Journal of Philosophical Theological Research
ISSN Print: 1735-9791 Online: 2538-2500

The Coceivability of a Disembodied Personal Life Beyond Death Based on David Lund's Views

Zainab Amiri[–] | Abdorrasool Kashfi [—] | Amirabbas Alizamani[——]

Received: 2020/06/23 | Accepted: 2020/09/04

Abstract

As science focuses exclusively on the physical, it seems to assume that the brain has a key role in the origin if not also the constitution of our consciousness; and thus the destruction of the brain, the nervous system, and the body makes it pointless or even absurd to think of any personal consciousness after death. But one need not be convinced by this. However, any effort to investigate a possible post-mortem life depends on forming a coherent conception of what such a life could be. Can we speak, without incoherence or contradiction, of a person continuing to exist after death in a disembodied state? Our concern in this study lies here. Based on Lund's view, we will present and defend an argument that one can conceive of a self who is fully embedded in the natural world and deeply embodied in a physical organism, and yet could have a rich variety of experiences in an afterworld encountered after death. In this theory, the close association of the mental and the physical is due to a causal connection - a connection that fails to establish that the physical brings the mental into existence and is compatible with theories that the source of consciousness is not in the brain (e.g., the transceiver or filter theory).

Original Research

Keywords

Conceivability, Afterlife, Disembodied Self, Perception, Phenomenal Body.

– Ph.D. Student in Philosophy of Religion, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. **(corresponding author)** | Zainabamiri9@gmail.com

— Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Philosophy and Theology, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. | akashfi@ut.ac.ir

—— Associate Professor, Department of philosophy of religion, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. | amir-alizamani@ut.ac.ir

Amiri, Z., Kashfi, A., Alizamani, A. , (2020). The Coceivability of a Disembodied Personal Life Beyond Death Based on David Lund's Views. *Journal of Philosophical Theological Research*, *22*(85), pp. 69 -88. doi: 10.22091/jptr.2020.5671.2356

Introduction

For more than one hundred years, the empirical evidence of survival has been examined and considered, but it is still unacceptable and even deemed unintelligible by some informed people. On the other hand, ruling out an afterlife as impossible is philosophically tenuous. (Hasker & Taliaferro, 2019) In any case, it is important to clarify what conception is offered by those who argue that personal survival is impossible. Here we might heed the words of Price. "Indeed, anyone who thinks there is a problem of survival at all should ask himself what his conception of survival is". (Price, 1964, p. 366) A successful explication of a coherent and intelligible conception of personal survival is significant not only for the reasons already suggested[1] but because of its bearing upon a serious objection to dualism — the contention that there is no intelligible account of it, and thus no such account of what could constitute a person's existence after bodily death. And more to the point, even if we provide a well-thought-out argument for survival incorporating the survival-supporting evidence, we would still need an adequate conception of personal survival to maintain clarity about what our argument is an argument for.

The first problem referred to as the Survival Hypothesis is of self-contradictory and its meaning. This problem directly affects the possibility of such a conception. Having settled this, there are essential questions that need to be answered; what is essential to the existence of a self or person and what does the term "person" include? We want to speak of a non-physical (disembodied) self who has inner conscious states, but this is the very problem. As a matter of fact, the conceivability of existence beyond death is a matter of whether a disembodied person is conceivable or not (Lund, 2009, p. 12). We can hardly point to such a being and locate where it is or distinguish it from another disembodied being, or explain that without the body or the sense organs and especially the brain, how could it have experiences and be conscious of them?

We should make the conception more detailed and elaborate on it because this conception is founded on the similarity between the dream world and the next world. In this regard, we are concerned to present an argument for the existence of such a world as a real one because its similarity with the dream world brings to mind that such a world would be tenuous and insubstantial. Furthermore, such a world would be private in contrast with the public physical world. In this study, a rather detailed conception of disembodied survival will be

1. David Lund provides in *Death and Consciousness* a probing investigation of the possibility of life after death and argues that this possibility "…is not ruled out by any scientific findings or compelling arguments of a logical or philosophical nature.". (Lund, 1985, p. x)

presented based on an interpretation and defense of David Lund's view.

Our study is mostly based on phenomenology and philosophical argument by appealing to what seems to be true of living persons in an effort to establish the possibility that only what is logically necessary and sufficient for their existence as persons prior to death would continue to exist after death in a disembodied state. It will be shown that the world of disembodied persons and this world both would be sensory and of phenomenal objects, but they would differ in terms of the cause of stimulation, not in the sensory content. And also this study is confined to the consideration of the *meaning* of the survival hypothesis, irrespective of whether we in *fact* (i.e. of its truth or falsity) survive bodily death.

Clarifying the Idea of Survival

It is impossible to provide evidence for something that we don't have intelligible conception or understanding of[1], so is the idea of "life after death". Because the very phrase of the idea of survival (i.e. "life after death") is self-contradictory; it means that "something is alive at a time when it is no longer alive" (Lund, 1985, p. 42). The point to be noted is that there is no contradiction in asking whether John has survived a shipwreck, but if we substitute "a shipwreck" for "his own death" and ask whether John survived his own death, there would be a contradiction and unintelligibility[2] (Price, 1964, p. 365). Lund clarifies the meaning based on the distinction between self and body so "life after death" means survival of the conscious self from the death of the physical body.[3] Therefore, it doesn't have any physiological[4] meaning—the life which will cease at death.

Back in the distinction, there come two features to mind: "1) that we have bodies and 2) that we are significantly more than our bodies" (Lund, 1985, p. 10). What is this "more" and what does this have to do with a disembodied person?[5] We have minds or consciousness as well as bodies and not only are consciousness and body (especially brain activities) conceptually distinguishable in thought (Lund, 1985, p. 43); (Lund, 2009, p. 20), but they also have essentially

1. Some reject the survival hypothesis *a priori* because they argue that the very conception of life beyond death is unintelligible (Braude, 2003, p. 3).
2. The contention begins from whatever sense we choose to the word. "One reason why it may appear unacceptable is a confusion of contexts" (Flew, 1972, p. 38).
3. Also ,Price says, "life here means consciousness or experience" (1995, p. 263).
4. There is also a psychological sense in Lund's view based on psi phenomena which will be examined later in this article.
5. I'll make no effort to go through the details of these arguments from Lund in this article because the objective here is to show the conceivability and give a coherent conception of disembodied survival. So what we are trying to do in this part is to clear shortly the conceptions which have been used in the bigger picture of the conceivability.

different properties (Lund, 2009, pp. 36-44). Although as human we possess both, being human is not essential to being a person. Personhood is essentially non-physically (contingently) embodied in humans and some possible non-humans, because what is essential to the existence of a person is to possess what we judge to be inner conscious states or personal life. If the person and its live human organs were identical, the persistence of the person would consist in the continuity of the body. So, through different thought–experiments, Lund examines this idea and gives us good grounds for believing that our identity must consist in psychological continuity[1]. He then gives us an empirical-grounded concept of what a person is from the first-person perspective and leads us to the single-subject view as the only plausible view (2009, pp. 45-62). Therefore, it seems that what is embodied, as logically distinct from all physical systems or material in which it is embodied, to be all that is both essential to and sufficient for the existence of a person (or a single subject).

We are creatures of the natural world, deeply embodied and complete embedded in nature and though self and its body are distinct entities, they are causally connected, possibly such that, as a matter of natural law, the self depends for its existence upon its present body (or, at least, some body or other). The challenge is that, given the causality, can we conceive of a disembodied person continuing to exist after the death of the physical body. Lund has given reasons to believe that the continued existence of the self beyond the death of its body is possible because the conceivability of a disembodied personal life follows from a concept of a person or self[2] who is the *center* of conscious states or experiences and is what *has* these states or *undergoes* the experiencing, unlike the body. Although the experience arises from the subject's association with the body, the association in question does not establish that the physical produces the mental but is compatible with other relations that might obtain between them. Some are consistent with the possibility that the essence of a person with the capacity to have mental states continues to exist beyond biological death.

The conclusion in question is offered by Lund after serious objections towards thoroughgoing ontological materialism[3], and sufficient attention to the

1. For instance, see (2003, pp. 72-91)
2. He has also comprehensively and broadly posited the very existence of the self in *The Conscious Self* (2005), and one of his arguments for the conscious self is based on modal properties that the self (as a subject-agent) has and no physical particular can have. The reader can find more credit of this argument by acknowledgment of Charles Taliaferro in his works (Taliaferro, 2018, pp. 50-59) (2017, p. 168)
3. In *Materialism, Dualism, and the Conscious self* (2014) Lund fares well in failing thoroughgoing materialism by showing the constraints imposed upon them and establishes, then, a strong dualism (substance dualism) by focusing on the conscious self as the subject of experience. Also, see *Materialism and the Subject of Consciousness* (2000). William G. Lycan as a materialist as well, in

first person perspective arguing that how the matter appears from this perspective will fail the arguments of rival approaches.[1]

By focusing on the nature of the causal relation, Lund in his sustained attempt of considering intentional causation reveals good grounds for the intelligibility and factual occurrence of dualistic causation as the best explanation (2009, pp. 63-76). This explanation shows that despite the deep embodiment of the person and the various ways in which its consciousness is causally and profoundly affected by the brain, its very existence is not brain-dependent. Lund considers other possibilities to find a possibility in which consciousness is a function of the brain and is consistent with the deep embodiment of the person. According to this possibility, the person (or conscious subject) is not brought into or kept in existence by the brain, and the functional dependence on the brain per se does not entail that conscious states are necessarily tied to the physical body. This function is best explained in a theory called "filter"[2] or "transceiver" theory in which the brain acts as a filter or transmitter through which consciousness passes. In other words, perhaps the brain acts as a filter permitting or refusing the manifestation of consciousness, and the conclusion is that consciousness occurs only in relation to the being whose consciousness it is and that this being is indivisible. In this theory, we can agree with the views in which mental states are caused by the physical system while doubting the conclusion that conscious states are produced or

→

Giving Dualism its Due (2009) acknowledges that "materialism is not significantly better supported than dualism."

1. Lund develops this view in Disembodied Existence, Personal Identity, and the First Person Perspective (1990).

2. No one has put forth precisely the idea that Lund expresses in the way he did. More specifically, the idea that the brain generates or produces the self and its conscious states has been questioned by others, though perhaps not quite in the way he did. Some well-known philosophers writing in the early part of the twentieth century did so. William James in *Human Immortality* (1898) did so in suggesting that the brain might have a transmitting function rather than a producing one. And J.M.E. McTaggert pointed out that the fact that the self does not have experience other than by way of its body does not show that a self without a body could not have experience in some other way. Perhaps, he suggested, it is just the existence of the body that presently makes those other ways impossible. He speaks of this in his *Some Dogmas of Religion* (1906, pp. 105-106). More recently, Edward and Emily Kelly (and others) in *Irreducible Mind* (2010), have argued for a number of interesting conclusions that include the irreducibleness of consciousness, the central importance of mystical experience, and, most relevant to the specific question, the role of the brain as an organ for limiting or shaping consciousness, but not creating it (see, for example, page 575). They speak of the brain as having an inhibiting or filtering effect on the consciousness passing through it. The source of consciousness is taken to be external to the brain. This theory might strike many as simply incredible, but there is empirical evidence that supports it; and it is consistent with, if not made more credible by, the fact that naturalism has failed to provide a plausible explanation of the presence of consciousness in the natural world (as Moreland, (2008), has argued).

In addition to the giant body of research mentioned, recently Eben Alexander has published a new book defending the filter theory from his scientific points of view as a neurosurgeon (2017).

generated by the brain, i.e., the function of the brain supports the brain-filtered consciousness but the more expansive source of consciousness is not located in the brain.[1] This source is the conscious self as it is in its fully integrated expanded brain-independent condition, and its relationship with brain-involved consciousness is comparable to awakening from a non-lucid dream.

The Idea of the Dream World

Now, Lund invites us to reflect upon the world of a dream. (1985, pp. 31-32) (2009, pp. 84-85/187) As I awaken to my ordinary waking consciousness, it is obvious to me that I am one and the same being as the dreamer though the dreamer is not aware of this while dreaming. I remember the events of the dream as only an episode in my conscious life which is much more extensive than what I had in the dream. My conscious life is not accessible and is dissociated from me while dreaming, but upon awaking I see my non-lucid dream the same as one of my all other experiences. Similarly, upon biological death, I may have an awakening like experience in which I attain a viewpoint from which I see my entire biological life to have been a non-lucid episode in an enormously long series of experiences that I remember then. The experiencing of transition in my consciousness upon awakening provides the empirical basis for the conception of a similar transition occurring after death. After death, I would experience consciousness expansion in which my entire embodied life from the expansive viewpoint is only an isolated episode now available in my fully integrated condition.

This analogy between the dream world and another world is needed to be explained in many aspects, and Lund has successfully fulfilled this need in what follows.

Perception and The Reality in "Another World"

It is of importance for people, as H.H. Price (1995) puts it, to know whether it would be possible for them to have the perceptual experiences in the "next

1. But it is incumbent upon one who doubts that they have their source in the brain to offer some conception of what their source might be and of what role the brain might have in their expression. Lund deals with these matters but not to a great extent. J.P. Moreland, among others, contends that the most plausible explanation of the existence of consciousness appeals to the existence of God. He presents a powerful argument for this contention in his book, *Consciousness and the Existence of God* (2008).
In addition to theistic conceptions of the source of consciousness, there are other conceptions that need not involve theism. Some highly important schools of Hindu thought embrace the latter conception. Lund speaks of one in *Persons, Souls, and Death*. (2009, pp. 98-99)

world" or not. One may object that without sense organs and the nervous system, how could the disembodied self be stimulated by any supply to have experiences? It seems that there would be no sense perception, and as a result, there would be no emotions or desires. Our emotions and desires in this world are directly or indirectly relevant to objects of sense perception. If such experiences were impossible, the disembodied self would be extremely impoverished. This would affect intensely the variety and quality of its experiences, and as a result, there would be no means to be aware of that world.

The approach to the answer has different steps. Firstly, based on defending an indirect realist view of perception[1], Lund shows the similarity between perception in this world and another world. Secondly, he explains how a person can have a veridical perceptual-like experience without receiving any stimulation from a physical object. Thirdly, in his view (1985, pp. 92-93), in the case of the disembodied person, being "out" of body does not stop a person from being conscious and having experiences because he is already out of body in a radical sense and logically distinct from it.

According to the findings of physical science, we have powerful support that the relation between the physical object and the percept is a causal relation. When a physical object (or an external stimulus) reaches the sense organ, a message travels along the nerve connecting the sense organ and consequently, a vast electrochemical disturbance occurs in the brain along which the appropriate sense experience takes place. It is apparent that the different features of the external stimulus and the percept cannot be identical and this is not all. There is also a time lag which is conspicuous in the case of distant objects. What one perceives, therefore, is not the external stimulus itself, but rather an effect or representation of it. This view has been called a causal theory of perception with which it is more plausible to explain phenomena like sensory illusions and sensory deficits. Regarding the causal theory of perception[2], there is a distinction between what one perceives and the objects of the physical world, and the perceiver is never in direct contact with them. We directly perceive entities that appear in our experience (i.e., phenomenal objects). There is only one public world of material things, but every person has their own private world and is only aware of others' worlds indirectly. Being indirect does not prevent their knowledge from being genuine knowledge.

There are also deeper questions needed to be answered. Is the dream-like world ontologically and epistemologically founded on reality? In the ontological part, which is perhaps the most challenging part, there are some

1. In the past, Lund has called this a "representational" view (1985, p. 64).
2. David Lund in *Perception, Mind, and Personal Identity* (1994) meticulously and widely argues for the truth of indirect realism in which we perceive physical objects indirectly. See, pp 3-50.

questions such as what are the fundamental elements of another world? And how are they related to each other? The former can also include this question: Is there anything real other than self in that world? The latter means that the relationship between self and other things is just like a dream world which is just non-real things represented to the self, perhaps in a continuous dream state, and after waking up one would find out that it was just a dream.

One might pull these points in the following way[1] that it seems that if there is a next world it might well be a world of mental images; although the word 'images' as used here might be misleading. The concept involved in this formulation is of an object of perception (e.g., vision) that is similar in certain respects and causally related to the visual object seen in an ordinary case of visual perception. In ordinary visual perception while awake, the physical eye is causally involved but not sufficient for the production of the visual object. But the visual object does not occur by itself. What occurs in the experience of seeing is an *awareness* or *consciousness* of a visual object. The brain is involved in this experience, but exactly how it is involved remains a mystery. This is the mystery of the existence of consciousness itself. In Lund's view, we don't have a very plausible explanation of how such a reality could come to exist in this world.

In (visual) dreams the brain is involved but the physical eye is not. Yet the visual object can be as vivid, as colorful, and as lifelike as any seen with the aid of the physical eye. After death, if one is still conscious and also conscious of visual objects, neither the brain nor the eye would be causally involved. One could still experience oneself having a body—a phenomenal body—somewhat like the apparently embodied being one takes to be oneself in a dream. The phenomenal body, or any phenomenal item, is an (intentional) object of which one is directly aware. A mental image is also a phenomenal item—it is an object of direct (or immediate) awareness. (One's awareness of it is not in virtue of one's awareness of something else.) Though a mental image is a phenomenal item, not every phenomenal item is a mental image.

If we ask whether we can know that an after-world of mental images is real, we cannot know that it is real unless it is real, and It is not clear how it can be real if consciousness (and the self whose consciousness it is) depend for their existence on the brain. But Lund doesn't think we can know that the existence of the conscious self is brain-dependent even though such dependence is very widely believed. If, however, the existence of the conscious self is brain-*independent* (as we explained earlier) and does survive death, the perceptual world that it encounters will be a phenomenal world—a world constituted of

1. In what follows we have used the contents of some of my correspondence with David Lund through email.

phenomenal items. As such, its world will be constituted of the kind of items that presently constitute its perceptual world, given the truth of an indirect realist view of perception.

This view apparently implies that each of us lives in his or her own phenomenal world. But we hardly notice this since we also live in, and focus almost exclusively upon, the public physical world in which we are immersed but do not *directly* perceive. We make continuous use of the shared physical world as we communicate with one another. In first-person terms, though *only I* am directly or immediately aware of my phenomenal world, others can become indirectly aware (i.e., have mediated awareness) of it by way of my communication with them that makes use of the shared public world.

So if the conscious self does exist in the absence of the brain and body with which it was associated, it could experience a phenomenal world, however isolated and limited that world would be in the absence of contact with a physical realm. That world could be like a prolonged dream that would be "without any fact beyond it." Of course, the obvious fact beyond some particular person's after-world would be the fact that others are in their own after-worlds. For it seems clear that if any one person survives, at least some others would also survive.

And more to the point, Lund proposes even a more radical meaning which we use here regarding the conception of disembodied self. In his suggestion, the disembodied self is already "out" of the body (1985, pp. 92-93). As such, being out of body after death would not cause a problem due to the fact of having experience and the reality of his world. The reason is that what we perceive as our body is a set of persistent percepts or images that are caused over time through stimulations of the brain and constitute the center of our perceptual world. These images are one of the objects of our field of consciousness, just as the body which we have in our dreams So, he suggests that being "in" a body and close association and intimate relation between a person and his body does not mean that they are identical because "in" does not have a spatial meaning. *If* we consider the body as one of the objects "in" the field of consciousness, it would be such that in another world I am experiencing a change in perspective in which I continue experiencing the world I am in.

Though it may have established the reality of another world, but we want to make it clear that based on phenomenology and what we find ourselves in this world and also based on the truth of indirect realism view, we can argue for the self who has a rich variety of experiences in a real world. We will proceed with the argument in the following steps:

"The self is real" and it means that the self is at the center of one's phenomenal world, but much of that world seems to be due to causal contact

with the public world. The self experiences this contact via an effect that is of a phenomenal kind, and it has an active and crucial role in the construction of reality.

According to indirect realism, in the afterlife, one could have experiences of a sensory kind that are similar to the sensory experiences one had in this world (there is sameness between the two). They could be qualitatively similar (they could be, colors, sounds, shapes, size, etc.) though the laws under which they occur could be quite different.

The sensory experiences epistemologically are reliable based on the condition under which they occur. So they might be reliable in the way that dream experiences of dream objects are reliable.

The central point here is that mental imagery, which includes the imagery of dreams, is real. Such images really do exist, even though they exist in the way images exist. They are subjective, only privately apprehended, but nevertheless real. They are not objective (if that is taken to mean observable by others), publicly observable objects.

Private objects can be authentic, just as they can be genuine — genuinely objects that are only privately apprehendable. If they are not genuine, the entire phenomenal world of each of us is not genuine. Indirect realism implies that your entire world of immediate experience is directly known only by you. None may enter and none may share. The closest another might come would occur if one should have an experience the content of which is qualitatively identical (exactly similar) to one you have. Numerical identity, in contrast, is impossible.

We hardly notice the privacy of our phenomenal worlds since we focus almost exclusively upon the physical, public world in which we are immersed. We make continuous use of our shared public world as we communicate with one another. But what is shared is something external to our experiences (say, a chair) which are causing them. So we can both be seeing one and the same (the numerically same) chair though my experience of seeing it is at least numerically distinct from your experience of seeing it. I can see (indirectly) the physical chair in virtue of (directly) seeing the content of my visual experience of it.

The self has a crucially important role to play in the construction of our immediate experience, even our sensory experience. When I am looking at a red tomato, I am having the experience of seeing the tomato, but this event could not occur without my involvement. I am essential to the occurrence of this event, for my seeing something cannot occur without *me*.

But not all of my role in this event is voluntary. I choose to look at the red tomato, though I could have been looking at something else, or nothing at all,

as when I am asleep. But when I do choose to look at the tomato, I do not choose to see it as red. That is involuntary. I cannot choose to see it as having a different color, or a different shape and size, e.g., a yellow, fish-shaped object the size of a giant pumpkin.

According to physics, the material object in the external world is neither red, nor solid (though a soft solid), nor does it have a pleasant fragrance. But the content of my experience *does* have these things. It is red, has a smooth, unbroken surface, and has a pleasant fragrance. These elements of the content of my experience do not exist apart from my experience of them, and my experience does not exist apart from me. I do not contribute this content voluntarily and yet it is mine in the sense that it is *my* response to an external stimulus. It is in these respects, among others, that the self has "an active and crucial role in the construction of reality."

As it mentioned of sense perception, Lund suggests that the content of my experience of seeing, for example, a red tomato, does not exist independently of my seeing it, and, consequently, not independently of me. We might say that this content is "mind-dependent" or "self-dependent." In other words, the immediate object of our perception depends for its existence upon *me*, but not *only* upon me. For its nature also depends in part on its external cause. The external cause, which I do not see directly or immediately, is mediated by my eyes and nervous system. The result is the *content* of my visual experience — the perceptual object, in other words, what it is that I see.

The view of perception described is very different from the view of common sense. An ordinary person very likely assumes, uncritically, that the object they are seeing — the perceptual object — is one and the same as the external object in the world outside them. It has, they assume, all the properties that they see the perceptible object (the content of their perceptual experience) to have. But the testimony of neurology, physiology, the physics of light, and perhaps our own critical reflection will tell us that this common-sense view is totally false. To consider the case of a red tomato again, the perceived object is red, roundish, has a characteristic scent, and falls to the floor with a thud or a squish. But the external object is not red, has no scent in itself, and it makes no thud nor squishes as it hits the floor. These are simply the effects it has on my experience. The physics of light and sound inform us that only colorless and noiseless waves reach our sense organs. The shape of the tomato, however, being a primary quality is, according to scientific theory, roughly similar to the shape we see.

This narrative shows, among other things, how much of the world that I assume exists out there around me is actually *in* me and does not exist independently of me. This also seems to lead to the conclusion that I cannot get outside of my own experience and literally see the world as another

does. The best that I can achieve is similarity, and even that I know, not directly, but by inference.

The Location

It may be opined that without the body we would be non-spatial due to the fact that our disembodied existence would not be extended in space. Were our bodies not in space, it would be quite clear that the other world is not in space. Does that mean it would be nowhere or, as a result, it does not exist at all? The central problem is about the whereabouts of that world regardless of what kind of body—an etheric, spiritual or astral body—we consider. If such a world exists, it must be somewhere. We won't find it in physical space although extended in space and its objects have shape, color, and size. How could it be possible for such a world to be in space and have no relation to physical space? Lund suggests us the solution by considering the dream experience (Lund, 1985, pp. 52-53). Obviously, dream images have spatial features and have spatial relations to each other without being spatially related to the things in the physical world. The question as to its location does not admit an answer, not because of lacking the necessary information, but because of being nonsense. There is no *a priori* reason that explains the necessity of having physical space for all spatial entities. This dream-like world is a spatial world of its own space and has no spatial relation to the physical world. It shows that transition from this world to the next world is not a movement in space, but it is a change in consciousness. We experience the same when awakening from a dream.

Identity and Individuation

An additional problem of identity in a radically different new body and environment exists here because the self could not remain one and the same self for very long in these new conditions. And also, some respectable philosophers have raised a serious objection of the conceivability of disembodied self in that how could we manage to identify a disembodied person as the one who was embodied once or how could that person remain one and the same throughout time in the absence of *body*. More to the point, such a world is a private mind-dependent one in which the disembodied self with his images is alone and isolated from all communications with other selves. Even if he could remember all the previous communications and relations vividly, it would not be helpful because there would be no longer any further communications with others. Were this true, would the disembodied

self's personality remain intact for a long time?

Lund shows personal identity in a way that there is no dependency between it and the continuity of the body. We are deeply embodied and have such a close relationship to our body that even our thought of ourselves is bounded up in the continuity of our bodies. The continuity of the body, however, may seem like a good guarantee of the personal identity, but it is just a good indicator of it, not an essential constituent for it. Lund, then, continues to explain that we identify things by either locating or describing them, and we mark a thing as an individual in a number of different ways depending on an element of arbitrariness. This element can cause difficulty as we try to decide if something has remained one and the same thing over a period of time. Sometimes the nature of the case is such that we cannot provide an answer to this question because it is a matter of convention. And even worse is when we apply such a method to persons for identification since we are so familiar with this method that may fail to discern that in the case of identifying myself *to* myself, I can do it without giving a description. As a matter of fact, we have a fundamental sense of identity which is unique and irreducible, and in which we know who we are. It does not depend upon bodily continuity. I cannot conceive of failing to know who I am, but the loss of memory is conceivable. In this case, I could not give a description of my history, but I would still be aware of what is happening to me "and would still know myself as the being that I find myself to be." (Lund, 1985, p. 60) That is because there is a nuance difference that Lund notifies us of, which is the distinction between a biography through which other persons can come to know much about me, and having that biography as experiencing it knowing what it is for it to be *me*. This kind of belonging is so fundamental and unique that it defies analysis and survives even the loss of memory (Lund, 1990, pp. 188-190).

The disembodied self, however, needs memory to firstly, be able to identify himself with a person embodied, and secondly, remain one and the same self throughout time. Here arises the critic in which the conceivability of the notion of disembodied self breaks down because memory is dependent on bodily continuity[1]. The critics, by pointing out the occasions when the subject remembers, and occasions he only seems to remember, have raised this refutation. Lund demonstrates that if there were no way of showing the difference of two events, "then there would *be* no difference between them" and the "inference from what is or can be *known* to what *is* or *can be* is obviously fallacious" (Lund, 1985, p. 61). More importantly, if we approach the

1. They consider bodily continuity as the criterion of personal identity, and it means that the body is the basis of *telling* that a group of experiences are the experiences of one person, and also the body *logically constitutes* their being so. (Lund, 1990, p. 188)

matter from the first-person view, all the critics will be seen to fail (Lund, 1990, p. 187). From this perspective, I certainly know that this experience is mine and it is impossible to remember the experience of someone else. I identify myself to myself without any description or criterion or even satisfaction of some condition. That is because I have a basic sense of personal identity which is not describable in terms of objective relations holding among items in my biography or reducible to any of them, and no stage does intervene to identify these items with finding them as mine. These considerations imply that the body does not involve essentially in personal identity. What identifies experiences in a single self is that all of them are mine and I am aware of them as such.

Lund indicates that memory establishes personal identity in the most complete manner possible because it provides direct knowledge of the past in its fullness, i.e., remembering the happening and meanwhile having a unique awareness of belonging that experience to mine, and it is the basis for the knowledge of being one and the same person during the interval between now and the event which the person remembers. It is worthy to note "the failure of the trace theory[1] implies that we have no plausible materialist account of memory" (Lund, 2009, p. 88) and the capacity to remember seems to be an intrinsic capacity of the self. And, apparently, the same is true of consciousness. But if neither the capacity for consciousness nor the capacity to remember some of one's own past conscious states is amenable to plausible materialist explanation, it seems rational to doubt that they vanish or be destroyed with the destruction of the brain which they were once associated with.

Lund states that even if we suppose that memory is dependent on bodily continuity, the notion of disembodied existence would not be unintelligible because the image body would seem to have whatever relevance to its identity through time just like the physical body and they both would be perceived in the same way by the subject. In this case, even if memory would be dependent on the body, the reality of a person's identity would leave intact.

With such an account we are led to the solution to the problem of individuating disembodied subjects. The problem is that we cannot distinguish between two disembodied subjects by referring to their different places as in the case of embodied ones. The solution, as Lund already suggested, is that whatever account which helps us show that an individual's being is identical with itself through time also helps to account for that individual being is not

1. For further study on the failure of trace theory, see;
   - Kelly, E. F. (2010). Irreducible Mind; Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
   - Alexander, Eben; Newell, Karen. (2017). Living in a Mindful Universe. Rodale.
   - Penfield, W. (1975). The Mystery of The Mind; A Critical Study of Consciousness and The Human Brain. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

identical to any other individual. From the first-person perspective, this individuating is incontestable, absolute, and irreducible. "This individuating self-knowledge is so basic that it cannot be described in terms of something more fundamental than itself. And it is knowledge which we have every reason to believe a disembodied individual could have." (Lund, 1985, p. 65) More to the point, this is not all. For each disembodied subject has a different set of experiences which differ from every other, either in the order or in the content of his experiences or in both respects. After all, if we consider the subject as a single entity which includes both embodied and disembodied phases, the personal identity after death would not be broken because the image body of the disembodied subject, like the dream body, has personal identity.

Is It a Private World?

It would seem that this private, mind-dependent world analogous to this public, mind-independent world is less real. As Lund suggests, although the most sensory content of this world "has a public, mind-independent *cause* (consisting in material objects and other people)" (1985, p. 54), the sensory content, based on indirect realism, in both worlds is private. So, the privacy would not affect its reality.

Beyond this, however, the important question is whether these worlds could be shared, at least in the mediated way that sharing (i.e., communication) occurs now and one might wonder how the disembodied self could communicate with others since the normal methods of communication would not work on that world. Lund notifies (1985, pp. 55-57) us with a sort of extrasensory perception (ESP) method which produces telepathic apparitions in this world. Similarly, it is conceivable for the disembodied self to be able to cause a telepathic apparition which resembles his former body in the experience of another disembodied self or, as in this world the telepathic apparitions include visual and auditory as well, induce auditory sensation of what he wants to express in himself and also in other beings. This communication, however, in that world is different; conversely to our language which consists in a number of conventional symbols, it seems that the language of the next world consists in a system of visual images. These visual images and ideas convey through telepathy; not through lips or vocal cord to ears, but through ideas and visual imagery to the mind's ear (Lund, 1985, p. 89). Such communication is so similar to what we experience now that temporarily one may not know he is disembodied. According to psychical research, ordinary perception and extrasensory perception are of essentially the same nature, and the difference is that the self interacts directly with the external world in the case of

extrasensory perception while in the case of ordinary sense perception it interacts directly with the brain and indirectly with the external world. This could be fully explained by the "filter" theory Lund proposes. For, the brain filters any capacity which is not useful for the physical organism, and at death, when bodily needs no longer exist, the psi capacity can release. This could result in the rich, meaningful, and various experiences created by personal interaction and thus similar to the phenomenal worlds we enjoy now.

Image Body

What needs further explication is how to conceive of an image body with which the embodied self could have rich experiences. When one dreams, despite being disembodied, he frequently involves himself in apparent physical embodied activities, for instance, he looks at the mirror and carefully recognizes himself and then remembers what happened upon awakening. It is, therefore, certainly conceivable for the disembodied self to have a body just like he has while dreaming which is a set of relatively persistent images he regards as his own body and is the center of his perceptual world. The reason is that one would retain memory images of the various perceptual experiences he would have had when embodied and under certain conditions, these memory images would function with the same quality as the perceptual experiences of which the images are.

As Lund proposes the role of the brain as a filter, if we suppose that this function includes the control of the forcefulness and vivacity of memory images, which has survival value, and suppose further that while dreaming this function is relaxed to allow memory to manifest itself, and at death, by the absence of biological needs, disappears altogether, then the disembodied self would have full memory images of bodily experiences he formerly had and his experience then would be very rich indeed. That is because these memory images now have the quality of sensory experience in the absence of the filter, and they appear to him to be very much like the physical body he once had. Lund describes the disembodied self at death in the following (Lund, 1985, p. 88); separating from the body and awakening in the threshold of the inner spiritual world, the person immediately is dominated by his "outer self"—the part of his being deals with other persons and external things and was so dominant in the physical life that it was assumed the whole of one's being. The memory becomes so strong that his physical experiences now appear vividly and clearly like perception. This image body grounded in memory would appear and function like his former physical body. Since he finds himself in the same state as the physical state and has a perceptual-like experience of what he

considers his body, it might take time to realize that he is dead. Finally, he may find the truth, not because of finding differences in his body or in the objects around him, but because he finds the phenomenal body to be subjected to strange casual laws. Things happen in accordance with his wishes and despite having usual sensory properties; they have peculiar causal properties.

Such a world would present him with voluntary images (what he does to his environment) and involuntary images (what his environment does to him, i.e. the events that happen to him), and in this image world, the image body as a center of his image world would consist of clusters of involuntary[1] images "which remain relatively constant while other images change." (Lund, 1985, p. 52)

Conclusion

According to some philosophers as well as some psychologists, it is the future that has a bearing on the present and if this is the case, the examination of the possibility of an afterlife would be of great importance to take into consideration. In this perspective, presenting a coherent and intelligible conception of the afterlife will be a part of proving its possibility, and also, the conceivability of such a conception is a guide to its metaphysical possibility. So the issue of the conceivability of afterlife existence implies that it is meaningful by which we can initiate to establish an argument upon the truthfulness or falsity of it.

The very idea of survival, disembodied existence, might seem absurd or unintelligible. On the view in question, what is necessary at the first level for clarifying this conception, i.e., disembodied existence is to determine the place and importance of the first-person view. If we disregard this perspective, it will be tough to speak of the nature of the self which is supposed to survive after bodily death. So, we should disentangle the problem by highlighting the first-person view in order to widen the scope of science enough to speak of consciousness, ESP, survival, and even of causal closure on a larger scale. Thus all the arguments against these issues, as Lund puts it "will be seen to fail when sufficient attention is given to how the matter appears from the first-person perspective".

The resurgence of dualism is an intriguing objective to take Lund's views seriously as he suggests the conception in question based on a version of mind-body dualism. As far as my research had indicated, there are other filter theories in this regard, but none, we believe, quite like this one he proposes. In this theory, the immaterial (non-physical) self does not consist in, and might

1. They are involuntary like the percepts we have from our physical bodies.

not depend for its existence upon, the existence of the body, and so might continue after bodily death. Lund fares well in showing the genuine possibility of life after death, and his suggestion not only is compatible with scientific researches but also has a positive account to show a mind-body dualism with considerable explanatory impotence in the conception proposed.

The proposed conception of the disembodied subject is internally consistent throughout in which the problem of identity, individuation, location, and perception of disembodied *self* or *person* has been solved by giving a detailed description of it and uncovering its contradictions. Our argument which was based on phenomenology and philosophical examination has shown that accepting the indirect realist view leads us to acknowledge the existence of a phenomenal realm immediately known in our perceptual experience, and by way of an inference to the best explanation of our experience, we showed that it is the physical world, not the phenomenal realm, that is epistemically remote and only known indirectly.

In view of this, the self though not receiving causal stimulation from its physical body, could have perceptual or perceptual-like experiences through its phenomenal body which have arisen due to the impact of the self's memories and experiences of its physical embodiment. The self, as a real entity, is at the center of the phenomenal realm and could have a rich variety of experiences in an afterworld. Such a conception, which is much like ourselves in many respects, is intelligible and we are justified to conceive it to be the case.

Lund acknowledges the strength of the evidence for survival. It is the most striking point in his works which offer empirical evidence with attendant comprehensive theories. This evidence shows that more than a few people have been convinced that they have acquired by way of extraordinary episodes of personal encounter. In *Death and Consciousness*, he mentions some of the remarkable experiences that people reported having, such as apparent encounters with the dead in OBEs, in NDEs, and in several cases of mediumship. Perhaps the most astounding reports are to be found in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

References

Alexander, E., & Newell, K. (2017). *Living in a Mindful Universe.* Rodale.

Braude, S. E. (2003). *Immortal Remains: The Evidence for Life After Death.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.

Flew, A. (1972). The Presumption of Atheism. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 2*(1), 29-46.

Hasker, W., & Taliaferro, C. (2019). *Afterlife*. (E. N. Zalta, Ed.) Retrieved from The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://plato.stanford.ed/archives/spr2019/entries/afterlife/>.

James, W. (1898). *Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine.* Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company.

Kelly, E. F. (2010). *Irreducible Mind; Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Lund, D. H. (1985). *Death and Consciousness.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Lund, D. H. (1990). Disembodied Existence, Personal Identity, and the First Person Perspective. *Idealistic Studies, 20*(3), 187-202.

Lund, D. H. (1994). *Perception, Mind and Personal Identity: A Critique of Materialism.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Lund, D. H. (2000). Materialism and the Subject of Consciouness. *Idealistic Studies, 30*(11), 7-23.

Lund, D. H. (2003). *Making Sense of It All.* Upper Saddle River,NJ: Pearson Education.

Lund, D. H. (2005). *The Conscious Self: The Immaterial Center of Subjective States.* New York: Humanity Books.

Lund, D. H. (2009). *Persons, Souls, and Death.* North Carolina: McFarland.

Lund, D. H. (2014). Materialism, Dualism, and the Conscious Self. In A. Lavazza, & H. Robinson (Eds.), *Contemporary dualism: A Defense* (pp. 56-78). Routledge.

Lycan, W. G. (2009). Giving Dualism its Due. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy, 87*(4), 551-563.

McTaggert, J. (1906). *Some Dogmas of Religion.* (E. Arnold, Ed.) London: Edward Arnold.

Moreland, J. (2008). *Consciousness and the Existence of God; A Theistic Argument.* New York: Routledge.

Penfield, W. (1975). *The Mystery of The Mind; A Critical Study of Consciousness and The Human Brain.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Price, H. H. (1964). Personal Survival and the Idea of Another World. In J. Hick (Ed.), *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion* (3rd ed., pp. 364-386). Prentice-Hall, INC.

Price, H. H. (1995). What Kind of a "Next World". In H. H. Price, & D. B. Frank (Eds.), *Philosophical Interactions with Parapsychology: The MajorWwritings of H. H. Price on Parapsychology and Survival* (pp. 263-269). MacMillan press.

Taliaferro, C. (2018). Substance Dualism: A Defense. In J. J. Loose, A. J. Menuge, & J. Moreland (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (pp. 43-60). NJ: Wiley Blackwell.

Taliaferro, C., & Knuths, E. (2017). Thought Experiments in Philosophy of Religion: The Virtue of Phenomenological Realism and Values. *Analytic Perspectives on Method and Authority in Theology*, 167-173.