

Part 4: Presidential Address<sup>1</sup>

## CAN WE DESCRIBE THE MIND?\*

Ian Stevenson

The founders of psychical research, predecessor of parapsychology, had as one of their principal motives the hope of obtaining support through scientific investigation for a view of man different from the materialist one that late-nineteenth century scientists developed rapidly and aggressively. The part of man previously identified as a soul had no place in the new understanding of man's nature that post-Darwinian biologists fashioned, usually with the open alliance of the fledgling branch of science known as psychology. Psychical researchers attended, participated, and met other psychologists on equal terms in the early congresses (now called conventions) of psychologists that were held at the end of the nineteenth century; but they were soon extruded from the company they were keeping when nearly all other psychologists closed ranks around the materialist outlook. Parapsychologists have persisted as a tiny, but fortunately hardy, minority convinced (for the most part) that man has an important component not adequately accounted for by present orthodox knowledge of his physical body, a component that we say has the capacity at times to communicate and obtain information by means other than the known sensory organs of our physical bodies. This belief is, I think, almost all that parapsychologists have in common, apart from their commitment to the scientific method for testing it; in other respects we have different allegiances, or at least different professional boundaries. Our shared belief in a nonphysical element in man gives us, despite our diversity, a unity that the awareness of Jewishness gave to the Jewish people before the founding of the political state of Israel. (We parapsychologists, however, are more like the Kurds, a people still without a recognized nation to call our own.)

If I am correct in saying that belief about the incompleteness of the prevailing scientific view of man unites parapsychologists, it is puzzling that we have not done more to describe or even conjecture the qualities of the component of ourselves to whose existence we have dedicated our professional lives. I must immediately add that a small number of philosophers and parapsychologists have written important papers on the nature of mind from the perspective of someone willing to take account of the data of parapsychology; and some

of these writers have even boldly speculated about the life we may live after death. My extensive obligations to these authors have deprived me of all claim to originality, except where I have made errors or deviations of which they would not approve.<sup>2</sup> Yet I think it fair to say that the majority of parapsychologists have concerned themselves little with the attributes of the mind that they believe, at least implicitly, may exist independently of the body, although associated with it during our familiar life. This failure may derive from intimidation by neurophysiologists, who, having made great advances in their field, sometimes proclaim that they will soon resolve all residues of difficulty concerning the relationship of mind and brain; and some of them claim to have done this already by asserting, dogmatically, the identity of brain and mind, which, if true, would make the mind-brain problem a pseudo-problem. Yet surrender to orthodoxy at this time seems particularly ill-advised, because several neuroscientists have recently declared bankruptcy, in effect, with regard to the ability of neurophysiology alone to solve the mind-brain problem.

I do not claim that I shall do what others have not accomplished. Instead, I shall leap over the mind-brain problem--deep chasm that it is--and attempt to describe a mind without regard to a brain. (But I shall return to brains later.) I cannot literally describe the mind, but I think I can point to certain properties and capacities that we can ascribe to minds, and perhaps I can obtain your agreement to my identification of them. What follows then are the speculations--not too far removed from data, I hope--of a radical interactionist.

You will naturally wish to know first how I define "mind" and "mental." By "mental" I mean all those processes and contents that I can attend to that are inherently private, that is, those that I and I alone can observe by introspection. (Here I must add the qualification--with regard to this feature of privateness--that it pertains only under some circumstances; a parapsychologist could not deny that minds sometimes invade each other's privacy.) By a "mind" I mean that part of a person in which the processes called "mental" occur. By a living "person," I mean a mind and its associated physical body. (For me the word "personality" has a more restricted definition than the word "person," but this need not detain us here.) By "physical," I mean whatever is not mental. Since I can conceive of minds having a structure, I must also suppose this structure to be of something, that is, of some "substance." This may be some type of material--a mental material, if you like--that our methods have not yet detected. And here I introduce another topic to which I shall return later.

I have already acknowledged--albeit quite inadequately--the debt I owe to philosophers and parapsychologists who have preceded me in considering these questions. Readers will also surely wish to know from what other sources of information I draw the data for my description of the mind. Consistent with the definition of "mental" that I have just given, much of that information comes from my ob-

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servations of my own mental contents and processes. I have widened the range of my experiences, compared with that of most persons, by paying more than average attention to my dreams, by some practice of meditation, by five personal excursions with hallucinogenic drugs, and by observations of many other persons to whom I gave such drugs when this was still legal. I have also drawn data for my concepts from spontaneous cases in parapsychology. Spontaneous cases occur to people in abnormal states of mind. This is not to say that they occur to abnormal people in the psychopathological sense, but only that they show properties of minds, and relationships between minds, that are not usually discernible when people are in their normal states.

I must here acknowledge that I have not so far learned much about minds, or the processes of their paranormal communications, from parapsychological experiments. The common factor of successful experiments appears to be emotion, or what I prefer to call the intensity of an experience; but we can observe the effects of strong emotion much better in spontaneous cases than in laboratory experiments. The important events of life that generate strong emotions do not happen in laboratories, or not often. I am referring here to such events as serious illnesses, accidents, other stresses, and--above all--death. Almost any type of spontaneous case, from the faintest telepathic impression to the most tornado-like poltergeist, may tell us something about the mental processes that generate it. I think, however, that we learn more about minds from some types of spontaneous cases than from others. I refer to those in which we have reports of mental activity that seems to be slightly or not at all, associated with a physical body. I have therefore found it particularly helpful to study: apparitions; near-death experiences and other types of out-of-the-body experiences; and cases of the reincarnation type. Among the last group of cases, I have thought especially valuable a few in which the subject of the case had both verified memories of a previous terrestrial life and seeming memories of an existence between the death of the person whose life he claimed to remember and his birth. These memories of a life between death and presumed rebirth rarely contain anything verifiable. This is not surprising, because the events narrated are not always referable to the world of physical objects and living persons. Yet I think that if we accept a subject's claimed memories of the life of a deceased person as authentic and having a paranormal component, we should at least listen respectfully when he says that he also remembers events happening to him after the death of that person and before he was reincarnated, to state the matter as he sees it.

I shall next indicate six properties or capacities of a mind that I identify as important. My arbitrary order of listing does not mean that I consider one of these properties more important than another. I am indeed unable to think of a mind that does not have all the properties I attribute to minds; to subtract any one from the others would reduce and perhaps abolish a mind's "mindness."

First then, minds have images and image-making capacities.

Some images, as I am now using that term,<sup>3</sup> have spatial properties. These images--not all ones--are extended in a space, so that we can describe in spatial terms the relationships of the parts of one image to each other and of one image to another image. The mind must therefore have spatial properties; in short, be extended. This means that minds exist in a space that we can call mental space. All of a person's experiences occur in this mental space.

The physical bodies with which our minds are associated during our terrestrial life also exist in a space. This space, however, cannot be identical with the mental space of which I am speaking, if only because of the disparity between, on the one hand, the size and location of a physical object (in relation to our physical bodies) and, on the other hand, the images that we have of it when we are in its presence, or those that we may have of it later, when we are not. We may look, for example, at a skyscraper of 100 stories from a distance and then approach it and walk around it. We are then moving in a physical space shared with the skyscraper. Yet we do not suppose that our sense-data that derive from the skyscraper or our memories of the skyscraper (if we have any later) correspond in size or location with the skyscraper itself. The skyscraper and the sense-data or memories we have of it must exist in two different spaces. There is nothing illogical in this, because nothing requires us to think that there can be only one space. This raises the question of "where" the mental space that I am postulating exists. My answer is that mental space and physical space may share, to some degree, the same location, just as a sponge and the water it occupies have the same location, although the sponge and water have different properties. I think, however, that minds may have a larger location than physical bodies have, or at least a wider range of influence. Descartes was clearly wrong in saying that minds are unextended, since some aspects of minds, notably visual images, have spatial properties, which--as I have said--means extension. I am suggesting that minds are not only extended, but that they may have a much greater extension in mental space than our physical bodies have in physical space.

Minds have other contents qualitatively different from those occurring in a spatially extended form. These include the familiar sensations of sounds, tastes, and odors. (Some sensations related to our physical bodies, such as touch and pain, may also have spatial properties or may not.) The sources for the usual stimuli of all these experiences can be more or less localized.

Second, minds have feelings or emotions that are nonspatial and nonlocalizable. Every mental state has some accompaniment of feeling, whether pleasurable or unpleasurable. Sometimes the feeling component has such low intensity as to be almost observable, whereas at other times feelings of pleasure or displeasure increase to strong intensity. I emphasize that some emotion or feeling accompanies every image that we experience. When an image has a particularly intense emotion accompanying it, the associated emotion may persist after the image has been replaced by another. I con-

sider this feature of minds of great importance in psychopathology, but it is not relevant to my present theme.

Third, minds have the property of memory, which is the ability to record information on one occasion and use it at another, later time. There appear to be two main types of memory: that of private images of past experiences that can sometimes be recalled at will and sometimes recur spontaneously; and that of learned actions, such as walking, shaking hands, or speaking a language. I call these latter memories "behavioral memories." These behavioral memories often become automatized, so that we can use them more or less when we wish without attention to details of execution.

A person's awareness on different occasions of having the same memories appears to be the single most important factor in his unique identity and also in conveying to him a sense of that identity or reassuring him about it, if he has any doubts. Similarly, the collection of behavioral memories that a person expresses, together with such of his imaged memories as he has communicated to other persons, provide for them indices of his identity by which they distinguish him from someone else. Two persons may look indistinguishably similar in physical appearance, as do some monozygotic twins; and yet they will have different identities, because each has had a separate stream of experiences and hence of imaged memories.

In the foregoing assertions I reject the bodily criterion of identity. I think memories endure longer than physical bodies. They may persist unchanged while bodies increase in size or, in old age, shrink. The attempt to discredit memories as the criterion of identity on the grounds that they have gaps and become transformed does not dissuade me from my adherence to them in this regard. If a senile man has forgotten some of his recent (or earlier) memories, he previously experienced a series of successive states in each of which he had memories of a still earlier state, and this linkage through a series of memories suffices to establish his identity. Other arguments have been advanced against the criterion of memories for identity. Some writers on this subject have, for example, said that because memories are private they are not verifiable. But they are publishable, and for the purposes of showing identity between the states of a person on different occasions we can properly use the claims of this person on these different occasions to have had identical (or resemblant) memories. It has been suggested that in order to examine such claims to remember, one must be able to recognize the person making them at different stages of his life, and that this recognition requires a bodily criterion of identity. It does not. Individual memories of different persons may resemble each other; but the patterns of all the memories--or even of portions of the memories--of different persons do not. No one could possibly have my set of memories, because no one else has occupied all the particular parts of (physical) space where the events remembered in my memories have occurred.<sup>4</sup>

I must next say a few words about the location of memories. Like all properties of the mind, memories seem to have a location in our brains, because we are ordinarily dependent upon the state of our brains for gaining access to our memories. When we become conscious of them, however, we do this in our mental space, not in the brain; and I suggest that a second depot of memories (the first being in the brain) exists in the mind. I find nothing incongruous in suggesting that memories may exist in more than one location; the process may eventually prove to be no more surprising than that by which we make a carbon copy of a typewritten letter. Perhaps, however, the mind alone holds our memories and the brain merely controls our access to them while we are alive. Yet some experimental data show that experiences that may be remembered may leave detectable changes in brains; such observations suggest that brains also have memories.

I am not satisfied that the word "identity" in what I have written above adequately expresses the meaning that I wish to convey under this heading. I certainly do not believe in a never-changing identity of personhood. Neither the mind nor the physical body of an infant are "identical" with the mind or the body of the old man that they become. It would be more precise to say that they have continuity rather than identity; but if anyone asks how we can know that a particular infant has become a particular old man, I reply that the evidence of their memories would influence my judgment in the matter more than would photographs of their physical appearances.<sup>5</sup>

Fourth, minds have purposes, and for the satisfaction of these purposes they usually act with other minds with which they form associations and attachments. Minds also make decisions between two or more choices, whether of belief or action;<sup>6</sup> and they implement their decisions with more or less capacity and persistence. I think it difficult to exaggerate the importance of the attachments that men make. I am not prepared to go so far as Buddhists do, and say that attachments cause all our suffering. Instead, I say that they enter into the processes of both our suffering and our happiness. The strength and quality of our attachments to other persons not only makes our ordinary happiness, or deprives us of it, but it also contributes--I would say necessarily--to the occurrence of paranormal communications.

Fifth, minds can communicate in two ways. In our waking state, they communicate chiefly by the use of physical signals--usually visual and auditory--emanating from a physical body that stimulates the sensory organs of the physical body of another person. Minds may also communicate directly without the physical signals and sensory organs of physical bodies. Such communication perhaps occurs continuously, with only a small portion of the communicated contents reaching awareness.

I believe that at some level all minds are united, just as all the islands and continents on our planet are attached to each other beneath the surface of the oceans. A few persons become aware of

this underlying unity at special moments or even for longer periods. We often refer to such experiences of the unity of all things as mystical, but this need not mean that they are unreal. Skeptics sometimes use the word "mystical" pejoratively in order to dismiss claims of glimpsing a truth that is hidden from persons unfortunate enough not to have such an experience.

The mystic enjoys a sense of general unity with everything else in the universe. Other persons who cannot have such a widely encompassing experience may nevertheless become aware of the underlying unity of minds in a more restricted fashion. I mean here persons who have what we call paranormal perceptions. Many of their experiences seem to be of unity, not with the universe, but with a particular person at a particular time. Typically, paranormal communications--at least those of which we become aware--occur between persons who have shared many intense experiences, such as members of the same family; and they occur especially at times when one concerned person is in distress and another is asleep, somnolent, or otherwise giving diminished attention to the events in his physical vicinity.

If all minds are united and form part of one whole mind, the union is either stronger or rendered more readily observable in certain groupings of persons than in others. I referred above to the occurrence of paranormal communications between members of the same family. Studies of spontaneous cases show that the effective link is not biological but emotional; paranormal communications occur as commonly between husbands and wives as between parents and their children. I think Whately Carington was right in assuming that all minds are one. But his application of the laws of association to paranormal communications omitted the important contribution that the intensity of feelings makes toward the strength of associational bondings; paranormal experiences occur mostly when the ties are strongest and when one person urgently needs another to whom he is already strongly attached.

We who claim that paranormal communications occur often should ask ourselves why they do not occur more often. One answer may be that although we have calamities enough, we do not love each other enough; and another may be that normal means of communication in the West make paranormal communication there less necessary than it was in earlier periods, and than it still is in some parts of the world today, where it may still be the only means of sending information over long distances.

I come finally to the sixth property of mind that I wish to mention. I refer to consciousness or awareness, including self-awareness. An important feature of a mind is that it has many more contents than those to which it can give attention simultaneously. Nearly all its processes and nearly all its contents lie outside its sphere of attention at any one time. Some of the contents that are ordinarily unconscious become more accessible under certain circumstances, such as when we dream, are under the influence of hal-

lucinogenic drugs, or come near death. In these conditions, memories may sometimes flow involuntarily into consciousness. But the mind has the capacity voluntarily to recall at least some images of which it is normally unconscious. This is such an important attribute that we may correctly define consciousness as that part of the mind that is under voluntary control. Voluntary actions, such as the practice of meditation, may influence subconscious levels of the mind, and ultimately behavior, but they do this gradually rather than immediately.

Now I shall turn back in the direction of the mind-brain relationship, not to show how brain and mind relate--I have already denied any capacity to describe this--but to offer some conjectures about the mind that reasonably derive, I believe, from the improbability of explaining it in purely neural terms. Up to the present, neuroanatomists have failed to account for the differences in sensory modalities by detecting differences in the structure or function of neurones in the different regions of the brain that are concerned with sensation. They may in the future find such differences, but this does not now seem likely. (It seems even less likely that neuroscientists will ever tell us, in their vocabulary, what it is like to experience orangeness, to say nothing of a sunset by Turner or a sunset in the sky.) We do, however, experience different sensory modalities, and different qualities within a particular modality (for example, we can discriminate between the sound of a rock falling on a tin roof and that of a chord played on a piano), and these different types of experience probably occur because the various parts of the mind respond differently to stimuli they receive from the brain. The mind must somehow fit the brain, perhaps somewhat in the way a football player's helmet fits his head. The activities of neurones in different parts of the brain may then cause different mental experiences by influencing the different parts of the mind with which they interact. The retina of the eye responds to light waves and passes signals to the visual sensory cortex and its association areas; but the retina does not respond to sound waves. I suppose, similarly, that the part of the mind interacting during life with the visual cortex and its association areas responds to changes in the neurones there, but not to those occurring in neurones elsewhere, such as in the auditory cortex. (Some exceptions apparently occur during the abnormal experiences of synesthesiae, which suggest a kind of reverberation within the mind from one sensory modality to another; I believe that next to parapsychology and the study of dreams, a better understanding of synesthesiae will contribute most to the coming anatomy of the mind.) Brain events, therefore, do not constitute mental events, but are one cause of them, although not the only one. Similarly, on the motor side, mental events may cause brain events and thus initiate and execute the various physical activities of which we are capable.

I conjecture further that the mind has a somewhat variable attachment to the brain, rather as the connection between the engine and wheels of an automobile may vary with changes in the clutch. In the conditions I mentioned earlier--in dreams, when we are under the

influence of hallucinogenic drugs, and as death approaches--the mind is more detached from the brain than it normally is. In these states, it becomes freer of the usual restrictions that its association with a physical body imposes on it during the life that we now have. In these freer conditions we notice a greater tendency for the presentation in consciousness of ordinarily unconscious memories, for synesthesiae to occur, and also for the occurrence of direct (non-sensory) communication between one person and another.

This type of communication--directly from mind to mind--provides perhaps the greatest single obstacle (and there are others) to our ever understanding mental processes exclusively in terms of brain states. It may be misleading and retarding of our progress to describe such communication as "extrasensory." Perhaps the process is not sensory at all. We usually refer to the person receiving the information as a percipient, but the more neutral word "experient" may prove more helpful when we try to describe a process that often suggests knowing more than perception; to be sure, the knower's new knowledge may be cast into the form of a perception that resembles his ordinary ones, but we cannot account for it by any of the physical stimuli that initiate normal perceptions.

Many persons have claimed that they could at certain times perceive their own physical bodies from a position other than that of their physical eyes. It is possible to explain away a substantial number of such claims on the grounds that the person had a hallucination of seeing his own body. This interpretation, however, becomes strained in certain cases, especially those in which the subject not only claimed to see his supine physical body, but also provided evidence of having had some paranormal cognition at the time he thought he was out of his physical body. It also fails to account adequately for cases in which the subject provided a stimulus for other persons to have had simultaneous paranormal experiences in which he figured, such as his being seen as an apparition at a distant place. If cases of this type--few though they be--are accepted as authentic, as I think some of them should be, they may throw light on all processes of perception. It is a feature of such experiences that the subject, when he is out of his body, goes on "seeing" the people around him, such as, for example, a medical staff struggling to revive his body, just as he sees them (although from a different position, that of his eyes) after he returns to his normal state of consciousness.<sup>7</sup> The small number of subjects who claim to remember events that they observed during an intermediate existence between death and presumed rebirth report similar visual observations. In short, persons of both the groups I have just mentioned claim to have had visual experiences (or vision-like experiences) without the use of their physical eyes and other parts of their body's neural equipment. This raises the question of whether all vision is not in one sense eyeless, that is, clairvoyant. (I am not the first person to suggest that all our physical apparatus of vision from the cornea back to the visual cortex may merely canalize most of our visual experiences without being necessary for them.)

I have already said that minds have spatial properties and a structure that one can, in principle, anatomize; and this structure must be of something. I have also emphasized the persistence of our memories during years when our physical bodies change. What persists, I maintain, are the patterns of our imaged and behavioral memories, not the unstable physical body with which they are associated during this life. I believe that our mental patterns--not just of our memories, but of our purposes also--will persist after our deaths. Then, however, we shall have no physical body, so the patterns must also exist in something else. I call this a mental "substance" without being able to define it further, except negatively by saying that it must differ markedly from the known ingredients of our physical bodies. I am aware of the hazards of using a word like "substance," and concerned about the rashness of conjecturing the existence of something I cannot describe.<sup>8</sup> Yet I do not see any way of avoiding such a further step after reaching the point at which I have arrived.

The special conditions--dreams, intoxication with hallucinogenic drugs, and the approach of death--to which I referred above provide, I believe, some preview of our probable condition after death. If I am correct in believing that they show what happens when the mind becomes partly loosened from its physical body, studying them may help us to prepare ourselves for what we shall experience when the separation becomes complete--when we shall see face to face and no longer through a glass darkly. This reasoning emboldens me to offer next some sketches of what life may be like immediately after death.

At death we shall not enter mental space, because, according to my view, we already live there. I should say more precisely that we live now in a part of mental space. After death we shall be able to explore more fully our own area of mental space, but perhaps with results that we shall not always find congenial, as we may expect from our experiences with unpleasant dreams. Memories will become more accessible to consciousness, and so will their accompanying feelings of pleasure and pain. The sudden flooding of consciousness with memories that occurs in some persons who seem about to die, or are afraid they are about to die, may occur to everyone when they die. The great Indian sage Patanjali said that the almost universal human fear of death derives from dim, subconscious memories of an unpleasant review of one's conduct in a previous life; and a dread of having another similar experience, even though the earlier one was not consciously remembered, made men afraid of dying. Perhaps Socrates was hinting at this "life review" when he said that a good man need not fear death.

I said earlier that our mental contents and processes (by the definition I gave) are private and, except for occasional incursions and excursions in paranormal experiences with other persons, they remain unknown to other persons. Since the states that I believe result from partial separation of mind and brain often include paranormal experiences, the communications that we now call paranormal

may be much more frequent after we die; they may even be the only ones we have.

Because communication after death may depend less on words, it may also be less precise. Feelings may spread from one person to another more easily and without censorship. A decline of verbal communication and a corresponding increase in the sharing of feelings may reduce the hypocrisy that language can hide. Perhaps also it will increase the spread of joy that we too often fail to share with each other now.

To be incarnated means that one is restricted in moving from (physical) place to place by the limitations of one's physical body and the physical vehicles that we can devise and afford. It means also that the ranges of the voice and eyes restrict our ability to communicate. Telephone, radio, and television increase the reach of our communications over distance, but do not alter their quality. In the discarnate state, on the other hand, movement may be instantaneous. As one survivor of a near-death experience put it: "I was free in a time dimension of space, wherein 'now' was in some way equivalent to 'here' in the ordinary three-dimensional space of everyday life." In that condition, to think of someone means to be with him instantly, again as in many dreams and paranormal experiences when we are alive.

The discarnate state may have the disadvantage of being one of contemplation with merely passive enjoyment or suffering, as the case may be. We may have less influence on our condition in the discarnate state than we have on it now, little as that often seems. We may undergo the sort of helpless drift that occurs in most of the dreams in our present existence. We may digest the thoughts that we have made during our incarnate lives, but have little power to introduce new ones. Perhaps it is true--as Buddhism teaches--that the discarnate state permits no progress along the evolutionary path that Buddhism conceives we tread. Yet reflecting on our past errors may prepare us for an improved performance in a later incarnation, if we have one.

This concludes my speculations about the nature of the mind. It remains only for me to make a few remarks to justify my offering these rash conjectures to you. I believe in the value of the scientific method, and some readers may wonder why I have not framed my speculations in the form of testable hypotheses. They may even reproach me with leaving science and wandering in the realm of metaphysics. This objection would both mistake my intention and contradict my view of how science proceeds. I think that many advances in science come from an intuition about a truth that precedes the obtaining of evidence for it. Yet I believe also that we should keep speculation only slightly ahead of data. This introduces the subject of the nature of evidence and its variable acceptance by different persons. With the advantage of working in the medical school of a university, I have never been as isolated from scientists in other

disciplines as some other parapsychologists--through no fault of theirs--have been. I may therefore appreciate better than they can that facts established for me are not so for many other parapsychologists, and are so for an even smaller proportion of scientists outside our field. Perhaps those who do not think my remarks adequately supported by sufficiently acknowledged facts may nevertheless accept them as expressions of intuitions in search of facts.

#### Notes

1. Thanks are due for the support of the Division of Parapsychology to the James S. McDonnell Foundation, the Bernstein Brothers Foundation, and the John E. Fetzer Foundation; and to Miss Emily F. Williams, who made helpful suggestions for the improvement of this address.
2. I have written this address without giving references either to support my assertions or acknowledge my debts. The latter are, however, so great and so obvious that readers will easily recognize my creditors.  
In order to avoid excessive length I have left the address dense, although I realize that some matters to which I have alluded in a sentence--or even a phrase--deserve paragraphs, and perhaps chapters, for their proper development.
3. For brevity, I am using the word "images" to refer to those aspects of our experience that Hume calls "impressions" (and sometimes "perceptions") and Russell (and most modern philosophers) call "sense-data," which are stimulated by an event outside our minds, and usually outside our physical bodies; and also to those experiences, such as fantasies and dreams (of day and night), for which we can usually identify little or no external stimulus. Although in practice we usually distinguish sense-data from fantasies, they occur in a continuous range of experience that illusions and hallucinations fill in. This justifies me in using the word "images" for such a wide variety of mental ingredients.
4. Careful readers will have noticed that I have adopted "memories," not "memory," as my criterion of identity. The use of the plural emphasizes that a person's uniqueness derives from his having a group of memories that no one else shares. Although other persons may have been present with him at the time of some events he remembers and may therefore have memories of such events that at least resemble his, no other person has all, or anything like all, the memories that he has.  
The tests of recognition that are often given to subjects of reincarnation type cases recognize this principle. The child subject of such a case is asked to pick out from a heterogeneous pile of clothes and other objects those owned by the person whose life he claims to remember. I cannot defend many such tests because of their procedural weaknesses; but the underlying prin-

ciple--that the child, if he remembers anything of a previous life, would have memories that match the expected memories of one other person and no one else--seems sound to me.

5. The contemporaries of the Buddha debated the question of what it is that is reborn, and persons around him seem often to have asked the Buddha to make a statement about it. He always replied with remarks that appear deliberately gnostic, such as that what is reborn is both the same and not the same as what dies. The Buddha appears to have evaded the question at least partly because he considered it otiose and distracting from proper awareness of the changefulness of minds. Indeed, he was so impressed by the constant flux of mental processes that he regarded a physical body as a better criterion of identity than its associated mind. In some passages the Buddha appears to have expressed the view that the problem of the identity (and continuity) between the successive persons in a series of rebirths was ineluctably beyond human understanding.
6. Some readers may find it puzzling that I associate decisions with purposes, especially when I include the decisions that we call rational, that is, those based on logic or evidence. Yet even our most rational decisions, starting with the decision to make rational decisions, derive from our purposes.
7. Some of these experiencers later claim to have seen much more than their physical bodies and the people around them while they were seemingly dead or nearly so. They sometimes claim to have traveled deeply into mental space and met there deceased relatives and saintly guides. However, I wish here to emphasize only the essential sameness--as it seems to these persons--of their visual experiences when viewed from within the physical body, so to speak, and from without it.
8. In using the word "substance" I feel the reproach of David Hume, who (in the Appendix to A Treatise of Human Nature) wrote: "When we talk of self or substance, we must have an idea annexed to these terms, otherwise they are altogether unintelligible."