I

1. There is a view of identity, now unfamiliar except in name, which warrants reconsideration. Joseph Butler held it, though I mention this mostly to give credit where it is due. Butler's remarks are sketchy and perhaps equivocal. So my attempt to give a more detailed rendition will surely stray beyond what he intended or considered. He explicitly discusses identity through time, but in outline his theory is not restricted to cases involving time. It is a theory concerning identity generally.

Butler alleges that there are two senses of 'identity'-a loose and popular sense and a strict and philosophical one-corresponding to two kinds of identity.[1] The difference is that what are strictly two things cannot be strictly identical, but may well be loosely identical. Butler gives the example of a tree in which 'the present tree' is strictly distinct from 'the tree which stood in the same place fifty years ago', for they share no part. Nonetheless they are 'the same as to all the purposes of property and uses of common life'. They are not strictly identical but are nonetheless loosely identical.[2]

This example with its commentary may tempt one to think that loose identity is not a kind of identity at all. A relation that holds of distinct things cannot be a relation of identity on pain of the contradiction that the distinct are not distinct. But this is too hasty. The strictly two may be loosely one. There would be contradiction in supposing the strictly distinct are not strictly distinct, or that the loosely distinct are not loosely distinct. But so far Butler has just asked us to suppose that the strictly distinct are not loosely distinct, that is, are loosely identical. There is no contradiction yet.

What it looks like is that there are two ways to count the things around us--a strict and philosophical way and a loose and popular way. On the strict way you would point successively and say 'one thing,' 'another thing'. On the loose way pointing just as before you would say 'one thing', 'same thing'. One may strictly count two things and say of them that they

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1 Chisholm asserts that since it does not make sense to talk about two kinds of identity, Butler must- be merely talking about two senses of 'identity'. My concern is more to legitimate talk about kinds of identity than to be dogmatic about what Butler must have meant. Roderick Chisholm, Person and Object, London, Allen and Unwin, I976, p. 92. Cf. also Roderick Chisholm, 'Parts As Essential to Their Wholes', The Review of Metaphysics, I973, p. 595.

2 Joseph Butler, 'Of Personal Identity', The Analogy of Religion, ed. Samuel Halifax, Oxford, Oxford University Press, I849, p. 305.

are loosely identical, that is, count as one when counting loosely. And in fact this is what Butler has done.

Which of these is the way that gives the real count? Do we really have distinct things or not? It seems that Butler should say that there are really strictly distinct things and they are really loosely identical. He has distinguished two kinds of identity after all. So neither way of counting gives the real count. Both give a real count, on this way of thinking.

This is not to say that both give a real but unexhaustive count. One might think that an accurate strict count fails to count what an accurate loose count does (and/or vice versa). But this misses the point. Butler thinks that the strictly distinct are what are loosely identical; what count as many on a strict count, count as one on a loose count. So nothing is uncounted on either count. Both ways of counting give a real and exhaustive count.

2. However, this discussion of counts makes one wonder whether Butler really did distinguish two kinds of identity as opposed to two standards on both of which one kind of identity holds.

Butler says that some strictly distinct things are the same 'as to all the purposes of property and uses of common life'. This may sound like one kind of identity holding on relaxed standards. There are strictly distinct things but on useful or convenient standards they are identical. Analo- gously, a surface which on strict standards is not flat may be flat on loose ones.

3. At this point Butler has been interpreted both as believing there are two kinds of identity (strict vs. loose), and as believing that there is one kind of identity but two standards on which it holds (strict vs. loose). Which interpretation is right?

There is no reason to think that he distinguished these two beliefs. But having made the distinction it is none the less appropriate to attribute both beliefs to Butler as follows: There are two kinds of identity. One kind holds on different standards. It is the kind that holds between one thing (counted on some standard) and one thing (counted on that same standard). The other kind of identity holds between distinct things (counted on a strict standard) and a single thing (counted on a looser standard). It is identity because the several things (counting strictly) are identical with each other (counting loosely).

So for example suppose you have a sapling and a mature tree. And suppose the sapling is at a certain location in the past and the mature tree is at that very location in the present, because (as we would popularly say) it was the sapling. Counting according to strict standards (according to Butler) the sapling is one thing and the

mature tree is another. Counting according to loose standards the sapling is one thing and the mature tree

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is that one thing again. In the sense of 'identity' in which we say one thing is itself, identity holds on either standard. The sapling is the sapling. This holds on both standards. The sapling is the mature tree. This holds on the loose standard (only). But countenancing different counts according to different standards gives us something else to say: The two trees counted strictly are identical counted loosely. This second sense of identity holds between what are two counted strictly and are one counted loosely.

Thus Butler's concept of loose identity is ambiguous between
(i) the identity of the loosely one and itself, and
(ii) the identity of the strictly two with the loosely one.
These are both to be contrasted with strict identity which is
(iii) the identity of the strictly one and itself.

The ambiguity requires legislation on how to speak. Let me reserve 'loose' and 'strict' to characterize standards. Let 'strict' connote merely that the count is higher-there are more things-on strict standards than on loose ones. Let 'one-one identity' hold on either or both a loose standard and a strict one. Let 'many-one identity' be the identity of what are many on strict standards with each other on loose ones. It is a many- one identity in the highly qualified sense that what are strictly many are loosely one.

So, to be clearer, Butler's concept of loose identity is ambiguous between
(i') one-one identity on a loose standard for counting, and
(ii') many-one identity between what are many things on a strict standard and are one thing on a loose standard.
His concept of strict identity is (iii') one-one identity on a strict standard for counting.

Let me put my interpretation another way. There are different standards for counting the same things. So what are distinct according to a strict standard may be identical according to a loose one.

4. The sapling and mature tree has been a contentious philosophical example, but here is an ordinary one: The I984 federal income tax guide explains how to individuate tracts of land for the purpose of figuring gains and losses when lots from a tract are sold. 'A tract is a single piece of land. Two or more adjoining pieces of land are considered a single tract for this purpose.'[3] So what are two tracts on some other way of counting are a single tract for this purpose.

The quotation uses the word 'considered'. How can I justifiably leave
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3 Internal Revenue Service, 'Sale of Property', Your Federal Income Tax: For Individuals for Use in Preparing I984 Returns, Publication I7 (Rev. Nov. I984), p. 81.

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it out? I take 'considered' to show deference to the fact that the land was introduced into the discussion as two tracts. Were the same land introduced as a single tract to say that it is two tracts for the purpose of litigation about ownership, we would say that this tract is considered two tracts for that purpose. The 'considered' does not mean that the land is really one not two (or two not one); rather it indicates the shift in standard for counting.

II
5. It is possible to avoid the developed Butler account I have sketched here by denying that we attribute identity according to different standards. It seemed to Butler that, ordinarily, we count as a single thing strictly distinct trees (sapling and mature tree) which are loosely identical. But seemingly the appearances could be explained without any appeal to loose standards for counting as follows: We ordinarily count as one tree a whole that has the distinct trees as parts. On this opposing view there are not different standards for counting and so there is no case of identity on loose standards of things distinct on strict ones. There is just the joint parthood in an identical whole of what are distinct.

Let me call this view opposing Butler's, the mereological view. The mereological view is currently so firmly entrenched that it makes it hard to see the Butler view as a viable alternative. To dislodge the entrenched view, or at least to make room for a competitor, I have to discuss the parts-whole relation.

6. There are various ways to look at the parts-whole relation. Let me contrast two, one of which is more familiar and the other of which I will cautiously endorse. The more familiar way is that the whole is a numerically distinct thing from each of its parts. This is familiar to current philosophers, anyway, though as I will suggest it might seem odd to ordinary people. The other way is that the whole is the many parts counted as one thing. On this view there is no one thing distinct from each of the parts which is the whole. Rather the whole is simply the many parts with their distinctness from each other not mattering.

This second view is not to deny the existence of the whole. It is merely to deny the additional existence of the whole. On the first view if four parts exist and the whole comprising them exists then (at least) five things exist. The second view denies this conditional.

Let me call the view that whole is distinct from each part the 'Non- Identity view' of the parts-whole relation, and the view that whole is the many parts counted as one, the 'Identity view'. Support for the Non- Identity view is straightforward and compelling. The whole and all the parts exist. The whole comprises all the parts.

None of the parts do.

the whole has a (relational) property none of the parts has. So the whole is identical with none of the parts. So it is distinct from each. So if n parts exist and the whole exists, then (at least) n + i things exist.

The Identity view will have to respond to this cogent argument, but first it is necessary to motivate and explain the view. I will give two sorts of motivations-one, an observation of an ordinary practice and two, some philosophical arguments.

7. Someone with a six-pack of orange juice may reflect on how many items he has when entering a 'six items or less' line in a grocery store. He may think he has one item, or six, but he would be astonished if the cashier said 'Go to the next line please, you have seven items'. We ordinarily do not think of a six-pack as seven items, six parts plus one whole.

Suppose a man owned some land which he divides into six parcels. Overcome with enthusiasm for the Non-Identity view he might try to perpetrate the following scam. He sells off the six parcels while retaining ownership of the whole. That way he gets some cash while hanging on to his land. Suppose the six buyers of the parcels argue that they jointly own the whole and the original owner now owns nothing. Their argument seems right. But it suggests that the whole was not a seventh thing.

We have ways of talking about a number of things characterized in a unified way. Several people can act collectively or in concert or jointly. It could be that a huge number of straws collectively break some poor camel's back. A number of raindrops collectively refract light into a rainbow. Thus it would make sense to think of six parts collectively doing something, say, occupying a location. Presumably the six parts collectively occupy just the location that the whole they compose occupies. So there are several things collectively occupying just the position that a single thing does. Furthermore they collectively look just like it, weigh the same amount, give off the same sounds, etc. The only difference is that they are many and it is one. But it is odd to insist that in addition to the parts collectively occupying the location, the whole does, too. For it is tempting to say that the parts collectively just are the whole. There is no further thing.

8. It might seem as if a Combination of the two views can consistently contend that the parts are each distinct from the whole and yet the parts collectively are identical with the whole. The idea is that if there are six things then a seventh thing-the whole they are parts of-exists, and the six things collectively are the seventh thing. But this Combined view comes at a cost. It entails that any whole with parts is a multitude. If it could be that some wholes with parts are single things rather than multitudes, then this view should be rejected.

My rejoinder makes some assumptions which must be made explicit. As a concession to the view being criticized, I am assuming that something can be one thing without being a single thing. That is, it can be one thing while being a multitude. For instance on this assumption it might be that one family is a multitude (of people) whereas one person is a single thing. Secondly I am assuming that any single thing is not a multitude; and any multitude is not a single thing, rather it is many single things. So for instance a family would be one thing which is several single things. Now I can expand on the rejoinder. Given the Combined view that any whole with parts is one thing which is its several parts, then any whole with parts is a multitude. So anything which is not a multitude is partless. So any single thing is partless. Thus on this view a person would not be an example of a single thing after all, since a person has parts. Single things would have to be, say, mathematical points. Here then is the problem: The Combined view entails that if something with parts exists then some partless things exist. For a whole with parts is a multitude, which is several single things, which are partless things. This result is undesirable. One's theory of parts and whole should not mandate atomism. Or more precisely, one's theory should not preclude the possibility that every whole with parts has as parts only wholes with parts.

So on the supposition that there could be single things with parts, the Combined view should be rejected. This seems to be the right supposition about persons. Despite having parts, a person does not seem to be a multitude as a family is.

My rejoinder has not argued that no whole is an extra thing identical with its parts collectively, just that some wholes (namely single things with parts) are not. That is enough to make room for the Identity view of parts-whole, which is all I need to do now. If I were to go further I would retract my concession that something can be one thing without being a single thing. But I need the Identity view in place to do this. None the less for ease of exposition let me use 'one thing' and 'single thing' interchangeably. Those who think there is at least one whole which is one thing but not a single thing can read my account as restricted to single things with parts.

9. Given that the whole is identical with the parts collectively, it is either not an additional thing or it is. Suppose it is. Then it is a multitude, namely the several parts. But it is a single thing, not a multitude. So it is not an additional thing. This is the argument so far, but the result makes sense only if the following problem can be solved: How can a whole be a single thing and yet be identical with a multitude? The answer uses the Butler view of identity. Assume that on strict standards for counting the parts are many and on loose standards they are one. The strictly distinct parts are identical with each other on a loose standard. The whole, then,

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is just the parts counted loosely. It is strictly a multitude and loosely a single thing.

How then can the motivation for the Non-Identity view of parts-whole be accounted for? Why does the motivation not preclude the unfamiliar alternative? The Identity

view of parts-whole, buttressed by the Butler view of identity can account for the situation as follows: According to strict standards there are n parts. These n parts collectively have various properties none individually has. For instance the n parts collectively comprise all the parts, though none of the parts individually does. None the less the n parts collectively are not a single distinct thing; even jointly they are still many distinct things. So, on a strict count, the n parts exist and the n parts collectively exist, and yet it is false that (at least) n + 1 things exist. On the other hand, when counting loosely, the n parts, strictly counted, are one thing. And this one thing, loosely counted, comprises the n things, strictly counted. But then the n parts strictly counted are not counted as n things, when counting loosely. So the n parts, strictly counted, exist, and the one whole, loosely counted, exists and yet it is false that (at least) n + 1 things exist on either count.

In other words the whole is just the n parts collectively on the strict count, or is a single thing on the loose count, and in neither count are there n + 1 things. Yet either way there is a compriser and none of the individual things comprised is by itself the compriser.

10. Therefore the argument that seemed to favour the Non-Identity view of parts-whole over the Identity view, does not. Either view can accommodate the fact that none of the comprised is compriser. The Butler view of identity is required for giving a good rendition of the concept of parts-whole. The mereological view appeals to parts and whole. So it is not a good way to avoid admitting that there are different standards for identity.

III

11. There is another entrenched view of identity, which I will call the Lockean view, and which seems to keep out Butler's. This is the view that count is relative to sort. The Lockean holds that what seems to Butler to be identity holding on different standards is really identity holding relative to different sorts. For example the Lockean holds that one man may be the same person as another man.[4] But the Lockean seems off the mark here, given that Butler's example was of things of one sort counted strictly or loosely-for instance he said that what are strictly two distinct trees are loosely one and the same tree. And in general, given that counting

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4 John Locke, 'Of Identity and Diversity', An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, vol. I, ed. A. C. Fraser, Oxford, Clarendon Press, I894, p. 460.
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parts and whole are cases of strict and loose counting, there are many instances of counting on varying standards things of the same sort. Take a lump of clay whose parts are four lumps of clay, or a piece of land subdivided into six pieces of land. The parts are not distinct relative to a different sort than the sort under which, loosely counted, they are identical.

The Lockean can counter by saying that if I am right, he is right. He can say that there is one of the sort of thing that gets counted as a lump of clay on a loose standard, and four of the sort of thing that gets counted as a lump of clay on a strict standard. But then we have no disagreement. We had a disagreement only if the Lockean was trying to deny that there are different standards for counting. In any case, I take it that the strong evidence for the Lockean view results from the fact that we often use sort to indicate the appropriate standard, because so often the whole is a different sort of thing than its parts.

Some remarks of Frege's are similar to the Lockean position on identity. This makes it tempting to think that whatever the problem is here, Frege must have solved it. For instance he says, 'While looking at one and the same external phenomenon, I can say with equal truth both "It is a copse" and "It is five trees", or both "Here are four companies" and "Here are 500 men".'[5] Also he says that, 'One pair of boots may be the same visible and tangible phenomenon as two boots.'[6] But only if Frege had explained how, for example, one tree could be the same copse as another tree, would he be giving an account rivalling the Butler explanation how distinct things can be identical. Clearly he is not doing this.

12. So I have sketched the Butler view of identity and noted some advantages it has over two important competitors-the mereological and the Lockean views. It must be considered a genuine contender for understanding identity, and not merely a historical curiosity. Fully arguing that a view like the Butler view is right is another matter. That would require detailed exposition, explanation of its links to common sense, and demonstration of its value in solving philosophical puzzles.[7]