

# “The compound mass we term SELF”: Mary Shepherd on selfhood and the difference between mind and self

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## Abstract

In this paper, I argue for a novel interpretation of Shepherd's notion of selfhood. In distinction to Deborah Boyle's interpretation, I contend that Shepherd differentiates between the mind and the self. The latter, for Shepherd, is an effect arising from causal interactions between mind and body—specifically those interactions that give rise to our present stream of consciousness, our memories, and that can unite these two. Thus, the body plays a constitutive role in the formation of the self. The upshot of this interpretation is that it can dissolve the problem of individuating mind that Boyle identifies. Briefly, the problem consists in Shepherd seemingly individuating minds in terms of their associated bodies and bodies in terms of the minds they are united with. My interpretation, however, allows to see that Shepherd neither wants nor needs to individuate the mind in isolation of the body and to read the passages, in which the problem seems to arise, as being about what makes living beings individual—with mind and body both playing a crucial role in this context.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on Mary Shepherd's notion of selfhood.<sup>1</sup> In distinction to Boyle's (2023, 218–21, 226–30) recently defended interpretation, which identifies the mind with the self, I argue that the self is the product (i.e., effect) of the

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causal interactions of an *embodied* mind—specifically those interactions that give rise to our present stream of consciousness, our memories, and that can unite these two.<sup>2</sup> The main upshot of this reading is that it can dissolve the problem of individuating minds that Boyle (2023, 230–33; 2020, § 5) sees arising for Shepherd. In a nutshell, the problem consists in Shepherd's seemingly circular way of individuating minds in terms of their bodies and bodies in terms of the minds they are associated with; this also entails that there is no way to individuate minds in isolation of their bodies (e.g., Boyle, 2020, 110–11). While I agree with Boyle on the latter bit, the reading defended here shows that this is not a problem for Shepherd because she neither needs nor wants to individuate the mind in isolation of the body. Rather, the mind's embodiment is that which allows it to become individual. To put it more generally, these passages, I argue, are best understood as a form of causal analysis where Shepherd individuates specific causes (i.e., mind and body) in virtue of their interaction and the effects they give rise to (such as the self).<sup>3</sup>

I defend my reading and argue for its upshot in four steps. In Section 2, I outline Shepherd's idiosyncratic notion of causation and the basics of her notion of matter (or bodies) and mind as capacities or causes.<sup>4</sup> In Section 3 I argue against Boyle's interpretation which identifies the self with the mind and demonstrate that the “complicate being self” (EPEU 154) is the effect of the causal interactions of mind and body—and thus that the body plays a constitutive role in the (causal) formation of the self.<sup>5</sup> In section 4, I discuss how this interpretation fits with Shepherd's discussion of the afterlife before I show in Section 5 in more detail how the problem of individuating minds can be dissolved on my interpretation.

## 2 | THE BASICS: MATTER AND MIND AS CAUSES

In order to understand the reading I defend in the following sections, it is prerequisite to clarify Shepherd's notion of causation as well as her technical vocabulary when it comes to mind and matter.

Shepherd's EPEU is dedicated to an analysis of the “operations of our mind” with the goal of demonstrating “how it operates ‘when acting as a cause’” (EPEU xv). Yet, as Shepherd points out (EPEU xi–xiii), this analysis rests on crucial insights from her first book ERCE. In ERCE, Shepherd's main aim is to refute Hume's “doctrine of the relation of Cause and Effect” (ERCE 9) by showing that the two *are* necessarily connected (ERCE 27–28). She argues against a conception of causality as a bipartite relation whereby the effect (necessarily) *follows* the cause. Rather, Shepherd contends that causality is *at least* a tripartite relation. This is suggested when she defines a “cause” as “such an action of an object, as shall enable it, in conjunction with another, to form a new nature, capable of exhibiting qualities varying from those of either of the objects cojoined” (ERCE 63). According to Shepherd, something is a cause if it is conjoined with something else to form a “new nature”—that is, an effect. While she admits that it is almost impossible for us not to think of this relation in terms of a “before and after”, she in fact denies that the effect *follows* the conjunction, holding instead that the effect is “synchronous” and “included in it” (ERCE 50). She illustrates this point in ERCE by saying that “Cause and Effect, might be presented by  $A \times B = C$ , therefore  $C$  is included in the mixture of the objects called cause” (ERCE 141).<sup>6</sup>

Although there is more that can be said about Shepherd's notion of causation, the most important thing going forward is the following: Shepherd's notion of causation is crucial for understanding how mind and body causally interact to give rise to the self (cf. Section 3). She repeatedly characterizes mind in causal terms. For instance, she writes that “MIND is the CAPACITY OR CAUSE, for *sensation in general*” (EPEU 155).<sup>7</sup> ‘Sensation’ for Shepherd is a “generic term” (EPEU 5) that encompasses “every consciousness whatever” (EPEU 6). This ranges from the sensations of “present sensible qualities” (EPEU 136) to the sensations of passions such as “pleasure or pain” (EPEU 66). Against Reid's view (e.g., IHM 6.10) she argues that perceptions are also sensations (EPEU 7, 24), although she agrees with him that it makes sense to distinguish between perception and sensation in that the former are a *special* kind of sensation because they are “taken notice of by the mind” (EPEU 9). That is, they are sensations that the mind explicitly registers and is aware of having—Boyle (2020, 97) calls this an understanding of perceptions as “second-order sensations”. Moreover, in distinction to Berkeley, who believes that sensations are a subclass of ideas (e.g., PHK 4–5),

Shepherd understands various species of ideas such as the “IDEAS of memory, reason, imagination, expectation, &c. variously compounded” (EPEU 142) as subclasses of sensation.

In a nutshell, Shepherd characterizes the mind as a ‘capacity’ or ‘cause’ for consciousness, although given her understanding of causation it is more precise to say that mind is a *partial* cause for consciousness. That is, the mind needs to mix with something else to cause consciousness. This something is matter, or a material body, which Shepherd defines as “*the capacity of exhibiting upon a sentient nature* [i.e., a mind], *the sense of solid EXTENSION in general*” (EPEU 242). That is, according to Shepherd, matter is that which can causally interact with the mind to produce the effect that is a sensation of solid extension.<sup>8</sup> There is, however, one material object that plays a particularly important role in allowing the mind to cause consciousness: the brain, which Shepherd characterizes as “the exponent of the powers of the soul” (EPEU 37; see also EPEU 160).<sup>9</sup> Further, she maintains that “a different action of brain is wanted for each *variety of sensation*” (ERCE 171). Shepherd suggests, for instance, that there is a particular “action of the brain and the mind” which is “deemed color” (EPEU 95).

The causal role of the brain (and by extension of the human body more generally, cf. EPEU 348–49) will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections. For now, it suffices to have established what Shepherd understands by cause and effect and that the mind and the brain are causes that interact to produce sensations or consciousness. However, it is important to note that not *only* the mind and the brain are required for sensations. While there are instances where the causal interactions of the two suffice for a sensation to arise (as in dreams, cf. EPEU 160), there are also many occasions where particular sensations may only arise if the organs of sense (e.g., EPEU 15) and external objects (e.g., EPEU 97) become part of the causal mixture. To put it differently, the mind and the brain are necessary but not sufficient for the (causal) production of consciousness.

### 3 | THE ROLE OF THE BODY IN CONSTITUTION OF THE SELF

In this section I argue that Shepherd is committed to the view that the “complicate being *self*” (EPEU 154) is compound and that this “compound mass we term SELF” (EPEU 152) arises from the causal interactions of an embodied mind. I will defend this interpretation by, first, dealing with the key passages for Boyle’s reading in which Shepherd seems to identify the mind with the self, before demonstrating that the importance of what Shepherd calls “the *sense of continuous existence*” (EPEU 154), which Boyle acknowledges, entails that the body plays a causally formative role in the constitution of the self.

Boyle (2020, 105; 2023, 218) contends there are several passages in Shepherd’s writings in which the latter identifies the mind with the self: Shepherd writes of “the mind, or object termed *self*” (EPEU 15), speaks of the “*the continuous existence of an individual mind, or self*” (EPEU 133), and calls the self a “sentient principle” (EPEU 58, 103)—a term she also seems to use to refer to the mind (EPEU 15). On a closer look, however, these passages are less instructive than they appear to be. First, note that Shepherd does not equate the mind with the self in EPEU 15 but with “the object termed *self* (my emphasis)”. That is, Shepherd is not claiming that mind and self are the same. Rather, she can be understood as making a point about our way of speaking and to suggest that we often talk *as if* the mind and the self are the same.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, Shepherd does not identify the self with the mind in EPEU 133, but with “*an individual mind*”. This is important because, as I argue in more detail in Section 5, it is a key contention of the reading defended here that a mind only becomes individual through its embodiment. Thus, passages in which Shepherd identifies the self with an *individual mind* are inconclusive taken at face value, unless it could be decisively shown that there is no important distinction between the mind as a general capacity for sensation (cf. Section 2) and an individual mind.

The case, however, is more complicated with Shepherd’s reference to the self as a “sentient principle” (EPEU 58, 103) because she also seems to use the phrase to speak about the mind. In contrast to Boyle (2023, 218; 2020, 105), I believe that Shepherd’s reference to ‘the sentient principle termed mind’ at EPEU 15 does not clearly establish that she uses that phrase to denote the mind. Similarly to Shepherd’s remark, made previously on the same page, about the mind being “termed self”, Shepherd can be seen as making a point about our way of speaking about the

mind and the self: we often do not draw a sharp distinction between these, when we talk about the self and the mind and sometimes use ‘sentient principle’ to refer to the one or the other. But even though Shepherd does not clearly use the term ‘sentient principle’ to refer to the mind in EPEU 15, there is another instance where she does. In EPEU 217, she writes of “the *mind*, or *sentient principle* and capacity”.<sup>11</sup> But on a closer look it becomes evident that this apparent identification is consistent with the interpretation of EPEU 15 as saying that ‘sentient principle’ is or can be used to refer to the mind and the self.

First, consider that in this passage Shepherd also seems to identify the mind with ‘capacity’ and, thus, by extension seemingly with the ‘sentient principle’. But the term ‘capacity’ does not refer exclusively to the mind. In fact, she also uses it when characterizing matter in Essay 3 dedicated to arguing against strong forms of occasionalism (EPEU 242). But as the first section has shown, Shepherd distinguishes matter from mind. So, what seems like an identification of ‘mind’ and ‘capacity’ in EPEU 217 is rather to be understood as Shepherd implying that the mind is a capacity. While we can use the term ‘capacity’ to refer to the mind, this does not entail that the terms ‘mind’ and ‘capacity’ are synonymous and that only minds are capacities—after all matter is characterized as a capacity as well. Similarly, it may seem at first sight as if Shepherd is identifying ‘mind’ with ‘sentient principle’. But actually, she ought to be understood as saying that the mind is a sentient principle, without wanting to imply that ‘mind’ and ‘sentient principle’ are completely synonymous. At least as a matter of fact we often use ‘sentient principle’ to refer to things other than mind such as the self.

Second, it is worth noting that Shepherd's terminology would be fundamentally inconsistent if she is taken to identify the mind with the self just in virtue of using ‘sentient principle’ in reference to both. For, shortly after calling the self a ‘sentient principle’ in EPEU 58, Shepherd equates the self with a ‘sentient being’ (EPEU 59). Thus, by extension Shepherd would then seem to identify the sentient principle with the sentient being and thus also the mind with the sentient being. But looking at all the passages in which Shepherd uses ‘sentient being’ (EPEU 40, 70, 204, 265–66), it becomes evident that she does not use the latter phrase to denote the mind. In EPEU 40 and 204, for instance, she uses ‘sentient being’ to refer to a living organism, while in EPEU 70 or 265–66 she uses it to denote a combination of the mind and the senses (i.e., something bodily). Thus, if Shepherd really intended to identify the self with the sentient principle and thus also with the mind and, crucially, the sentient being, her usage of this terminology would seem hopelessly inconsistent. But this problem of inconsistency does not arise if Shepherd's describing of the self as a ‘sentient principle’ is understood in the context of her implicit claim in EPEU 15 that we often do not draw a sharp distinction between the mind and the self when talking about them, and thus use terms interchangeably that actually do not denote precisely the same.

Briefly put, the passages Boyle identifies in support of her reading are not as decisive as they appear to be at first sight. For considered in themselves they do not demonstrate that Shepherd is committed to the view that mind and self are identical. In fact, most of them are consistent with an interpretation according to which the self (as an effect) is different from the mind (as a partial cause). This holds particularly considering that Shepherd implicitly distinguishes between the *simple* mind and the *compounded* self.<sup>12</sup>

As Boyle (2020, 103–4; 2023, 220–21) notes Shepherd is clearly committed to the simplicity of the mind. For instance, she writes that the mind is a “*simple* capacity for general sensation” (EPEU 15; see also EPEU 48, 207, 217, 239, 374). In contrast, Shepherd calls the self a “*complicate* being” (EPEU 154) and a “*compound* mass” (EPEU 152). Boyle (2023, 226) admits that a “*natural way*” to understand these claims is that Shepherd is saying that the self is a “*compound of mind and body*”, and so Boyle asks “[h]ow could a simple mind be identical with a compound self” (Boyle, 2023, 228). In answering this question Boyle (2023, 226–27) quotes longer passages from EPEU 152–54—in which Shepherd discusses how we come to have knowledge of “*our own independent existence*” (EPEU 152)—and argues that Shepherd ultimately endorses the view that “[s]elf is a compound of the capacity to think and the continuous consciousness—the series of conscious sensations—that results from the use of that capacity” (Boyle, 2023, 228).

According to Boyle, the difference between the simple mind and the compounded self comes down to a difference in a “*broader and narrower*” sense in which Shepherd employs these terms (and which interpreters must keep apart when reading her). In the narrower sense, Shepherd uses the terms ‘mind’ and ‘self’ to refer to the mind as a

cause merely, i.e., to the mind as the “general capacity to produce sensations,” which is simple (Boyle, 2023, 228). In the broader sense, the terms refer to this capacity *and* the “train of sensations” (i.e., the effects) it produces (Boyle, 2020, 107). In distinction to this, I argue that ‘mind’ and ‘self’ are not synonymous but used in different senses to denote different entities. In other words, I defend a reading that is closer to the “natural way” (Boyle, 2023, 226) of understanding Shepherd’s notion of self. More specifically, I argue that the self is the effect of causal mind–body interactions, specifically the one’s required to give rise to our present stream of consciousness, memories, and the union of both.<sup>13</sup>

Consider the crucial point that Boyle (2023, 227–28) isolates in Shepherd’s remarks on EPEU 152–54<sup>14</sup>: Shepherd rejects the notion that (personal) identity has anything to do with “*sameness of particles*” (EPEU 154), instead emphasizing “the *sense of continuous existence*”, which is but the “the union of the *ideas of memory*, with the *impressions of present sense*” (EPEU 154). Boyle (2023, 227–28; 2020, 107) convincingly argues that the rejection of the “sameness of particles” is an implicit reference to Locke’s *Essay* (cf. *Essay* 2.27.4–6). Boyle takes this as a sign that Shepherd adopts a broadly Lockean notion of person- and selfhood, according to which the body does not play a constitutive role in the formation of the self. As Boyle (2023, 228) puts it, the “identity of particles is irrelevant to the identity of selves, and [the] ‘sense of continuous existence’ is relevant”.<sup>15</sup> This, however, underestimates that acknowledging the importance of the “*sense of continuous existence*” (EPEU 154), entails that the body plays a constitutive role in the formation of the self because the body plays a causal role for this sense to arise.

In order to see this it is prerequisite to understand what Shepherd means when she says that “the *sense of continuous existence*” consists in “the union of the *ideas of memory*, with the *impressions of present sense*” (EPEU 154). At first sight, Shepherd’s analysis of the ‘sense of continuous existence’ sounds similar to Reid, who claims that “there can be no memory of what is past without the conviction that we existed at the time remembered” (EIP 3.4). That is, we can become aware of our own continued existence whenever we realize that we currently have sensations or remember sensations we had.<sup>16</sup> In such instances we also become aware of the “relation that exists between the *idea* of remembered existence and the *sensation* of present existence” (EPEU 138), as Shepherd puts it when discussing what the “*objects of memory*” are (EPEU 137).<sup>17</sup> Crucially, however, these objects, as well as the previously mentioned ideas of memory and impressions of present sense (EPEU 154), all require the body to exist. After all, they are sensations and they, for Shepherd, are the effect of the causal interaction of mind and body, and more particularly the brain (cf. Section 2). As Shepherd writes in the section subsequent to her discussion of personal identity, which is about the “*essential difference between body and mind*” (EPEU 156):

Practically, sensation in *general* is never known, but in company with that which excites the *sensation of extension in particular*, and which seems so much a *part* of the whole cause necessary for sensation in general that under the form and action of the brain, it only seems capable of being elicited.

(EPEU 156)

In this passage, Shepherd first closely connects the mind, which is a capacity for sensation in general, with the body (i.e., that “which excites the sensation of extension in particular”) (cf. Section 2). She then goes on to argue that the body, and in particular the brain, is (causally) required for sensations to arise.<sup>18</sup>

In short, the formation of the self requires specific causal interactions between mind and body because these interactions result in a variety of sensations such as the ideas of memory and impressions of present sense. These sensations, in turn, are united to form the “the *sense of continuous existence*” (EPEU 154) which is crucial to the persistence of the self. But the body, or more precisely the brain, is not only required for the existence of the components that are united. Shepherd also holds that the brain is necessary for the union itself. For in the same section on the essential difference between mind and body, Shepherd discusses the “*resurrection for the dead*” (EPEU 157) and goes on to write:

Now if the causes for sentience, *minus* the brain, find in the great womb of nature any other cause equal to the brain, a finer body, an ethereal stimulus, or anything which may *help to unite memory with sense*, then the difficulty attending the notion of the resurrection vanishes. (EPEU 158)<sup>19</sup>

I will discuss the difficulty Shepherd mentions here in more detail in the following section. For now, it suffices to note that this difficulty is concerned with the afterlife and the question whether there is something like a “personal consciousness” (EPEU 384) in the afterlife. That is, Shepherd wonders whether the self ends with death or can continue. For the present purpose the vital thing to consider is the following: Shepherd claims that this difficulty can be resolved if there is something (an ‘ethereal stimulus’ or ‘finer body’) that can replace its brain and, crucially, its function in helping to unite memory with sense.<sup>20</sup> In other words, Shepherd explicitly acknowledges that the brain plays an important role in the production of our “*sense of continuous existence*” (EPEU 154) which is “relevant” to our “identity of selves”, as Boyle (2023, 228) puts it.

In sum, if it is acknowledged that the “*sense of continuous existence*” (EPEU 154) is relevant for the self and its identity, this entails that one also needs to acknowledge that the body plays a causally formative role in the constitution of the self. First, the body, and more particularly the brain, is required to provide the material (i.e., impressions of present sense and ideas of memory) that form the union that is this ‘sense of continuous existence’. Second, Shepherd even goes as far as to say that the brain is causally co-responsible for the mind–body union itself.<sup>21</sup> This reading is also consistent with Shepherd’s claim, made in the context of discussing dreams, that the self can pass “from place to place” (EPEU 103), while the mind “separated from the ideas of our bodies [...] has no relation to space, or place” (EPEU 58), as Shepherd puts it when discussing the notion of ‘outwardness’ and the relation between mind, sensations, and space.<sup>22</sup> Finally, note that my interpretation, according to which the self results from the causal interactions of an embodied mind, can also do justice to Shepherd’s distinction between the simple mind and the complex self. In contrast to Boyle’s reading, there is no need to introduce a distinction between different uses of the terms ‘self’ and ‘mind’ because these terms actually denote different things. The self is complex or compounded because it is the effect of causal interactions of the simple mind with the body and brain more particularly, and a wide variety of sensations.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4 | THE AFTERLIFE AND THE SELF

The previous section has established that Shepherd believes the self to be the result of the causal interactions of the living mind–body compound that is a human being. Specifically, the constitution of the self requires the interactions that are required for causing the ‘impressions of present sense’, the ‘ideas of memory’, and their union. At least as far as *living* human beings are concerned, these interactions depend on the existence of a brain.<sup>24</sup> In this section I demonstrate how this reading fits with Shepherd’s discussion of the afterlife despite initially giving rise to a worry. For Shepherd speaks of the “dispersion of the particles of the present gross body by death” (EPEU 158), which, on the reading defended here, entails that the self cannot persist. This, however, seemingly conflicts with Shepherd’s commitment to the view that human beings can “retain” their “individual consciousness of personality” (EPEU 378) in the afterlife.<sup>25</sup>

In order to dispel this worry, it is necessary to take a step back to look briefly at the broader context in which Shepherd’s discussion of the afterlife (e.g., EPEU 158, 377–85) takes place.<sup>26</sup> As Jolley (2015, 2) notes, questions about the afterlife and particularly concerning the resurrection of human beings were a “touchy” subject even when Locke was alive, and it was still a contested subject at Shepherd’s time of writing, as is suggested by her speaking of “the difficulty attending the notion of the resurrection” (EPEU 158; see also EPEU 384). The difficulty Shepherd mentions rests on two doctrines.

On the one hand there is a (philosophical) commitment to an immortal soul (Jolley, 2015, 2), which Shepherd shares. Not only does she speak of the “immortality of the soul” (EPEU 378), but also of the “eternity of mind”

(see the running title of Essay 10, EPEU 372–385). The latter is important because Shepherd clearly suggests that the terms ‘soul’ and ‘mind’ designate the same, when she writes the following in her Essay 6 (EPEU 296–313), which is dedicated to showing that sensible qualities cannot be causes: the “capacity for sensations in general” can be “designated” by terms such as “soul, mind, spirit”.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, the previously mentioned difficulty comes about because of the (theological) doctrine—prominently articulated in 1 Cor. 15 by St. Paul—that my soul survives death until Judgment Day when it is reunited with my now resurrected body.<sup>28</sup> This raises a series of questions as, for example, Locke pointedly puts it: “They [the dead] shall be raised that is said over & over. But how they are raised or with what bodys they shall come the Scripture as far as I have observed is perfectly silent” (Locke 2002; *Writings on religion*, 237).

For Shepherd, however, there is primarily one question of interest. This becomes evident when she writes the following<sup>29</sup>:

The proper question, therefore, concerning the immortality of the soul, is not whether it can survive the body as a continuous existence [...] But the inquiry should be, whether when the organs which are in relation to any individual capacity, undergo the change called DEATH, if the continuing mental capacity become simple in its aptitudes again, or, whether it remain so far in an altered state by what it has gone through in the present life, that it continues as the result of that modification. EPEU 378–79

The ‘individual capacity’ Shepherd is speaking of above is her way of referring to the mind or soul, and thus she asking the following question: does the mind become simple again or does it remain in a modified or ‘altered’ state? If it is the former, the mind or soul is “lost in the eternal ocean of mind” (EPEU 378), while in the latter case it would “retain its individual consciousness of personality” (EPEU 376), which would allow the mind or soul to be “improved and go on in a state of moral amelioration” (EPEU 376).

Ultimately, Shepherd contends that the “testimony of scripture” renders the second option more likely and so there will be a “renewal of conscious memory” (EPEU 384).<sup>30</sup> This makes sense given that the ‘testimony of scripture’ she is referring to in all likelihood includes the Paulian doctrine of the reunion between soul and resurrected body. For if the self is an effect arising from mind–body interactions, it holds that as soon as they are reunited that is, the mind re-embodied in the old body, the causal interactions that were required for the “*sense of continuous existence*” (EPEU 154) can carry on and the formerly mortal self persist.

However, there is a problem concerning the time between our death and resurrection. After all, Shepherd says that death leads to a “dispersion of the particles of the present gross body” (EPEU 158) and this includes the brain, which plays such a crucial role for the “*sense of continuous existence*” (EPEU 154; see Section 3). Shepherd implicitly acknowledges this problem when she speaks of “*the difficulty attending the notion of the resurrection (my emphasis)*” (EPEU 158). But, according to Shepherd, this problem would vanish if there were a “cause equal to the brain, a finer body, an ethereal stimulus”, as long as it can “*help to unite memory with sense*” (EPEU 158), because this would ensure the “*sense of continuous existence*” (EPEU 154) (and presumably the self itself) could persist. Shepherd even believes it is highly likely that such an alternative exists, since she writes at the end of her discussion of the afterlife that “independent of the inference from scripture, the reunion of memory to future consciousness presents no philosophical difficulty” (EPEU 384).

In other words, as long as there is an ‘ethereal’ alternative to the material body (and the brain specifically) which replaces its function, Shepherd contends that a “personal consciousness” (EPEU 385) can continue in the afterlife.<sup>31</sup> To say, however, that there is no “philosophical difficulty” (EPEU 384) is an overstatement. In order to see this, it helps to distinguish between what I will call in this section the mortal and the ethereal self. While the former is the self that is produced by the causal mind–body interactions of *living* human beings, the latter denotes the self that comes about after the death of a human being once their material body is replaced with an ‘ethereal stimulus’. With this distinction in place, it becomes evident that there are difficulties concerning the continuity of ‘personal



consciousness' into the afterlife. For Shepherd never clarifies how the mortal self of living human beings relates to their ethereal self in the afterlife. Is the ethereal self a continuation of the mortal self? It does not seem that Shepherd can answer this question affirmatively, because she claims in EPEU that “*like effects must have like causes*” (EPEU 99).<sup>32</sup> This entails that a difference in the causes leads to a difference in the effects. Following this the ‘ethereal self’ needs to be different from the ‘mortal self’ because the latter requires a (material) brain, while the former is partially caused by an ‘ethereal stimulus’. It seems then the ethereal self should be thought of as something akin to a placeholder which allows the mind or soul to retain an “individual consciousness of personality” (EPEU 378) in the afterlife along with “the impressions once made on it” (EPEU 388). This placeholder is needed until the Day of Judgment, when mind and body are reunited in resurrection and the—formerly mortal and now resurrected—self can continue. Although this strangely seems to imply that the self takes a break as it were, it is worth noting that this idea is compatible with Shepherd's view that the mortal self also pauses during our lifetime. After all, she says that the self is “suspended in sleep” but “fitted to [be] revive[d]” (EPEU 153). Analogously, one can think of the intermediary state that begins after our death as a period in which the mortal self is ‘suspended’ before it is ‘revived’ on Judgment Day.<sup>33</sup>

In sum, while Shepherd never explicitly comments on the relation between the self in our mortal state, the ‘personal consciousness’ in the intermediary state, and the self after resurrection, the difficulties surrounding this relation can be put aside for the present purpose. These difficulties primarily pertain to Shepherd's understanding of the afterlife. They do, however, not undermine the reading defended here, according to which the (mortal) self results from the causal interactions of an (living) embodied mind—specifically those interactions that give rise to our present stream of consciousness, our memories, and that can unite these two. On the contrary, Shepherd's remarks on the afterlife and the intellectual context clearly suggest that she accepts such a compound view of the self.

## 5 | DISSOLVING THE PROBLEM OF INDIVIDUATING MINDS

In the previous section, I substantiated my reading of Shepherd's notion of self as the effect of the causal interactions of an embodied mind by showing how this interpretation is consistent with her views on the afterlife. In this section, I focus on a key upshot of my interpretation: on this reading the problem of individuating minds is not a problem for Shepherd.

The problem of individuating minds is discussed in detail by Boyle (2020, §5; 2023, 230–33). In a nutshell the problem consists in Shepherd apparently not having a “non-question-begging way to individuate” minds in what Boyle calls the narrower sense (Boyle, 2020, 111; 2023, 233). According to Boyle (2020, §5; 2023, 230–33), this problem arises because Shepherd individuates minds virtue of the bodies they are connected with. For instance, when discussing the immateriality of the mind in Essay 11 Shepherd says, “let such [a capacity to feel] be within the given compass of any individual organization, and the substance would exist as the capacity of an *individual* mind (my emphasis)” (EPEU 388). While the “capacity to feel” refers to the mind, “organization” is a term Shepherd often uses to speak of the bodies of living beings, human and non-human (e.g., ERCE 191; EPEU Essay 12; Boyle, 2020, 110). The point of EPEU 388 is thus that a mind can be considered as an individual mind if it is “within the compass” (i.e., is associated with) an individual body. But for Boyle this seems question begging. After all, at least in the case of human beings Shepherd seems to hold that a body can only be considered as individual because of its connection to a mind. In EPEU 62 Shepherd writes in the context of a discussion about external existence and how outwardness relates to our body that we “consider that *as our own body*, which is within a bound, or certain limit [...] we call the skin” and which “is the source of *conscious* pleasure and pain”.<sup>34</sup>

As Boyle (2020, 110) points out, this problem would be particularly devastating for Shepherd because her “own account of the reality of objects requires that there be many distinct, individual minds/selves,” since the testimony of others is crucial for the question of whether a certain object is outward. According to Shepherd an object can only be considered as outward if it can be “taken notice of by more than the perception of one mind” (EPEU 35).



Consider also the importance of others for the question of whether an external object exists independently of an individual mind. For Shepherd argues that we get the notion of independency of external objects from the fact that one object can affect “many minds in manner which renders it impossible there should be as many objects as minds” (EPEU 80–81). She illustrates this point by saying that if five persons see a pond and walk around it together, they have rounded one pond which is seen five times and not five different ponds (EPEU 81).

Considering the gravity of the problem, it is unsurprising that it has attracted attention. Landy (forthcoming-b) argues that Boyle is right about the existence of the problem but that we ought to understand Shepherd as embracing the problem of individuation: “many of the somewhat strange claims that Shepherd makes about the mind can be read as expressing this position [i.e., that minds cannot be individuated]”.<sup>35</sup> In distinction to this, LoLordo (2022, 32) argues that Shepherd does not have this problem of individuation because EPEU 62 is making an epistemological claim and that Shepherd neither has nor should have an account of individuation. In other words, LoLordo contends the problem of individuating minds is not a problem for Shepherd because the latter is not interested in questions of individuation and does not make (metaphysical) claims about the issue. As will become evident next, I agree with LoLordo inasmuch as I believe that Shepherd has no interest or need to individuate the mind in Boyle’s narrower sense. Yet I disagree with LoLordo in that I argue that Shepherd does have an account of individuation—at least when it comes to embodied minds.

In distinction to LoLordo, and similarly to Boyle, I think that Shepherd is making a metaphysical claim in EPEU 62. That is, I agree with Boyle that Shepherd does want to say that my body is different from your body and all other bodies because it is associated with my mind (and not your or any other mind). Similarly, I agree with Boyle that EPEU 388 expresses the position that my mind is different from your mind or any other mind because it is connected to my body (and not your body or any other body). However, I do not think this leads to a question begging way of individuating minds. For consider that these passages are neither about the individuation of minds nor of bodies. The point Shepherd is making on EPEU 62 is concerned with how *our* body is special for us, and different from things outside of it, not only because it is a source of “conscious pleasure and pain” (since it is connected to *our* mind) but also since within its limits (i.e., the “skin”) we find everything “we call ourselves” (EPEU 62). Similarly, EPEU 388 is about that which makes a mind, such as the one of humans, individual, namely, its embodiment. However, if we take seriously the insight that individual human beings are living embodied minds (most of whom have a self, see note 13) and that these passages (EPEU 62, 388) are primarily concerned with this, the following becomes evident: the seemingly circular passages are best understood as Shepherd pointing to different sides of the same coin, so to speak.

Just as a coin can be individuated by looking at either the tail or the head side, Shepherd can individuate an individual human being (i.e., a living embodied mind) by focusing either on their mind or on their body—both of which are constitutive factors of said individual. For Shepherd, then, it would not make sense to ask how you can individuate a mind apart from its body. As she puts it when arguing against Lawrence’s materialism: “[T]o address the mind is to address the body, which *instantly* acts along and with it, not *after* it. And to address the body is to address the mind—for every sensation, however popularly called *bodily*; requires *mind*” (ERCE 172). In terms of individuation Shepherd is entitled to the following claim: Mind<sub>a</sub> is distinct from Mind<sub>b</sub> because it is united to and causally interacts with Body<sub>a</sub> and not Body<sub>b</sub> and thus belongs to human being<sub>a</sub> and not human being<sub>b</sub>, (and so partially constitutes Self<sub>a</sub> and not Self<sub>b</sub>) and Body<sub>a</sub> is distinct from Body<sub>b</sub> because it is united to and causally interacts with Mind<sub>a</sub> and not Mind<sub>b</sub> and thus belongs to human being<sub>a</sub> and not human being<sub>b</sub>, (and so partially constitutes Self<sub>a</sub> and not Self<sub>b</sub>). To put it differently, a particular self is caused by interactions of a specific mind and a specific body. While it is possible to individuate this particular self (i.e., an effect) in reference to its specific causes, it is also possible to individuate the specific causes in terms of their interaction—that is, as both being causes of something—as well as their effect (i.e., a particular self).<sup>36</sup>

Thus, Shepherd has a non-question begging way of individuating minds (and bodies) as constitutive or causal factors of individual human beings that give rise to the selves of these beings. However, one may push back that this does not solve the problem that Boyle identifies.<sup>37</sup> For Boyle can arguably agree with the proposed solution, but stress that it only works for ‘mind/self’ in the broader sense and not for ‘mind/self’ in the narrower sense that is, for

mind/self considered “strictly” as the “capacity to produce sensation” (Boyle, 2020, 107). This is crucial because according to Boyle (2020, 110; 2023, 233) this is where the problem really lies: Shepherd cannot individuate mind/self in the narrow sense and hence it seems as if there is “only one universal mind” (Boyle, 2023, 233).

Although Boyle is right to point out that we cannot individuate any mind considered purely as a “capacity for sensation” (EPEU 14–15), I disagree that this is problematic for Shepherd. Shepherd has a univocal notion or understanding of mind. That is, Shepherd believes that every mind (including the one belonging to non-human animals, angels, and God) is a capacity for sensation in general.<sup>38</sup> In other words, what Boyle calls the narrower sense of mind/self does not refer to anything that Shepherd, considered in itself, would want to individuate. When Shepherd, for instance, comments on the “essential difference between body and mind” (EPEU 155), she can say that the mind as a “CAPACITY or CAUSE, for sensation in general” is different from the body as a “continually exciting cause, for the exhibition of the perception of extension and solidity on the mind in particular” (EPEU 155) because this holds for any mind (belonging to a human or some other being). From Shepherd's perspective, a mind like the one of a human being, on the other hand, only becomes the object of individuation once it is united with a body and actually manifests the capacity for producing sensations. As interpreters we need not distinguish between different senses in which Shepherd employs the term ‘mind’. Rather, we need to be mindful of the context in which the term is used. It is important to be careful and to separate general remarks about the mind considered purely as a capacity to produce sensations from comments (some of which generally hold) about individual, usually human, minds that are embodied.<sup>39</sup>

Consider, for instance, the previously mentioned passages (EPEU 35, 80–81) concerning Shepherd's account of the reality of objects and their independency. In EPEU 35 Shepherd speaks of the testimony of other “men” (i.e., humans) and thus about (living) human mind–body compounds and not about any capacity to produce sensation in isolation. Similarly, she says that “we gain the notion of independency of objects from observation of one object affecting the many minds in a manner which renders it impossible there should be as many objects as minds” (EPEU 80–81). This might sound as if Shepherd is concerned with different capacities to produce sensation in isolation. But if it is considered that these minds need a body—Shepherd speaks of the “instruments of five organs of sense” (EPEU 80) one sentence prior—to be affected and that she illustrates the whole point by speaking of five “men” walking around a pond, it becomes clear that Shepherd, again, is concerned with individual embodied minds of (living) human beings.

Briefly, on my interpretation the problem of individuating mind dissolves, because this reading acknowledges the importance of embodiment for the general capacity to produce sensations that is the mind to become individual. While Boyle is right to say that Shepherd cannot individuate this capacity considered in itself, this is unproblematic for Shepherd. For her inability to do so does not entail that minds cannot be individuated at all nor does it entail that there only is “one universal mind” (see Boyle, 2020, 110; 2023, 233). Rather, it means that, according to Shepherd, some things universally hold for all minds—or at least for all human minds.

## 6 | CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper has been to introduce and defend a novel interpretation of “the compound mass we term SELF” (EPEU 152). According to this interpretation the self is the effect of the causal interactions of the (living) embodied mind—specifically of those interactions that are required to give rise to our present stream of consciousness, our memories, and that are needed to unite the latter two. I have defended this view against Boyle's interpretation, which holds that the mind and the self are the same, by showing that the passages which seem to support this view are inconclusive. Furthermore, I have argued that Boyle's acceptance of the importance of the ‘sense of continuous existence’ for the self-entails accepting the constitutive role the body plays in the formation of the self. For the body, and more specifically the brain, is needed to give rise to this sense. I also noted that my reading is a more natural fit with Shepherd's distinction between the simple mind and the complex self. Subsequently I have addressed the worry that my reading seems inconsistent with Shepherd's discussion of the afterlife. I argued that the interpretation

defended here is consistent with this discussion because Shepherd accepts the view that the mind (or soul) will be reunited with its old body on Judgment Day and thus the persistence of the (now immortal) self will be possible. While it remains unclear what happens to the self in the intermediary state between death and resurrection, this unclarity is not owed to my interpretation of Shepherd's notion of selfhood but explained by the vague nature of her remarks. In the final section, I have demonstrated the main upshot of my interpretation and argued that it dissolves the problem of individuating minds identified by Boyle. On my interpretation it becomes evident that Shepherd is entitled to individuate a particular mind or a particular body as specific partial causes that interact and together give rise to specific effects such as a particular self. Finally, I have rejected the notion that Shepherd needs or wants to individuate minds considered purely as general capacities for producing sensations. But as noted we, as interpreters, have to be careful to distinguish Shepherd's remarks on the mind considered in isolation that universally hold for all minds, from her general remarks about individual human minds, or from specific remarks about particular (groups of) minds which can also belong to non-human beings.<sup>40</sup>

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Shepherd's notion of selfhood has attracted considerable attention in recent scholarship. Landy [forthcoming-b](#) seems to accept a Boylean interpretation (see Boyle, [2020](#), § 4; [2023](#), 218–21, 226–30) inasmuch as he contends Shepherd's account of the mind is “essentially and irreducibly” first-personal. Antonia LoLordo ([2022](#), 23–32), on the other hand, is committed to the position that the body plays an important role for the constitution of the self. However, as will become evident there are differences in our respective readings in terms of the exact role the body plays.
- <sup>2</sup> While there may be even more (types of) causal interactions required, a detailed causal analysis of the constitution of the self this goes beyond the scope of the present investigation (see note [22](#)). In this paper I contend myself to argue that the body plays a constitutive role in the formation of the self and to caution against equating the self with an (living) embodied mind (see note [13](#)). Moreover, for the sake of clarity, the focus of this investigation is confined to human beings. While Sections [2](#) and [3](#) focus on *living* human beings, Section [4](#) also takes their afterlife into consideration. Matters are slightly more complex in section [5](#) which requires to consider minds belonging to non-human beings as well. This focus, however, does not entail that non-human animals (or angels) do not have minds or selves for Shepherd, or that their minds are individuated differently. In fact, there is reason to believe that she entertains the position that non-human animals, at least those with a brain, have a self and that their mind is also individuated in virtue of the latter's embodiment. For more on Shepherd's views of non-human animal minds and cognition see Fasko ([forthcoming](#)) LoLordo ([2022](#), § 4.3, and [forthcoming](#), §§ 6–8). For more on the question whether non-human animals also have immortal souls see LoLordo, [2022](#), § 4.4.
- <sup>3</sup> While Boyle ([2023](#), 230–33; [2020](#), § 5) does not argue for a solution, LoLordo ([2022](#), 31–32) argues that the problem does not exist because Shepherd is not committed to the claim that bodies are individuated in terms of their associated minds. My solution is closer to Landy ([forthcoming-b](#)) who contends that this problem exists but is ultimately of no great significance for Shepherd.
- <sup>4</sup> Shepherd's theory of causation is also considered in more depth by Bolton, [2019](#) and Paoletti, [2011](#).
- <sup>5</sup> I use the following abbreviations in this paper: ERCE for Shepherd's *Essay on the Relation of Cause and Effect* (Shepherd, [1824](#)) and EPEU for the *Essays on the Perception of an External Universe* (Shepherd, [1827](#), [2020](#)). Unless noted all emphases are found in the original and the page numbers refer to the original pagination.
- <sup>6</sup> Note that it is unclear whether this commitment to the synchronicity of causes and effect and the way it is spelled out by Shepherd entails a primarily temporal claim or whether it entails a (metaphysical) commitment to the numerical identity of causes and effect (cf. LoLordo, [2022](#), 9). As will become evident, however, resolving this issue is beyond the scope of my present investigation. For more detailed treatment of the synchronicity of causation, see Landy, [2020](#). Also cf. LoLordo, [2022](#), §§ 4.4 and 5.3 for more on the problems that a metaphysical interpretation of the synchronicity claim face.

- <sup>7</sup> This characterization of the mind, as a capacity or cause, can be found throughout EPEU (48, 84, 113, 157, 163, 216, 242). For a more detailed discussion of Shepherd's notion of mind cf. Boyle, 2020, § 3; LoLordo, 2022, chap. 4, [forthcoming](#).
- <sup>8</sup> Note that it would be possible for consciousness to arise even without matter, e.g., if God (who is not material, EPEU Essay XI) were to directly interact with the mind. Also consider that this only holds as far as we can know mind and matter because we do not know their “real essence[s]” (EPEU 244) or the one of extension (EPEU 165). For more on the question whether mind and matter are nothing but causal powers for Shepherd see LoLordo, 2022, chap. 4.2; 2021, § 9.7. Finally, it is important to appreciate that external (material) objects are capable of mixing with our organs of sense and giving rise to various sensations of (present) sensible qualities (EPEU 127).
- <sup>9</sup> As will become evident in the third section I agree with Boyle (e.g., 2020, 104) that Shepherd uses ‘mind’ and ‘soul’ interchangeably. But as the next sections show I reject the idea that this also holds for ‘mind’ and ‘self’. Rather these terms denote two different, albeit causally connected, things.
- <sup>10</sup> This way of speaking can be explained by considering Shepherd's commitment to the synchronicity of causes and effect (see note 6) because this commitment entails that cause (i.e., the mind in this case) and effect (i.e., the self) appear to be identical to us. However, note that even on the metaphysical interpretation of the synchronicity claim it would not follow that mind and self are identical because the self would be identical to the *mixture* of causes that is, to whatever the mind mixes with to causally produce the self.
- <sup>11</sup> There are other instances (EPEU 48, 106, 148, 200) in which Shepherd uses the phrase. These, however, are less clear cut because it is not always evident whether she only refers to the mind as a sentient principle or to the mind plus the senses.
- <sup>12</sup> Shepherd's understanding of simplicity and complexity merits further research because it is not entirely clear what this contrast amounts to for Shepherd. In a trivial sense everything that is an effect is compounded or complex because it requires several causes (cf. section 2). But as I argue in the following, by drawing this distinction between mind and self she wants to point to something less trivial. For consider also that Shepherd distinguishes between “simple and compound sensations” (EPEU 240) even though all sensations are effects (EPEU xiv, 60). For the purpose of this paper, it suffices to note that Shepherd, by making this contrast, points to a second-order or non-trivial complexity that sets the self apart from the mind inasmuch as the latter is part of the compound that constitutes the former (see also note 22).
- <sup>13</sup> Note that there may be more (types of) causal interactions required to give rise to the self (note 2). The crucial thing to note for now, however, is that my reading entails that the self cannot be equated with an (living) embodied mind. For while Shepherd seems to equate the self with “a *sphere of certain limited consciousnesses*” (EPEU 266), she also, similarly to Locke's distinction between “man” and “person” (e.g., *Essay* 2.27.6–9), seems to make the following implicit distinction: there is a difference between human beings who are living mind–body compounds (EPEU 400; Fasko 2023, 473–77) and the self that arises from the causal interactions of their embodied mind. This distinction is important because Shepherd's view on what she calls “idioty”—discussed in Essay 7 of EPEU—entails that there are human beings (i.e., living embodied minds) who do not have a self. After all, someone afflicted with ‘idioty’ cannot perceive anything more than the “immediate impressions created by the use of the five organs of sense, and the power of motion” (EPEU 314). Thus, such an individual seems incapable of forming memories or connect these to the present which is crucial for Shepherd's notion of selfhood (cf. EPEU 138). I consider Shepherd's view on “idioty” in more depth elsewhere (Fasko, 2021, § 2).
- <sup>14</sup> In her book Boyle (2023, 226–27) quotes almost the entirety of these pages. Since I agree with Boyle about the crucial point Shepherd is making there I will, for the sake of brevity, forgo to cite the passages as well in detail.
- <sup>15</sup> Shepherd implicitly acknowledges the importance of this sense for the question of selfhood when she writes in EPEU 98 that idea of the self-arises from “any particular given state of sensation, mixed with the consciousness of our own continued existence, and the *idea* of its continually existing cause [i.e., the mind].”
- <sup>16</sup> Note that Shepherd's emphasis on memory implies that human beings may not have a self when they are born. Although Shepherd deems it possible that we already compare ideas during our fetal development (EPEU 105, note) and seems open to the idea that a fetus could already have memories (cf. EPEU 379–81), which would allow the ‘sense of continuous existence’ to arise. But given the importance of the brain, which is established next, Shepherd would need to accept that the self could only begin around week 6 of a pregnancy.
- <sup>17</sup> Shepherd's account of personal identity thus deviates from Reid's after all, who primarily highlights the epistemological function of memories (EIP 3.4). It is also different from Locke's in that respect—at least if the latter is understood in the Reidian manner as needing to claim that the self is (partly) constituted by memories. After all, the memories need to causally interact with the “impression of present sense” according to Shepherd. For more on Locke and personal identity see Weinberg, 2011, and for Reid see Copenhaver, 2006.
- <sup>18</sup> Shepherd goes on to confine this point to living human beings (EPEU 156–59), which is why she is very careful with her wording in the quoted passage in EPEU 156 with “practically”. For now, however, living human beings are the focus of the present section (see note 2) and as far as they are concerned it holds that a brain is required.

- <sup>19</sup> In his interpretation of the passage, Landy ([forthcoming-b](#)) emphasizes Shepherd's claim that the brain "may help to unite memory and sense". While I take his point that the brain is not solely responsible for this union and that mind plays an important causal role, I do not think that this allows us to conclude that the mind "just is the unity of memory with senses" (*ibid.*). On the contrary, if my reading is correct, then the mind is an irreducible part of this union, but so is the body (and particularly the brain).
- <sup>20</sup> See also EPEU 379, where Shepherd suggests in the context of her discussion of the afterlife that there is a question whether there are "any other interfering powers than those of the visible body [from which] sense and memory shall be elicited". This suggests that before this, i.e., during life, the body is crucial in the causal production of memory and sense.
- <sup>21</sup> Shepherd emphasizes the special relation we have to our body in EPEU 62, when she says that our body, i.e., everything within the limits of our skin, is the "source of *conscious* pleasure and pain". For instance, if someone were to slap me in the face, I would become consciously aware of the pain this causes for me, which is explained by the causal interaction of the hand and the skin on my face. I discuss this passage in Section 5 in more detail.
- <sup>22</sup> Peter West and I consider Shepherd's notion of space in depth (see Fasko and West [forthcoming](#)). Also note that this interpretation fits with Shepherd's view of 'idiocy' because someone afflicted with idiocy cannot have a self, yet this person has a mind (note 13).
- <sup>23</sup> For instance, the sensation that arises when I look at my computer united to my memories of writing the previous section can serve this function, but so can the sensations that arise when I close my eyes to remember what I would see outside of my office window and then open them to see the river. Thus, it might seem as if Shepherd endorses a bundle theory of the self in a Humean vein (e.g., T 1.4.6.19; Pike, 1967) and believes that there is "a perpetual flux" (T.1.4.6.4). But even though it is true that that different sensations can unite to form the 'sense of continuous existence' and that the latter is not static in that respect, Shepherd does not believe, in a Humean vein, that there is no diachronic stability to the self at all. For the crucial thing is the *union* of ideas of memory and the impressions of present sense, which can remain stable over time. Moreover, Shepherd does not emphasize the "perpetual flux" (T.1.4.6.4) of our ongoing sensation in the way Hume does, but highlights the importance of the past and our (conscious) access to it – as well as the need of a causal interaction between present and past in forming this union (EPEU 152–54). For more on Hume's account of personal identity and the way he seems to have been dissatisfied with it, see Garrett, 1981 and Greco, 2015 (who does not attribute the bundle theory to Hume). For more on Hume and Shepherd on bundle theories more generally see Landy ([forthcoming-a](#)).
- <sup>24</sup> As the case of "idiocy" illustrated (see note 13), this brain must also function in a roughly regular manner. But 'neurotypical' would be anachronistic and too narrow a requirement, because someone on the spectrum can have a self. The important points are whether the brain works in a way as to allow memories to be generated and united with the present stream of consciousness. I thank [omitted] for highlighting this aspect.
- <sup>25</sup> I thank an anonymous referee for their constructive criticism when pressing me on this point.
- <sup>26</sup> In the following I focus on Shepherd's remarks in EPEU because, as LoLordo (2022, 29) notes, there is reason to assume that Shepherd has "altered her view between the ERCE and the EPEU".
- <sup>27</sup> Hence, I agree with Boyle (2020, 104) and LoLordo (2022, 23) that Shepherd uses 'mind' and 'soul' interchangeably (see also ERCE 171). This also important because someone afflicted with 'idiocy' then can have a soul despite not having a self (note 13) A more detailed reconstruction of Shepherd's argument for the continuous existence of the mind, which goes beyond the present purpose, can be found in: Boyle, 2020, 104–5 and 2023, 221–224); LoLordo ([forthcoming](#)), § 5. For more on Shepherd's argument for the eternity of mind/soul see LoLordo, 2022, 29–30.
- <sup>28</sup> For a more detailed discussion of these two doctrines and the issues they create for orthodox theists, see Jolley, 2015, chap. 1.
- <sup>29</sup> This statement, as well as the overall discussion about the afterlife, is made in the context of Shepherd criticizing the materialists for their failure to distinguish certain bodily organs that Shepherd deems necessary to "elicit each sensation in particular" from the "*continuous* power" that is the mind (EPEU 376). This is an interesting parallel to EPEU 158 because there the afterlife is mentioned in the context of Shepherd discussing the essential difference between mind and body (see EPEU 155; Section 3).
- <sup>30</sup> For my present purpose the details of Shepherd's discussion of these two options and her way of arguing for the retaining of our "individual consciousness of personality" (EPEU 376) can be put aside. For it is only important to understand how Shepherd's view on the afterlife are consistent with her understanding of the self as an effect arising from causal interactions of the embodied mind. For more on Shepherd's views on the afterlife, see Boyle, 2023, 257–63 and LoLordo, 2022, § 4.4.
- <sup>31</sup> It is crucial to note, however, that this does not entail that the brain is not a constitutive causal factor for the self. For it still holds that the brain is required in the case of the selfhood of living human beings. In other words, the brain remains a constitutive causal factor of, what I will call, the *mortal* self.

- <sup>32</sup> See also EPEU 141. Note that this is different from the so-called likeness principle (CLP) which states that like causes must have like effects (see e.g., ERCE 78). But as LoLordo (2022, 10) notes scholars like Fields provide reasons to believe that the CLP is a biconditional for Shepherd.
- <sup>33</sup> Note that Shepherd never explains what happens to the self during those periods of suspension when we sleep and so it would be surprising if offered a detailed explanation of what happens in the intermediary state in the afterlife. After all, the former suspension is something we can experience firsthand during our lifetime, while the latter is beyond the realm of what we can possibly experience as long as we are alive. Also consider that the problem which remains would not disappear on Boyle's reading. On the contrary, as Boyle (2023, 262–63) notes in her discussion of the afterlife, on her interpretation Shepherd does not seem entitled to favor the option that we “retain” our “individual consciousness of personality” (EPEU 378). For, on Boyle's reading, Shepherd has a problem of individuating minds (to be discussed in the next section) which would force Shepherd to accept the “eternal ocean of mind” (EPEU 378) as the only option.
- <sup>34</sup> Even though the problem Boyle identifies is thus primarily concerned with minds belonging to humans and thus consistent with my focus on human beings in this paper (see note 2). I agree with Boyle's more general presentation of the problem. After all, the problem arguably also arises for what Shepherd refers to as (living) conscious beings (ERCE 169) more generally. That is, living beings with a mind, which include non-human animals because their minds are also embodied (EPEU 388).
- <sup>35</sup> It is worth noting that Landy does not explicitly address the worries Boyle (2020, 110) raises concerning the reality of external objects (cf. EPEU 35, 80).
- <sup>36</sup> This way of individuating has the potential to be applied to other objects as well. That is, it might be possible to render it into a general account of individuation. After all, Shepherd draws a close connection between causation and individuation. Consider, for instance, that the causal likeness principle (see note 22) helps her to distinguish ‘natural kinds’ (see LoLordo, 2019). Also note the importance of what Boyle (2023, 68) and me (Fasko 2023, 479) call the ‘causal history’ of objects, for the question what kind of object a particular thing is (see e.g., ERCE 104). However, given the many issues a Shepherdian account of individuation faces and Shepherd's relative silence on it (LoLordo, 2022, 23; Boyle, 2023, 60 note 8), I content myself with having shown that (i) Shepherd can individuate mind, body, and self as causes and effect and (ii) this fits the generality of her remarks on individuation. Thus, while I agree with LoLordo (2022, 32) that Shepherd does not explicitly give us a general account of individuation, I believe, in distinction to LoLordo, that her writings may offer the resources to develop such an account.
- <sup>37</sup> I thank an anonymous referee for their constructive criticism of my former presentation of this point and this section more generally, which was instrumental to improve both.
- <sup>38</sup> This does not mean, however, that there are no differences between the God and humans (see Fasko and West forthcoming, § 3) or humans and non-human animals (LoLordo 2022, 28) in terms of their cognitive behavior. As I argue in detail elsewhere (Fasko forthcoming) these differences, in the case of non-human animals, can be explained by Shepherd, while holding that all these beings have the same kind of mind.
- <sup>39</sup> This also holds for her sometimes general comments about groups of individual embodied minds that include non-human animals such as the one about “inferior understandings” (EPEU 287; Fasko, 2021, § 3). Thus, one can think of Shepherd's remarks on the mind as representing different levels of focus and interest on which Shepherd is commenting. Although matters are complicated by the fact that it is not always clear whether Shepherd is concerned with human minds only and because she does not always explicitly mention the embodiment when speaking of individual minds.
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