

二元論の哲学に関する一考察：  
死に対する形而上学的研究と死後と来世の論理的存在の二元論的視点\*

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An Essay on the Philosophy of Dualism:  
A Metaphysical Study on Death and the Dualist View of the Logical  
Existence of Post-Death Experience

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**Keywords:** physical death, metaphysics, dualist view, post-death, philosophy

**1. Introduction:**

Religion is a human creation. Indeed, God is used as a spurious explanation for anything not currently explained by science. Henry Drummond (1851-1897) in his book *The Ascent of Man* creatively labeled the gaps in scientific knowledge taken to be evidence or proof of God's existence as the "God of the gaps". As the intellectually honest can attest, the "gaps" have been closing in on all theological arguments as the "mysteries of the world" are explained through science. The author, as a cultural anthropologist, has an innate interest in world religion; however, he is careful to distance himself and certainly does not resign himself to *believe* in any specific faith. Religion represents culture and is a unique topic to study; nevertheless, religion also serves to create walls and tension between nations and cultures. This author believes that religion on a whole is a manifestation of the folly of humankind since it represents one of the greatest obstacles for achieving universal peace. As one takes a look at the history of humanity, religion has been a source of conflict throughout recorded time. In the words of French philosopher François-Marie Arouet 'Voltaire' (1694-1778), "those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities".

The author tends to have the same mindset as the philosopher/sociologist Robert M. Pirsig (1928-2017). As Pirsig (1974) wrote in *Zen and*

*the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, "When one person suffers from delusion, it is called *insanity*. When many people suffer from delusion, it is called *religion*." Pirsig also states that "if one only knows one religion, one knows no religion" meaning that knowledge of only one religious doctrine does not provide one with perspective to know one's own beliefs objectively. With this in mind, the author took to researching world religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Shintoism, etc. The author found that Asian philosophy and religious views on death tend to characterize it as one being erased from existence. Nirvana of Hinduism and Buddhism is merely an escape from the cycle of reincarnation—a state of non-existence. Even in the author's disenchantment and disbelief toward religion, he still finds himself clinging to the Christian concept of the existence of an afterlife—regardless of whether it is through the merit of Christ's resurrection or some other divine plan. The author is agnostic until he considers his own mortality. Having religious belief in his youth gave the author hope for a continued existence or some kind of an afterlife. In the past, believing in the Christian concept of a "Plan of Salvation" gave the author hope for having a continued existence. Although reassuring in ways, the author's own skepticism prevents him from yielding all of his reservations. Therefore, the author writes to meditate as he reanalyzes himself and his core beliefs. He is, as anyone is, the sum of his life experiences, culture and environment. The most basic

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theological assumption is debated as being belief in the existence of God(s). However, the author would rather believe that the true theological debate is found in the searching for evidence of the soul or one's spirit. This is what the author would like to address before sharing thoughts on the evidence of an afterlife.

## 2. Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Dualism

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of being and the world that encompasses it (Geisler, 1999). Metaphysics attempts to answer two basic questions in the broadest possible terms: First, "what *is* there?" and second, "what is *it* like?" (Hall, 2012) Metaphysics attempts to clarify the fundamental notions by which people understand the world. For example, physical existence, the existence of objects and their properties, space and time, cause and effect, and possibility. A central branch of metaphysics is ontology, the investigation into the basic categories of existence or *being* and how such categories relate to each other. Some include epistemology as another central focus of metaphysics, but others question this. Another central branch is metaphysical cosmology: which seeks to understand the origin and meaning of the universe by thought alone.

There are two broad conceptions about what "world" or "realm" is studied by metaphysics. The stronger of the two conceptions, assumes that the objects studied by metaphysics exist independently of any observer. This means that the subject is the most fundamental of all sciences. The weaker, second conception assumes that the objects studied by metaphysics exist inside the mind of an observer, so the subject becomes a form of introspection and conceptual analysis. Some philosophers, notably Immanuel Kant, discuss both of these "worlds" and what can be inferred about each one. Kant described the shift between the two conceptions as a "Copernican" turn (Hall, 2012).

Some philosophers and scientists, such as the logical positivists, reject the entire subject of metaphysics as meaningless, while others

disagree and think that it is legitimate. Plato, Nietzsche, Confucious, Averroes, even Christ and Buddha have contributed various metaphysical theories.

The concept that our existence is an illusion or simulation was popularized in 1999 by the movie "the Matrix". Thought experiments by philosophers and various religious doctrine also hint at this concept. The Hindu religion has the idea that the phenomenal is an illusion called *Maya* or the illusive which is separate from the eternal reality of *Brahman*. Buddhism has a similar concept of illusive reality called *Samsara* and freeing oneself of the attachment to this life is the ultimate goal and considers this "enlightenment" what one should seek to achieve. The Taoist view seeks to separate the individual from their "butterfly" dream of their self. Gnosticism clings to the concept of a *Demiurge* or a flawed demi-God who created a flawed system or universe which we find ourselves. Gnosticism encourages believers to seek beyond this universe for a higher state beyond the imperfections of this life. Knowledge is interpreted as the key to spirituality by those of many faiths. Ignorance becomes the human obstacle for spiritual progression.

Immanuel Kant hypothesized that our filtered reality through tools such as language leads to self-deceit and blinds one to the truth. Rene Descartes' philosophy of an evil demon intently deceiving our "brain in a vat" is similar to the concept of being plugged into a computer matrix. Plato's allegory of the cave where people chained up inside of a cave would only perceive their reality by the shadows cast on the wall. Human society is determined to fight to preserve their "shadow reality". Distrusting one's senses to find deeper truth tends to be common fodder for philosophers and religions seeking to prove our reality. Reality becomes somewhat "irrelevant" and "unobtainable" if it cannot be defined. Whether or not reality is properly defined, this author believes that all life is precious and that it is a gift that should be used well. If one lives as though one will never die, then one dies as though one has never lived.

### 2.1 Dualism as *Ditheism* or *Bitheism*

Dualism, from the Latin word *duo* meaning “two”, denotes the state of two parts. The term dualism was originally coined to denote co-eternal binary opposition, a meaning that is preserved in metaphysical and philosophical duality discourse but has been more generalized in other usages to indicate a system which contains two essential parts (Geisler, 1999).

Moral dualism is the belief of the great complement or conflict between the benevolent and the malevolent. It simply implies that there

are two moral opposites at work, independent of any interpretation of what might be “moral” and independent of how these may be represented. The moral opposites might, for example, exist in a world view which has one god, more than one god, or none. By contrast, *ditheism* or *bitheism* implies that at least two gods exist. While *bitheism* implies harmony, *ditheism* implies rivalry and opposition, such as between good and evil, or bright and dark, or summer and winter. For example, a *ditheistic* system would be one in which one god is creative, the other destructive (Geisler, 1999).

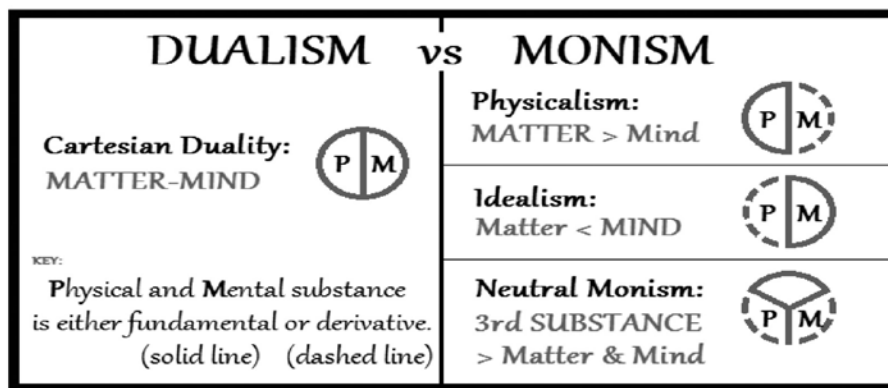


Figure 1. Illustration of the Differences Between Dualism and Monism  
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### 2.2 Dualism as *Yin* or *Yang*

Alternatively, in *ontological dualism*, the world is divided into two converging categories. A concern of Chinese metaphysics, especially Taoism, is the relationship and nature of *being* (有) and *non-being* (無). The opposition and combination of the universe’s two basic principles of *yin* and *yang* is a large part of Chinese philosophy, and is an important feature of Taoism, both as a philosophy and as a religion. The division world view is also important in Confucianism as Taoism influences were on a cultural level in China. Although *yin* and *yang* appear simple as a concept, there is complexity within the philosophy as explained in Taoism.

The *yin* is the dark tear and the *yang* is the light tear. Each side of the tear has a dot of the opposite color which is symbolic of “everything containing the seed of its opposite” (Bellaimey, 2015). Although “good” and “evil” might be subjective, as an example, all people as individuals

have the potential for both good and evil—even those considered to be good have the potential of doing terrible things; likewise, a person of terrible or immoral behavior has the potential of doing good things. With this in mind, there is no such thing as *total* opposites within the concept of *yin* and *yang*. Moreover, neither *yin* nor *yang* would exist without the opposite tear to complete the full circle. Each half of the circle—both *yin* and *yang* are relative to each other.

*Yin* and *yang* are an integral part of Taoist belief. *Yin* is the female side depicted as the dark tear with the white dot and *yang* is the male side depicted as the white tear with the black dot. *Things* can alternate between being *yin* or *yang* depending on multiple variables. One can turn into the other—much like opposite sides of the same coin. To illustrate this concept, wheat that is growing is *yang*, but when wheat is reaped it is *yin*. A wave’s crest is *yang* and the trough is *yin*. The shell of an egg is *yang*

but it is yin that is the egg within the shell. Cities in China are also influenced by yin and yang. Cities on the sunny-side of mountains may contain –yang in its name while cities on the shaded-side of mountains may have –yin as a suffix to its name. Yang carries the characteristics of being bright, strong, hard, and fast while yin has the opposite meaning. Yang is the sunbeams while yin is the shadows. The pitch of a ball is yang and the catch of the ball is yin. In essence, yang starts an action and yin receives or completes the action. In a more abstract sense, yin is the inside empty space of a cup and yang is the cup itself. However, if the cup was filled with coffee, the heat would be yang and the blackness of the coffee would be yin. Yang is the power of a fire but yin can be equally powerful if not influenced by yang as in the case of the freezing cold of winter is the *power* of yin. Water gently flowing as a river is yin, but can be quickly converted to yang as a waterfall (Bellaimey, 2015).

Taoists believe that the universe is made up of energy and vibrations which behave differently in different contexts. According to Taoism, the power of the universe is deeper and truer than any other force—this power is called the *Dao*. This Tao also means “the way”. Yin and Yang are never truly opposites as each side has the potential to switch roles as representative of the dot in the tear of each side. There are two sides in Taoism as represented by yin and yang; however, unlike other religions where the higher power is all good and has an all evil rival, Taoism teaches the both yin and yang are relative and that we need to learn from both yin and yang. Unlike religions that teach a personal relationship with a deity or God(s), Taoism teaches that the higher power is impersonal. Taoist belief is that one must live in harmony with “the way” and not fight against the universe’s power or natural flow. As an example, it would be more productive to listen more and argue less. According to Taoism, one should be willing to undo or change some *thing* or some *behavior*. By joining the “natural flow” one will make more progress. One should be real to oneself as focusing on being the best would only blind one from their own happiness.

Live simply because complications only generate grief and stress and remove one from the *Dao*. According to Taoism, a wise person is flexible and conforming since these are the attributes of one who has achieved harmony with *Dao*. Learning to recognize yin and yang are considered the secret for tapping into the energy of *Dao*.

The concept of yin and yang bears striking resemblance to the Monad or *monas* (μονάς) in Greek philosophy. The Monad refers to a single *unit* or refers to one being *alone*. In Greek cosmogony or creation belief, this refers to the first being or creator. In other meaning, it refers to the totality or sum of all beings in existence. This concept was conceived by the Pythagoreans as both a philosophical and religious symbol. The first thing that came into existence is the “monad” which gave birth to the “dyad” which is Greek for *two* or *second*. The concept of the “monad” also influenced an early concept of geometry and science which would later evolve. According to Diogenes Laertius (Hicks, 1925) the monad evolved into the dyad and the triad and so on until numbers evolved. From the evolution of numbers came points, then lines, the two-dimensional, three-dimensional, bodies which eventually culminated into the four elements—earth, water, fire and air, from which the world is built of (Hicks, 1925).

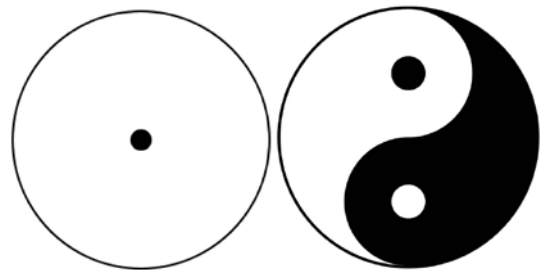


Figure 2. Illustration of the Circled dot used by the Pythagoreans and Greeks and the Modern Yin & Yang Symbol ©Wikimedia Commons, free media repository, November 26, 2016

The elements and their correlation to yin and yang are also explained in Taoism. Daoist Laozi explains in the ancient text *Dao De Jing*, the

power of *Dao* as reflecting the power of natural elements. Moreover, Laozi explanation of the forces of *Dao* having an increase parallels the Greek philosophy of the monad (Gutenberg, 2007). Laozi is quoted as saying “from the *Dao* comes one, from one comes two, from two comes three, and from three comes the ten thousand things” (道生一、一生二、二生三、三生萬物) (Gutenberg [Chapter 42], 2007).

The elements represented by the yin and yang

in Taoism are expanded to include elements perceived as being forces of *Dao*. The eight “bars” merely make up the introductory elements for a more complex system. The eight bars include: 乾・兌・離・震・巽・坎・艮・坤. The order of the bars runs counter-clockwise from the top as represented in the illustration below. Correlation to the concept of yin and yang can also be observed through the bars in the elements and forces as illustrated in Figure 3.

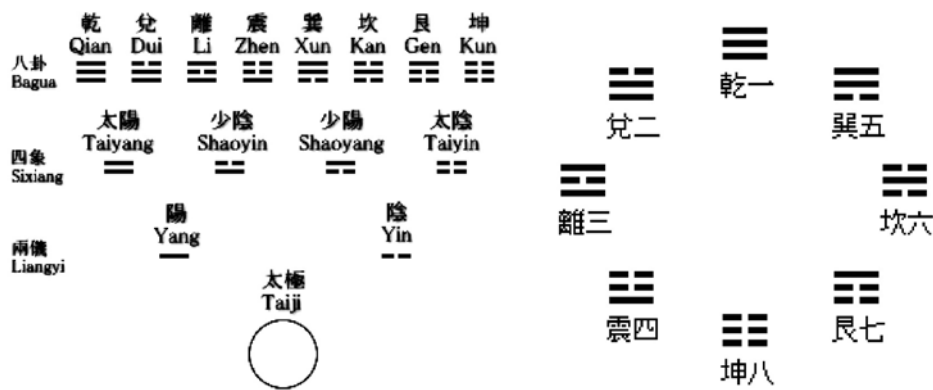


Figure 3. Illustration of the 先天圖 displaying correlation to the Yin Yang symbols  
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There is much more to disclose on the complexity of *Dao* as the eight bars are further expanded into the 六十四卦 or “rokujushike” representing the complexity of Taoist explanation of natural forces and elements including weather patterns, natural material, and seasons. The original eight forces or elements are also represented by the bars surrounding the yin and yang symbol in Figure 4. Both the yin and yang as well as four of the elements and forces *Dao* are represented on the South Korean flag.



Figure 4. Illustration of the Yin Yang symbols with bars and South Korean flag  
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### 3. A Monkey in the Works: Dualism and Science—Assessing Theories on Evolution

The questions of who we are and where we came from have been on the minds of scientists and philosophers for centuries. Such questions have excited mankind's interest for an answer and have been a major topic for a variety of scientific theories and religious doctrine. Physical anthropologists as well as other members of the scientific community have composed theories concerning mankind's origins. Certain theories of evolution involving the study of primates and fossil records have led to a commonly accepted theory that primates are related to humans.

There exists a classification controversy concerning the evolutionary separation between the different primates. However, the African apes are viewed to be the closest living relatives of humans. Specifically, the Bonobo, which is one of the least well known of the African apes has a striking similarity to humans. The Bonobos are similar to the chimpanzee, but have longer legs, a higher center of gravity, and a narrower chest. The Bonobo also has a differently shaped face and can walk upright more easily than other apes. However, not only physical similarities exist, there are also some genetic evidence linking the African apes and humans (Relethford, 1996).

Research concerning the similarities between primates and humans includes the study of comparisons in their various physiological characteristics. For example, the lack of a tail, similar dental features and the way in which the brains of primates and humans are organized is similar (Capitanio, 1998). Other shared physiological characteristics would include basic anatomical features such as stereoscopic color vision, prehensile hands and opposable thumbs, flexible forelimbs, and relatively large, complex brains (Smuts, 1995). Bonobos possess an ability of tool-making through the use of their phalanges dexterity skill as well as mental reasoning skills.

Psychological characteristics are also similar between primates and humans. According to research conducted by Barbara Smuts, male aggression against females in other species is a

counterpart for our own. Even among primates, social and sexual patterns have shown great diversity. For example, the male Bonobos treat females with more respect than chimps who frequently act towards females violently. Furthermore, the male Titi monkeys appear to exhibit behavior that looks like jealousy (Capitanio, 1998).

According to Dr. Novak, the president of the American Society of Primatologists, non-human primates are used as research subjects because "humans are primates." Non-human primates are also studied because they are fascinating animals. By learning about non-human primates it is possible to learn more about ourselves (Novak, 1997). However, as humans there is a common opinion that our identity is being threatened by being classified with "animals". Our identity is carefully established through the theory that humans are self-conscious, thinking organisms. Even scientists identify organisms with a certain favoritism toward humans. Studies are often based on analogies/homologies where the subject being studied is compared to criteria established by ourselves and for ourselves as humans. One might feel that primates are studied with such captivating interest because of the scientists' fascination in finding out about ourselves. Nonhuman primates can tell us more about ourselves and about our relative place in the world of living things (Park, 1998).

Nevertheless, one might consider that the theories concerning the relations of humans and primates and the theory of evolution to be inconclusive. The established criteria to prove a theory as a fact requires conclusive verification. Such verification cannot be given, even by science which is based upon inductive logic. Inductive logic by its very nature is potentially limited for producing genuine knowledge. Fossil remains and the studies of primates have only created certain theories that are still missing conclusive evidence. If the hypothesis is true, then the lack of proof does not remove truth away from the theory. However, if a hypothesis or a "myth" according to religious doctrine is also true, then the lack of proof concerning its validity does not

remove truth from religious theories either. A hypothesis is simply an explanation of observed facts (Relethford, 1996). In accordance to this definition, a hypothesis could also be considered a “myth” in a philosophical sense. Both “hypothesis” and “myth” are words used as an account designed to explain an observed reality in terms of the conceptual language available to a person. Consequently, when modern scientists observe and attempt to explain those phenomena as best they can with concepts which they believe to be true, they are making myths. So it is with religious explanations as to humankind’s relationship with the natural world. Both religious and scientific explanations are “myths” that remain inconclusive. As Robert Pirsig (1974) writes, science is derived from philosophy because both science and philosophy are in the mind. Because of the variation of minds, both scientific and religious explanations often conform to the disposition of the individual doing the thinking. Perhaps it is best stated by Matthews during his introduction to a 1971 edition of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*:

“In accepting evolution as a fact, how many biologists pause to reflect that science is built upon theories that have been proved by experiment to be correct, or remember that the theory of animal evolution has never been thus proved?...The fact of evolution is the backbone of biology, and biology is thus in the peculiar position of being a science founded on an unproved theory--is it then a science or a faith? Belief in the theory of evolution is thus exactly parallel to belief in creation--both are concepts which believers know to be true but neither, up to the present, has been capable of proof.” (Gish, 1988).

Physical anthropologists as well as other members of the scientific community have their theories concerning the origins of mankind. They have written well-composed theories concerning evolution and the study of primates. However, the author feels that it is necessary

to take all theories of science, religion, and philosophy into consideration. The scientific theory of mankind’s evolutionary relationship to primates is worth studying but should not take absolute relevance over other possible theories. The same historical prejudices which disregarded the relevance of the theories of evolution would be created by evolutionists for other pending theories if the freedom of hypothesizing or other “myth-making” were not supported. Scientists, philosophers, teachers, religious leaders, and students are all free to pursue the study of their theories concerning humankind’s relationship with the primates.

Dualism and the duality of modern culture is an ongoing battle of opposites: emotion vs. logic, chaos vs. order, spirituality vs. science, free will vs. destiny, material determinism vs. irrational nature, et cetera. Reality, whether obtained by freedom through truth or slavery through ignorance is a choice that one must make. Freedom and choice whether an illusion or not gives one hope.

Modern quantum field theory suggesting that random number generators can be influenced by consciousness is part of a theory authored by Roger Penrose and Stuart Hameroff. According to Penrose and Hameroff, consciousness affects the human world ties in matter and energy and cellular microtubules transmitting information on a quantum level, allowing our brains to communicate with an underlying universal consciousness. This is the concept of dualism on steroids.

Wrestling with our own mortality is perhaps what has given way to religion and the concept of dualism. Existential angst is shared by most everyone who has thought about life, death, consciousness, and existence. To expand on the concept of dualism, the author feels that it is relevant to associate the concept with an actual medical case dilemma. As an example of the philosophy of dualism, the author would like to present the case of Mr. X to demonstrate dualist belief on mortality.

#### 4. The Case of Mr. X

Mr. X is suffering from severe medical problems and complications. His situation displays a history of his troubling physical condition and the accelerated rate of his deteriorating health. The nature of Mr. X's condition causes one to ask whether Mr. X is alive or not. It is the author's opinion that Mr. X is alive. It appears that medical, biological, and moral viewpoints all testify of this. Although Mr. X is in a physically declining state, he still matches all prescribed definitions of being alive.

According to the Harvard report's new criteria/definition, as well as the 10th edition of *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, the definition of death is "a permanent cessation of all vital functions," or the "cause or occasion of loss of life". This leads to the need to have the term "life" properly defined. Life is described as being the "quality or character distinguishing an animal or a plant from inorganic or from dead organic bodies". Life is synonymous with existence, especially conscious existence, which is conceived through religious interpretation as a quality of the soul or as the soul's nature and being. "Life" is further defined by science as having the following qualities: it *grows*, it *reproduces*; moreover, in the case of plant life has *chlorophyll* to chemically convert carbon and oxygen. However, these criteria can be debated as fallible—crystals grow but are not "alive". Mules, which are the offspring of a donkey and a horse, cannot reproduce, but are not "dead" and hotdogs may contain chlorophyll but are not "alive". With this in mind, one can see how "life" and its interpretations and even theories on its "origins" are very subjective. In the scientific sense, life may merely be the inevitable result of complex chemistry—this explanation, if correct, might suggest that life throughout the universe is also inevitable as the probability of life existing elsewhere is compounded by the complexity of the universe.

Upon further reference to the dictionary's explanation, the author looked up the word "dead". Being dead is described as devoid of life or having the appearance of death. Synonymous words would include being unresponsive,

extinguished, inanimate, deceased, defunct, departed, inert, barren, infertile, and exhausted. An individual who is challenged by not having certain physical capabilities would possibly fit such descriptions (such as being unresponsive as in the case of Mr. X). However, the author feels that the definition of death and dead is agreeable with his debate that Mr. X is a living individual. Mr. X. is only responsive to deep pain; nevertheless, he is responsive. A response disproves Mr. X from being defined as "dead".

According to information obtained by reading what Robert Morison and the Harvard Medical Committee wrote about their research concerning death and dying, the author has come to realize that the definition of death as a process versus an event is to be a great topic of debate. Perhaps the explanation of death is as the dictionary definition suggests. The cessation of the heart beat, not breathing, cold body, etc. are all casual signs of death. Biological processes only exist with living organisms. To give an inanimate object the title of "life" would be like giving a living organism the title of "death" while vital signs, even if in a small percentage, are present.

Granted, the definition of death in itself is abstract and difficult to define due to moral and medical ideals being at conflict with each other. Moral ideals are often dictated by an individual's personal beliefs which are manifested by the individual's religion and culture. Medical ideals are more scientific and based on facts which on occasion impose upon the sentimental aspects of moral ideals. "The 'definition' of death is part of a process of development in social attitudes and legal rules stimulated by the unfolding of bio-medical knowledge". (Presidents Commission, 1981). Although the author has a better understanding of how the medical and moral realms of thinking are somewhat separated, his own personal values are dictated by his own consciousness and learning. The author has not undergone a paradigm shift but has continued with the acceptance of the traditional definition of death.

According to the accepted definition, death occurs when there is a complete and irreversible



cessation of vital signs. These signs are represented by three organs—the heart, lungs, and brain. These three organs are acknowledged as being the most significant to sustaining vital signs because of their interrelationship. An irreversible cessation of any one of these three organs quickly stops the other two and consequently halts the functional capability of the individual as a whole.

Since the 1950s, technology has intervened with the invention of machines such as the respirator, which artificially replace the function of a failed or a failing organ or vital sign. The invention of the respirator, for example, takes the place of breathing functions. The failure of breathing functions would otherwise result in an irreversible cessation of all vital signs. However, no machine can replace all of the functions of the brain stem. The brain stem regulates body temperature, heart beat, breathing, digestion, and pain reflex. When an individual is impaired by lack of reflexes, unresponsiveness, and a flat electroencephalogram, that person is still alive according to the biological definition of life. In the case of Mr. X, being dependent on assistance with the digestive process and his lack of responsiveness except for deep pain suggests that he is in a declining state. It is clear that his normal body functions are no longer in a condition sufficient enough for the individual to take care of himself without the aid of a machine. Because Mr. X's vital signs are still functioning, even if his digestive functions are at the mercy of a machine and other vital signs are in a decaying condition, Mr. X is alive by medical definition. The continuation of cell reproduction testifies that Mr. X is also alive according to biological definition. Body temperature regulation, pulse regulation, etc. manifest that brain stem functions are still in an operative state which also would indicate "life".

In the case of Mr. X, it appears that, the definition of death should not be expanded to include him. Having food/nutrient problems which requires digestive assistance is similar to being in need of respiration assistance.

Death is described as being the permanent secession of all vital functions. With such a definition, all vital functions would include circulatory functions of the heart, respiratory functions of the lungs, and body regulatory functions/primal brain functions of the lower brain stem which regulates such things as digestion and body temperature, etc. Having even one of these functions self-regulated by the individual denotes life. Even if the individual is in a state of unresponsiveness, the definition of life is still being manifested by the carrying out of bodily functions and cell reproduction. The essence of the individual in a measure of functionality is not the debate which is at hand. Granted, Mr. X is in a declining state which, if continues, will match the traditional definition of death. Mr. X has suffered extensive medical problems and diseases that have resulted in numerous operations. Hypertension, type II diabetes and cerebral vascular disease has led to problems which concern such things as digestive functions and responsiveness. He is still alive not only by medical definition and by dictionary definition, but also he is still alive by a morally-dictated definition.

Morally speaking, it is also difficult to consider Mr. X as deceased. Even as natural laws suggest, self preservation is the code which all life shares. Morality is often dictated by religion which also determines the value that life is prescribed. Christianity teaches that life is a gift from God and that it needs to be protected. Moral laws are written throughout the doctrines of Christianity and that "death" takes upon spiritual as well as physical connotations. During the author's studies at universities in Japan and Korea, he attended courses which researched the concepts of death in East Asia and explored the religious doctrines of Zen Buddhism. From various studies in Japan and Korea, the author has learned the value placed on life and the definition of death is culturally determined. The doctrine of Buddhism endorses the Hindu concept of reincarnation. According to Buddhist beliefs, life and existence is defined as endless suffering and pain. Reincarnation is the continuing process of

being in a painful state. The only way to escape the cycle of reincarnation is to become “extinct” or in a state of *nirvana*. Perhaps if Mr. X’s case was being presented in an Asian country, there would be a different view on the value prescribed to his life. If Mr. X’s case was being presented in a different culture, or if this author had different cultural philosophies, perhaps his own perception would change. The author’s culture is a representation of the religious philosophy he was raised in. Certainly, religion is an influence as to how one feels about moral values and supports or challenges the opinion that Mr. X is alive.

Life, death, heaven, hell, nirvana are all anecdotal concepts. However, when one is given the choice between experimental and anecdotal, most educated people would choose the experimental. However, there are scientific theories based entirely on indirect experimental evidence that is still believed by scientists. Dark matter and dark energy have never been directly observed. The author would like to elaborate on this point in conclusion of this paper.

To summarize, it appears that from the dictionary definition of death, by evidence of traditional opinion, and by the author’s personal interpretation, Mr. X is still alive. Medical, biological, and moral viewpoints and the acceptance of their terminology prescribed to life and death is sufficient evidence that Mr. X is alive.

### 5. The Long Conclusion: A Future in Death or Merely Death in the Future?

In order to demonstrate that it makes sense to say that post-death experiences are logically possible and that the “same person” (who previously lived) survives the death of his/her body, it is necessary to consider the different viewpoints concerning the relative nature of physical death. Religion, psychology, philosophy, and metaphysical doctrines have on occasion introduced the concepts of living organisms being made up of a physical body as well as a spiritual essence. The spiritual essence or spirit of life is separate from the physical component by the fact that the spirit

is considered to be abstract, ambiguous, and its existence highly debatable. The necessity to define “spirit” becomes significant when exploring the possibility of a continued existence after physical death. A spirit can be referred to as a “soul”. A soul also serves to individualize and personify humans as individuals. Philosophers also refer to the soul as the “self”. Since it is also what thinks, it is also called the “mind”. The soul is also viewed as the primary element of what gives men their dignity (Walter as quoted by Taylor, 1973 [pp. 135]).

Spirit is difficult to be proven as matter, though it is possible to create a reference to its existence. If an individual wrecked while riding a bicycle, the part of that individual’s body which was impacted during the accident is physically injured—an arm, leg, back, et cetera. However, when an individual’s dear friend or relative suddenly dies there might be a reaction of pain in the “heart” or “mind”. These pains display an existence of something that while not being tangible, as in the case of the recipient, an indubitable fact in the mind of the one experiencing the pain of heartbreak. This conclusion is based upon a “feeling”, but feelings might also be considered a manifestation of a spirit.

Athletes on occasion feel a physical happiness which comes from being in good health—such as a marathon runner who feels a “runner’s high” during a race and can describe this physical pleasure. Moreover, there is a pleasure that is felt spiritually. For example, upon receiving a gift from a close friend, it is possible to feel happiness in one’s heart. Spiritual pleasure and spiritual pain as well as physical pleasure and physical pain exist in some acknowledgeable tense. In order to argue that post-death experiences are logically possible, one might feel that justifying a spiritual existence is necessary; however, it might be debated that we are not physical beings having a temporal experience—instead, we are spiritual beings having a temporal existence.

Nevertheless, one might consider that it is necessary to depend upon our physical bodies as a reference for personal identity. However, people who grow from babies to adulthood

undergo changes in their appearance, personality, as well as biological changes. Most every body cell in an individual is replaced on average of every five years. (Sherlock & Johnson, 1998). By this definition, an individual becomes a totally “new” individual every five years. According to biological definition, one does not remain the same person. Dependency upon the physical body to establish personal identity is therefore debatable. One might consider that the individual’s existence continues, if when one dies, one is not of the same physical structure as what would match a biological definition of the individual. However, one exists as an individual constructed of a different, spiritual structure. The spirit is an indestructible entity that would never perish from a physical death. This continued existence is abstract considering that it is not biological science that can describe the properties of a spiritual structure.

We are now presented with the question as to what denotes an individual. Establishment of identity is a basic need in order to fit into certain prescribed physical and social realms. However, one might consider that personal identity does not always have to depend upon a physical body. Dependence upon physical structure, fingerprints, DNA, et cetera for physical criteria are trivial when considering the possibilities of a spirit “self” to establish personal identity. The individual’s character, disposition, traits, habits, secrets, memory, experiences, and knowledge can all be related to the spiritual essence of an individual. A person, if considered more than a biological organism, overcomes the boundaries set for determining personal status. A spiritual body creates a different set of criteria for debating “sameness”. Granted, “same” as in the meaning “unchanged” defines the person as being not the “same” in life when compared with the individual in the post-life. There is no longer a physical body to match the criteria for “sameness”. However, it is the “same” spirit or soul that is possessed by the individual in his/her physical life as well as in his/her spiritual post-life that identifies the individual as being the “same”.

Science has had many physical and mathematical

laws that have not had their theories verified until recent history. If post-death experiences are to be confirmed, then what is the method of confirmation? Perhaps as author C. S. Lewis (1952) suggests, the understanding of what would verify a hypothesis about our own future existence is lacking clarity. As a metaphysical problem, perhaps it is easier to say “Wait until you die!” and let it be. The hypothesis concerning post-death experiences includes that one will, after the date of one’s physical death, have conscious experiences—including the experience of remembering that death. Furthermore, this is a prediction which will be verified by one’s own experience if it is true, but which cannot be falsified if it is false. If an observation can justify or falsify a theory, it is necessary to have the confirmation that an observation can provide. Once a theory is justified through observation, then it becomes a fact. However, verification and falsification are also symmetrically related (Hick, 1960 [pgs. 257, 258]).

If a post-death experience is confirmed, by what other observation could it be confirmed? The individual who is having a post-death experience needs to have his/her experience verified in order to confirm the theory of a post-death existence. Therefore, a delegation/deputation of colleagues is used to confirm the theory. However, the post-death experience of the delegation would only provide confirmation of the theory to themselves.

Once Einstein predicted that the dark-half of the moon has craters. This was a logical hypothesis based upon the observations of the light-half of the moon, but could not be proven as truth until the confirmation of the observations of a delegation. It took many years from the time of Einstein’s theory until it was actually proved through the observation of a delegation—astronauts. The observations that testified of the truth of his theory still would have been inconclusive if it wasn’t for the confirmation of the delegation. However, in the case of a post-life, the delegation is also by theory engulfed by the post-life experience which doesn’t allow for any confirmative remarks about the post-life

observation. Whether it is truth or fiction, the individual as well as the delegation has the same fate that leaves a possible reality of the post-life unconfirmed. Moreover, to say that a post-life existence is false is not a fact that anyone can experientially verify.

To “verify” means to “know”. Knowing is an experience which someone has or undergoes (Hick, 1960 [pp. 255]). There are also different concepts about what the post-death experience is. To fulfill all of the logical and psychological conditions prescribed in order for verification to take place is a difficult task. But it is wrong to dismiss it as being unverifiable on the grounds that it has not been verified. Perhaps the problem is that the verification process is too conditional. One might consider that it is best to prove things of a spiritual nature in a spiritual way. Science does a great job of describing the physical and natural. Symmetrical thinking is a manifestation of science. Are there other ways to prove truth besides observation or falsification of a theory?—In religion it is called *faith*.

In the religious world, there are individuals who speak about having authority to describe the post-death via divine revelation. This introduces a debate over religious doctrine and the different concepts of religious *authority*—a Supreme Being or God. There are also those that have had near death experiences and have felt they have entered into an after-life realm. However, without some other form of documentation or verification, there will always be a degree of doubt. Just the same, one cannot prove that there is not a “Resurrection Land” any more than one can disprove it.

Life is viewed as all that one has, and the loss of it is the greatest loss one can sustain. The view of death being more than simply the loss of life, but rather the state of being nonexistent or unconscious is often objectionable (Nagel, 1979 [pp. 62]). Death is feared and viewed as evil only because of what it deprives us of—the experience of life. Feeling alive in the psychological sense which consists of having experiences, namely “organic sensations”. Because of this, experiences are casually connected with

being a physical organism. “Life” implies “experiences” and these terms are strikingly synonymous by definition. Due to this perception, perhaps post-death should be described as being an “after-death experience” (Price, 1953 [pp. 180]). Natural views suggest that death is an evil because it brings an end to all the experiences of life. To bring hope into what is perceived as an after-life, it is necessary to state that experiences continue as well as existence.

Philosophers have pondered the meaning of life and the meaning of death and their thoughts are arranged as colorful as possible to demonstrate a conclusion to be debated. Others, write what is perceived to be a conclusive argument. Perhaps a philosopher would have been more articulate and arrange his presuppositions and prejudices in an orderly way, then step back and say, “Behold what I have proved” (Taylor, 1973 [pp. 131]). All in an effort to prove his point—no matter the point one cares to make. Believing in the truth of a post-death experience brings hope and removes the fear of the sting that death brings. Hope brings happiness and inner peace. The evidence of an after-life is defined spiritually, not scientifically. However, even scientists sometimes conform to the beliefs of the heart that not all things can be explained by science. Einstein stated that:

“...The scientist is possessed by the sense of universal causation. The future, to him, is every whit as necessary and determined as the past. There is nothing divine about morality; it is a purely human affair. His religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.”

Therefore, all in all, human, philosopher, religious fanatic, or scientist is still left with their personal theories to prove the existence of

an after-life. However, the truth remains, even if it is not verified by an observation, it is logical to say that the spirit of the same person who previously lived survives the death of his/her physical body. Confirmation is the only test application missing. Many truthful hypotheses have existed long before confirmation was conclusive. Post-death experiences, whether proven in time or by the individual observer, the lack of conclusive confirmation does not remove the truth from the hypothesis. In this way, it makes sense to say that a person can survive the death of his/her physical body... at least, this author has chosen to believe so.

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