofar as it is sweet resembles sweet and sour sauce insofar as it is sweet." Or "the chocolate as sweet . . . ," or " . . . so far forth as sweet . . . ," or " . . . inasmuch as it is sweet . . . ," or perhaps "*qua* sweet." However these expressions do not allow us to say some things that can be said with 'wholly' and 'partly'. One cannot say "The chocolate is partly sweet not wholly sweet" only using 'insofar as'. On the other hand they allow us to say things we cannot say with 'wholly' and 'partly' such as "Insofar as it resembles the sauce the chocolate is sweet." But there are other even more versatile formulations.

One way is to appeal to respects. "The chocolate is partly sweet" becomes "The chocolate is sweet in some respect." "Sugar is wholly sweet" becomes "Sugar is sweet in all respects (in which it has taste)." Thus 'all' and 'some' can be used in conveying what 'wholly' and 'partly' mean. Plus the same things can be said as with 'insofar as', etc. For instance, "The chocolate insofar as it is sweet resembles sweet and sour sauce insofar as it is sweet" becomes "The chocolate in the respect in which it is sweet resembles sweet and sour sauce in the respect in which it is sweet."

Also one can appeal to extents: "The bittersweet chocolate is sweet to some extent." "To the extent that it is sweet it resembles sugar." One can also make comparisons that others of these sorts of expressions do not allow: "The extent to which she is wise is greater than the extent to which she is foolish."

Let me call all such expressions "qualifiers."[12]

8. Recall the original motivation. The chocolate is sweet and not sweet, i.e., partly sweet and partly not sweet. How can this be expressed using qualifiers? One can say "Insofar as it is sweet, the chocolate is sweet and insofar as it is bitter, the chocolate is not sweet." But this formulation fades in and out of seeming true. Is the second conjunct true or false?

The problem is how to take the scope of the 'not'. What part of the sentence is being negated? Consider the Swiss flag which is red and white. (I use this example so one can always translate back to more familiar talk of parts.[13]) Here are three readings of "In the respect in which it is white, the flag is not red." (There may well be others but these will serve.)

(1) Sentence negation: It is *not* true that, insofar as it is white the flag is red.

(2) Qualifier negation: Insofar as it is *not* white the flag is red.

(3) Qualified negation: Insofar as it is white the flag is *not* red.

Qualified negation is the one intended above when saying "Insofar as it is bitter, the chocolate is not sweet." (3) is equivalent to saying, "Insofar as the flag is white, it is *non*-red." And it is true. (2) is also true in this case, given that the relevant distinction is between the flag as white and the flag as red. If the flag had been white and green, however, (2) would have been false. Insofar as it was not white the flag would have been green, not red. (3) however would have been true. As white it would still be non-red. So (2) and (3) are not equivalent. (1) is also true. Never is something red insofar as it is white. Even if the flag were completely orange (1) would be true. In that case however (2) and (3) would be false: (2) because the flag would be orange to the (full) extent that it was not white, (3) because it implies that there is an extent to which the completely orange flag is white. So (1) is equivalent to neither (2) nor (3).

Feeling these possibilities made it hard to interpret the 'not' when discussing the chocolate. This confusion was compounded by the following: If

one were to interpret "The chocolate is not sweet" while mentioning respects, one would say "In no respect is the chocolate sweet." It was hard not to hear the negation this way when saying "As bitter the chocolate is not sweet." But then the result was in effect "There is a respect in which the chocolate is sweet in no respect." This seemed to convey that bitterness in some respect is incompatible with sweetness in any respect, which seemed false and contrary to what the sentence was supposed to convey. So the confusion was compounded.

In any event we now need to recognize qualified negation. There are things that make sense to say, which cannot be said without it. For instance, "In the respect in which it is spherical, the globe is not white" said of a white globe.[14] When 'as white' and 'as spherical' are the relevant qualifiers, being spherical is a way of being (qualifiedly) not white.[15]

In "Bittersweet chocolate insofar as it is bitter, is not sweet," the 'not' expresses qualified negation. The sentence does not entail that bittersweet chocolate is not sweet. It just entails that there is a respect in which it is not sweet. That allows for the existence of another respect in which it is sweet.

III

9. We might say "Sam as friend is willing, but Sam as public servant is not." Interpreting this as a sentence involving qualified negation, is interpreting it not to be a contradiction. The second conjunct is not the negation of the first. However the interpretation is not obviously a statement that an individual differs from itself. Suppose Sam in one respect has a property that he in another respect lacks. What does this have to do with Sam having and lacking a property? In what way does *Sam* differ from himself? And if he does, why isn't this contradictory?

I will argue, first, that things in respects are bearers of properties. I will argue, second, that an individual in a respect is the same thing as the individual in other respects and as the individual itself. The above examples, and those in the footnotes show, third, that an individual in one respect differs from itself in another. Accepting all three is accepting that an individual differs from itself. What then remains is to grant recognition to this differing. I recommend doing so by recognizing a currently unfamiliar sort of distinction. I will call it an "aspectival distinction." An aspectival distinction prevents contradiction.

When considering the meaning of a sentence such as "To some extent Sam is willing to help," it is not obvious which property-bearer is being attributed which property. (Is it Sam or Sam to some extent? Is the property, willingness to help, or partial willingness to help, or willingness to help a bit?) I will argue that in some cases the property bearer is: the individual to a certain extent. I do so by means of cases in which it is unambiguous that individuals as qualified are the subject matter.

Three points: First, we talk about, for instance, Sam as public servant. "Sam is a great guy." "Really? I only know him as the guy who takes bids." Or

a poet on the radio asks: "Do you remember the farm when you were five?" You are asked to remember the farm as it was then, perhaps to contrast it with the farm as it is today. Or to a group vilifying someone a defender might say, "You are thinking of him only so far as he is self-glorifying. You are forgetting his generous side." Second, relations hold between individuals in respects. Lemonade as sweet differs from itself as sour. This purple insofar as it has a blue cast resembles this blue more than that one. Ed as sociable person is more empathetic than he is as professional philosopher. Third, things considered qualifiedly resemble those considered unqualifiedly. So they share properties. Wine insofar as it is sweet resembles grape juice. The property both have is sweetness. Wine insofar as it is sweet has it, just as the juice does. In conclusion then, individuals in respects, individuals as qualified, are among the bearers of properties and relations.

I will call individuals as qualified, "aspects." And I will say they are aspects of the individual considered unqualifiedly. I trust this captures what we mean when we talk about something's differing aspects. When we say, "I like some aspects of her work, but not others" we are willing to answer "Do you like her work?" with "Yes and no."

10. The main question is: Is an individual in one respect numerically identical or distinct from that individual in another respect, and from that individual unqualified. I will argue all are identical. However, one aspect may have a property the other lacks. And an individual has aspects none of its aspects have. The temptation is great to say all are distinct on pain of contradiction. So deciding the main question entails deciding whether numerically identical things can differ qualitatively.

The primary theoretical utility of appeal to aspects is to explain away apparent contradictions such as "I do and I don't." I have established that there are cases well described this way, so some explanation is required. The explanation is that an aspect does and an aspect does not. A theory of aspects has to resolve the contradiction; one that does not fails as a theory. I will argue that a theory of aspects that has all qualitatively differing things be numerically distinct fails in this way.

Suppose aspects of an individual are numerically distinct. And none is identical with the individual itself.[16] Why would it be proper to appeal to something's aspects to resolve apparent contradictions concerning the thing itself? Why isn't this simply changing the subject from the thing itself to things numerically distinct from itself and each other? For example, suppose a parent is both deft and clumsy. One could not resolve the apparent contradiction by saying that one of his children is deft and the other clumsy. This is simply to change the subject. What justification makes the case of numerically distinct aspects different?

A tempting justification is that an individual has its properties *in virtue of* its aspects having theirs. A certain aspect's having a property explains the

individual's having that property. Perhaps, even, the aspect's having the property just is the individual's having that property.[17]

Consider an analogy with parts and wholes. For example, suppose a whole is red and white. Assume it is red in virtue of one part being red. Likewise it is white in virtue of another part being white. But the white part is not red. So apparently the whole is not red in virtue of one part's being not red. So the whole is red and not red. Thus, appealing to parts has not solved the apparent contradiction. On the assumption that the parts are numerically distinct each from the other and from the whole, and that the whole has its properties in virtue of the parts having theirs, the qualitative differences between the parts are had by the whole.

One might object as follows: Lacking a property is a matter of lacking any part with that property; it is not a matter of having a part that lacks it. So something that is red and white is not such that it is red and not red. So there is no even apparent contradiction.

However this reply simply rules out saying something about the whole which makes perfect sense, viz. qualified negation. Perhaps another example will make this clearer. Take opposites such as transparent and opaque. This will reduce stray and potentially confusing negations. Suppose something has a transparent part and an opaque part. Which does the whole have in virtue of a part having it? Is the whole transparent and not opaque (since not all parts are opaque) or is it opaque and not transparent (since not all parts are transparent), or is it opaque and transparent (since some parts are opaque and some are transparent). If the last (which seems most reasonable), then the whole is opaque and not opaque (since some parts are opaque and some are not opaque). But this is the sort of apparent contradiction appeal to parts was supposed to solve.

The problem is this: On just the assumption that wholes have their properties in virtue of the properties of the parts, there is no way to provide for the difference, while talking about the whole, between what is said with sentential negation and what is said with qualified negation. One can of course make an analogous distinction when talking about parts: "It is not true that some part is red" vs. "Some part is not red." But one has not been given the wherewithal to do this while talking about the whole. One might try to say "The whole is partly red and partly not red." But without further resources this could only be a variant way of saying "Part of the whole is red and part is not." So one would be neglecting the problem. It is the properties of the *whole* that are at issue. The differing properties of the parts are perpetuating the problem, not solving it.

The same problem occurs if one appeals to aspects each numerically different from the other and from the individual that has them. One aspect of Caesar (say, Caesar as courageous) is admirable and another (say, Caesar as ruthless) is not. Assume Caesar is admirable in virtue of the first aspect and not admirable in virtue of the second. But now we have ceased to talk of

Caesar's aspects and are talking about Caesar himself. We can say that he differs from himself in virtue of his aspects differing. But if they are distinct from him then the fact that their numerical distinctness makes *their* qualitative difference unproblematic, does not help in making the qualitative differing of Caesar from himself unproblematic.

11. In response one might take a different approach. One might say there really is no change of subject. The apparent reference to a unitary thing is just a manner of speaking. One is really all along only talking about the several aspects. There is nothing but them, they are numerically distinct, and so they can differ .

But this approach gives up the supposition that an individual is unitary, that it is a single thing. This supposition is not worth giving up, especially in the case of oneself, one's best example of unity. Furthermore it does not make sense to give it up. Everything has aspects, even aspects. A red aspect resembles a sweet aspect insofar as they are aspects and differs insofar as one is red and the other is not.[18] If anything with aspects were really several things then absolutely everything would be several things. But nothing can be several things if there are no single things. For there to be several there has to be a single thing and another and another. . . .[19] So everything and nothing would be several things. Absurd. So something with aspects is not really several things.

Suppose an individual's aspects are each distinct from the individual and from one another. Then one needs to justify resolving the contradictions concerning the individual by changing the subject to its aspects. However I do not see further possible justifications beyond saying the individual has its properties in virtue of its aspects having them, or that the individual really is just the several aspects.

Seemingly there is another possible approach. One might say there is no need for justification. The theoretical task is merely semantic. We are simply trying to find a model, using whatever entities, that makes all and only the appropriate sentences true. If we can use numerically distinct aspects to give consistent truth conditions for the apparently contradictory sentences about individuals, then let's use them. That is all the justification needed. But this is wrong. The task is metaphysical; the task is to have the formulations in terms of aspects be reformulations and elucidations of the problem sentences. The task is to say more clearly and systematically what we ordinarily are trying to say. We have to be sensitive to the ill-formed intentions of ordinary speakers including ourselves. So if the ordinary speaker takes himself to be speaking about one thing and the philosopher argues the speaker is really speaking about a numerically distinct aspect of that thing, the philosopher ought to explain why it would be so easy to seem to be talking about the former when talking about the latter, and why the latter is really what the ordinary speaker was trying to talk about all along. Without such a justification, the philosopher cannot properly be doing metaphysics.

Thus supposing that an individual and its qualitatively differing aspects are all distinct from each other entails that appeal to aspects cannot in a justifiable way solve the problem it is supposed to solve. We ought not to consider aspects distinct from the individual they are aspects of. So we ought not to consider them distinct from each other. If we accept that they are identical, then we have accepted that the same thing can differ from itself.

12. But now if Sam and Sam in some respect are the numerically same thing, what difference does it make to distinguish them? Why ever insist that in "Sam as friend is willing to help" the property bearer is Sam as friend, rather than Sam? The reason just is that Sam and Sam as friend differ qualitatively. Sam as friend, is an aspect of Sam; Sam is not. Sam is more complex than this aspect: He has aspects it does not have.

The reason the objection has force is that philosophers have assumed that numerical identity entails qualitative identity, for otherwise contradictions would be true. However I have argued that to *prevent* certain ordinary things we say from being contradictory, we need to accept that there can be numerical identity without qualitative identity. I am not endorsing contradiction, I am preventing it.

A venerable type of inference is: Thing *a* has some property, *a* is numerically identical with thing *b*, so *b* has that property. I do not want to dispense with this but merely circumscribe its application. It is valid of things considered unqualifiedly—otherwise contradictions would be true. But it is not valid if either *a* or *b* is something considered qualifiedly, that is, if either is an aspect of something. The farm as it was when we were five had a lot of buildings. It was the same farm as the farm now is. But the farm as it is now does not have a lot of buildings.

Likewise it is a venerable inference that if thing *a* has a property and thing *b* lacks the property, then these are two things. And again, the inference is valid of things considered unqualifiedly. But it is not valid if either is considered qualifiedly. The farm as it was when we were five had more buildings than the farm as it is now has. But they are not two farms.

Identicals considered unqualifiedly are indiscernible. But identicals considered qualifiedly may be discernible. Something may qualitatively differ from itself.

IV

13. Something feels wrong in these explanations of identity however. "Caesar, insofar as he is courageous, is admirable" seems proper. But "Caesar, insofar as he is courageous, is identical with Caesar" seems improper. It feels as though the 'insofar as he is courageous' ought to explain the attributed property. It does explain being admirable, but it does not explain being identical with Caesar.

I think it is right that qualifiers are often used in making an explanation. But to think that they are always so used is the result of an oversight. My explanation again involves scopes—this time of the qualifier. Sometimes qualifiers modify sentences; they are used *sententially*, let's say. Sometimes they modify subjects or objects in sentences; they are used *individually*, let's say. Only in the former cases are they used to give explanations.

Consider "As expansive, one enjoys others' good fortune." The phrase 'as expansive' can apply to different portions of the sentence. Let me use parentheses to indicate the differing groupings.

(4) *Sentential use*: As expansive (one enjoys others' good fortune).

(5) *Individual use*: (As expansive (one)) enjoys others' good fortune.

I conjecture that a qualifier used sententially is used to explain why and to what extent the sentence is true. A qualifier used individually is used in referring to an aspect of an individual. It is false, reading the qualifier sententially, that as expansive one is identical with oneself. Expansiveness does not explain why one is self-identical. But it is true, reading the qualifier individually, that as expansive one is identical with oneself. An aspect of oneself is identical with oneself. Earlier I was emphasizing the individual use. But the sentential use is important and must be acknowledged.

I conjecture further that any sentence true when the qualifier is read sententially is also true when the qualifier is read individually, but not vice-versa. This would be so because in sentential uses the qualifier must be used to explain, while individual uses do not have this limitation. Thus "Caesar insofar as he is courageous is admirable" is true whether the qualifier is read sententially or individually. On the other hand "Caesar insofar as he is courageous is identical with Caesar" is true only when the qualifier is read individually.[20]

Their use in explanation tempts commentators to think that sentential uses can be reinterpreted simply as explanations.[21] Often they can: "Insofar as one is expansive, one enjoys others' good fortune" becomes "Because one is expansive, one enjoys others' good fortune." But this works only when the individual unqualified is, for example, expansive. When an individual differs from itself, sentential uses cannot be so interpreted. Consider "Insofar as one is expansive one enjoys others' good fortune", and "Insofar as one is envious one does not." Suppose these are reinterpreted using 'because'. Then we may presume that one is both expansive and envious. But then both "One enjoys others' good fortune" and "One does not enjoy others' good fortune" follow. The result is contradiction. So the reinterpretations as explanations are not always reliable. They neglect precisely the main reason qualifiers are necessary—to allow us to say that something differs from itself.

14. To conclude then: It is best to recognize in some cases that an individual differs from itself. What remains is officially to grant this recognition.

I suggest we dub these cases, cases of "aspectival distinction." I think I am recognizing a distinction like the "formal distinction" of Duns Scotus, which resembled various sorts of distinctions proposed by medieval thinkers.[22] I coin a name because that used by Scotus has long been misleading. Also I am mentioning him as an inspiration, not to give interpretation.

Basically I am arguing as follows: There are cases in which things that are not two distinct things qualitatively differ without contradiction. If qualitative difference without contradiction required numerical difference, then there would be no such cases. So it doesn't. In such cases there is rather an aspectival distinction.

The strategy for arguing against me would be to insist that there can be no such qualitative difference and argue that therefore there are no such cases. My description must then be faulty. But I ask, what would be the basis of this insistence?

My guess is that here we leave the realm of argument and enter that of emotional appreciation of the way the world is. Opponents to my proposal have a faith in the purity of unity: Its absolute simplicity precludes any complexity. My feeling is that this is a noble and innocent faith that shields us from some of the world's sublime impurity and complexity.

Unities can be as complex as multitudes.[23] Montaigne sees this in us ourselves. It may be that in one respect we will something which in another respect we pointedly do not will. In ordinary speech we recognize such complexity with answers such as "Yes and no" and "I do and I don't." These apparent contradictions are really brief ways of appealing to an aspectival distinction.[24]

ENDNOTES

[1]Michel Montaigne, "Of the inconsistency of our actions," *Essays*, Bk. II, Ch. 1, in *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, trans. by Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 244. Many of Montaigne's examples are of self-differing between different times, whereas I am concerned with self-differing at the same time also. What leads me to think we are talking about the same sort of thing is his statement, "I have nothing to say about myself absolutely, simply, and solidly, without confusion and without mixture, or in one word, *Distinguo* is the most universal member of my logic." (p. 242)

[2]Other examples: Think of the bittersweet feelings one has toward a misfortune that brings good, such as a painful accident that helps one find courage, or a deeply mourned death that sends one's life in a beneficial direction. Even a child can have mixed feelings at the loss of a pet—sad because she misses it, happy because she found its care burdensome. Think of one's ambivalent feelings toward prestigious accomplishments when one is well aware both of the seductiveness and power of success, as well as its high personal cost. Consider a situation of conflict with someone with whom you empathize deeply, a spouse or a child say, for instance disciplining a child when you know full well the behavior was outrageous and yet you feel his resultant misery. Think of walking up the stairs to an important interview,

when you want to go forward and yet want also to go backward enough that it gives your progress an unreal, dreamlike quality. In these cases, you regret the misfortune and you don't regret it; you want prestige and you don't want it; you want to discipline the child and you don't want to; you want to go forward and you don't want to.

[3]See Section 10.

[4]I've found a similar point, concerning self-deception, on p. 41 of Brian P. McLaughlin, "On the Very Possibility of Self-Deception," in Roger T. Ames and Wimal Dissanayake, eds., *Self and Deception* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996). This same sort of answer could be adapted to defeat another proposal: One might propose to use Geach's notion of relative identity to explain how someone might differ from himself. Suppose numerically distinct sub-selves are one and the same self. It might be that one sub-self has a property the other lacks, yet they are the same self. But again, the question is does the self differ from itself? If yes, the contradiction remains; if no, the contradiction is not resolved. Peter Geach, "Identity," *The Review of Metaphysics* 21 (1967), pp. 3-12, and "Ontological Relativity and Relative Identity," in Milton K. Munitz, ed., *Logic and Ontology* (New York: New York University Press, 1973), pp. 287-302.

[5]David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Eric Steinberg, 2d. ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), Sec. IV, Pt. II, p. 24.

[6]It is no use reversing things and saying that he continues the enquiry because being a philosopher entails or explains his dissatisfaction, and being an agent doesn't. For he does not pursue the philosophical enquiry when being just an agent. As agent he is *not* dissatisfied. It is not simply that he is dissatisfied because he is a philosopher and not because he is an agent.

[7]Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. by Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), p. 89.

[8]Ibid., p. 91.

[9]Herbert Fingarette, *Self-Deception* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), pp. 95-96.

[10]I use the phrase 'the discernibility of identicals' not because of its aptness taken literally, but to piggy-back on the common understanding of the phrase 'the indiscernibility of identicals.' This latter names the principle that if something and something are the same thing then they have all the same properties and relations. I deny this conditional, hence the name for my theory. As explained in part IV, however, I endorse the conditional for a restricted number of cases. It turns out there is another essay with this phrase as its name. However the topic there is essentialism and the kinds of changes a persistent entity can endure. J. M. E. Moravcsik, "The Discernibility of Identicals," *The Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976), pp. 587-98.

[11]In other words, " . . . philosophical decisions are nothing but the reflections of common life, methodized and corrected." Hume, *Enquiry*, Sec. XII, Part III, p. 112. To my mind, this is not to say that present ordinary claims aren't influenced by earlier metaphysical revisions. We start from where we are.

[12]Propositions using such terms have been called 'reduplicative' and 'reflexive'. A name for what I am calling qualifiers could be fashioned out of these. But it seems to me that these do not convey as well in current English the use to which the expressions are put. Allan Bäck uses the former in *The Theory of Reduplication*, thesis (Ph.D.) The University of Texas at

Austin, 1979. Benson Mates following Leibniz uses the latter in *The Philosophy of Leibniz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 131.

Examples of the use of "qualifiers" by philosophers in ways I hope are illuminated by my discussion include:

> If we consider quantity as it is presented in the imagination—and this is what we more frequently and readily do—we find it to be finite, divisible, and made up of parts. But if we consider it intellectually and conceive it in so far as it is substance—and this is very difficult—then it will be found to be infinite, one, and indivisible, as we have already sufficiently proved. Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics* Part I, Prop. 15, Scholium, trans. by Samuel Shirley, in Steven M. Cahn, ed., *The Classics of Western Philosophy*, 3d. ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977), p. 521.

> [I]nsofar as these ideas are merely modes of thought, I see no inequality among them; they all seem to proceed from me in the same manner. But insofar as one idea represents one thing and another idea another thing, it is obvious that they do differ very greatly from one another. René Descartes, Meditation Three, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 3d. ed., trans. by Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), p. 27.

> Thus insofar as I have been created by the supreme being, there is nothing in me by means of which I might be deceived or be led into error; but insofar as I participate in nothingness or non-being, that is, insofar as I am not the supreme being and lack a great many things, it is not surprising that I make mistakes. Descartes, Meditation IV, p. 36.

> Sensual Pleasure qua Pleasure is Good & desirable. by a Wise Man. but if it be Contemptible tis not quâ pleasure but qua pain or Cause of pain. or (w^{ch} is the same thing) of loss of greater pleasure. George Berkeley, *Philosophical Commentaries*, Sec. 773, in *Philosophical Works*, ed. by M. R. Ayers (London: Dent, 1975), p. 326.

> My practice, you say, refutes my doubts. But you mistake the purport of my question. As an agent, I am quite satisfied in the point; but as a philosopher, who has some share of curiosity, I will not say scepticism, I want to learn the foundation of this inference. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Eric Steinberg, 2d. ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), Sec. IV, Pt. II, p. 24.

> When I endeavour, to examine my own conduct, when I endeavour to pass sentence upon it, and either to approve or condemn it, it is evident that, in all such cases, I divide myself, as it were, into two persons; and that I, the examiner and judge, represent a different character from that other I, the person whose conduct is examined into and judged of. . . . But that the judge should, in every respect, be the same with the person judged of, is as impossible, as that the cause should, in every respect, be the same with the effect. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. by D. D. Raphael and A. L. MacFie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 113.

> But if our Critique is not in error in teaching that the object is to be taken *in a twofold sense*, namely as appearance and as thing in itself; if the deduction of the concepts of understanding is valid, and the principle of causality therefore applies only to things taken in the former sense, namely, in so far as they are objects of experience—these

same objects, taken in the other sense, not being subject to the principle—then there is no contradiction in supposing that one and the same will is, in the appearance, that is, in its visible acts, necessarily subject to the law of nature, and so far *not free*, while yet, as belonging to a thing in itself, it is not subject to that law, and is therefore *free*. Immanuel Kant, "Preface to Second Edition," *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 28.

Therefore a rational being must regard himself qua intelligence (and hence not from the side of his lower powers) as belonging not to the world of sense but to the world of understanding. Therefore he has two standpoints from which he can regard himself and know laws of the use of his powers and hence of all his actions: first, insofar as he belongs to the world of sense subject to laws of nature (heteronomy); secondly, insofar as he belongs to the intelligible world subject to laws which, independent of nature, are not empirical but are founded only on reason. Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Sec. 3, trans. by James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 53

I haven't stumbled across recent examples except for this: "Again, the person who lies to himself is apparently dishonest and insincere, insofar as he is a liar, but innocent and genuinely mistaken insofar as he is the victim of a lie." Michael W. Martin, "Morality and Self-Deception: Paradox, Ambiguity, or Vagueness," *Man and World* 12 (1979), pp. 47-60. Here, however, the author thinks the apparent self-differing is an illusion.

And this: "The 'extralinguistic' items include the language itself—in the role of *being mentioned*, whereas the intralinguistic realm is the language in the role *being used*. Haim Gaifman, "Is the 'Bottom-up' Approach from the Theory of Meaning to Metaphysics Possible?" *The Journal of Philosophy* 93 (1996), pp. 373-407.

[13]The analogues in terms of parts to the sentences to come are roughly,

(1') It is not true that there is a white part that is red.

(2') There is a part which is not white, that is red.

(3') There is a part which is white, that is not red.

[14]The example here is from Hume whose discussions of distinctions of reason, abstract ideas, and identity have greatly influenced this essay (though in the end I disagree with his express position). David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), Book I, Part I, Sec. VII, p. 25.

[15]It may be that being not white and being non-white come apart in a way I have not taken notice of. The first might simply be a denial of whiteness. The second might be the affirmation of having a color other than whiteness (perhaps as in this country's system of racial classification). Thus insofar as the globe is spherical it is not white, but in that respect it might be not non-white either. This would be because sphericality is not a color. But these distinctions are too fine to be relevant here; 'non-' is a helpful way to convey what it is for 'not' to have short scope in these contexts.

[16]Since no one aspect has less title to be identical with the unqualified individual than any other, then if any is identical with it then all are and so they are identical with each other contrary to the initial supposition.

[17]Cf. George Pitcher, *Berkeley* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 150-52.

[18]Cf. Hume, *Treatise*, Appendix note to Book I, page 20, line 17, p. 637.

[19]Cf. Hume, *Treatise*, Book I, Part II, Sec. II, pp. 30-31. See also G. W. Leibniz, letter to Arnauld of April 30, 1687, in *The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence,* trans. by H. T. Mason (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), p. 121.

[20]The same distinctions in the scope of 'not' discussed earlier apply whether the qualifier is used sententially or individually.

[21]See Allan Bäck, "Syllogisms with Reduplication in Aristotle," *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 23 (1982), pp. 453-58, and E. J. Ashworth, "The Doctrine of Exponibilia in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," *Vivarium* 11 (1973), p. 159.

[22]Cf. Maurice J. Grajewski, *The Formal Distinction of Duns Scotus* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1944), pp. 97-98. Related distinctions are the modal distinction of Suarez, the virtual distinction of Thomas Aquinas, and various distinctions of reason appealed to by various authors. See Francis Suarez, *On the Various Kinds of Distinctions*, trans. by Cyril Vollert (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1947). For a modern discussion of a distinction of reason see Hume, *Treatise*, pp. 24-25.

[23]For a discussion of what makes unities unities, see Donald L. M. Baxter, "Identity in the Loose and Popular Sense," *Mind* 97 (1988), pp. 575-582, and "Many-One Identity," *Philosophical Papers* 17 (1988), 193-216. The latter presages the theory presented in the current essay, as does my "Identity through Time and the Discernibility of Identicals," *Analysis* 49 (1989), pp. 125-131.

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