

CHAPTER NINE

PERSONAL IDENTITY

“I haven’t changed. I’m the same as I was before—only in a different way.”
Judy Holliday (as Gladys Glover), *It Should Happen to You*

In Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, the title character tumbles down a rabbit hole to some strange adventures. She happens upon the Caterpillar, who inquires, “Who are you?” This question leaves Alice at a loss: “I—I hardly know, Sir, just at present—at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.” Alice’s puzzlement about her present *identity* raises an interesting topic in metaphysics.

Metaphysics aims to identify both the things that populate our world and their nature. There is one type of very familiar “thing” whose nature we often take for granted. And that “thing” is persons. Like Alice we might under various circumstances be led to ask exactly what features constitute the identity of persons. What is it that makes some-“thing” *this* person, rather

than some other? For some the identity of a person is to be found in having a soul. For others it—personal identity—is found in having a particular unique configuration of DNA. For still others it is having that body. Answers to the question of *personal identity* are not limited to these three, however.

We might also be led to ask whether some particular person *at this time* is the *same* person as that one, earlier. For instance, you might wonder whether that woman you saw in the supermarket today is the person whom you briefly met at a party a year ago. The issue here is not what we think when we say, “Fred has changed so much since high school that he’s not the same person.” Fred now and Fred then are literally the same person. What is meant here is whether this person, Fred, is literally the person also called Fred that you knew in high school.

The imagined technology of television programs such as *Star Trek* raise the question in more dramatic fashion: When you flip open your communicator and command “Beam me up, Scotty!” not everyone is so sure that it is *you* that reappears moments later in the starship Enterprise. So, we might then ask about not just how many changes, but also exactly what kind of changes you might go through and still be you. Forget about Alice and *Star Trek* for a moment: scientists are hard at work developing new microchip implants for the human brain—in addition to the implants that have already been developed!¹ Microchip implants could extend the range of our senses, allowing us to detect more than our “normal” senses allow.² Would you now with a normal functioning brain, and the you, say, 20 years from now—with a head-full of microchips, replacing your brain—be the same person?

We can distinguish several sorts of questions about identity, corresponding to several senses of the words “identity” and “identical.”

When we say “X and Y are identical,” we might mean one of two things. We might mean that X and Y, despite being two separate things, have exactly the same characteristics. Two new dimes are in this sense (just about) identical. But we might also mean that “X” and “Y” are two names for one thing. In this second sense, George W. Bush is identical with the forty-third president of the United States, and Fred, whom you have just bumped into, is the person you sat next to in third grade. To distinguish the two kinds of “identity,” philosophers call the first kind **qualitative identity** (X and Y have the same qualities) and the second kind **numerical identity** (X and Y are one and the

1 Snyder 2012.

2 Moyer 2013.

same). And—to make things more confusing—there’s a third use of the word “identity” that means the qualities or personality or whatever it is that constitutes the important nature of an individual—make you what you are, as in “My Italian roots / love of music / work with dog rescue are basic to my identity.” Notice that this sort of “identity” can change over time in what is numerically the same person: a few years ago, Ella wasn’t interested in dog rescue. Let’s call this sort of “identity” **individual identity**. And, more confusing still, we can ask about what makes for personal identity, where this question is about what counts as a *person* (as opposed to some other sort of being). An answer to this might imply that we count—or don’t count—fertilized human eggs, or chimpanzees, or robots, or silicone-based aliens from the planet Zarkon, as persons. We’ll call this **personhood identity**.

Persons and Identity

Two obvious and very broad characterizations of persons come very quickly to mind. We think of persons as having a mental or psychological life. More generally, we might characterize this as a conscious life, or simply, consciousness. People have memories, desires, opinions, wishes, fears, sensations, and emotions. They know things, make plans, have hopes and goals. All of these, and others, we tend to think of as mental, as psychological. So, we might identify persons with some aspect of their mental lives, or perhaps the sum total of their mental or psychological life. This sort of idea about identity may have implications for what makes for identity in several of the senses listed above.

But a different point of view produces different sorts of multiple implications. No doubt our most immediate and default means of *identifying* people is by their bodies. Indeed we can tell at a glance that this is Julia because she has Julia’s body; we can tell that this is Jack because he has Jack’s body. And we know that this is the same Julia we spoke with last Sunday because it’s the same “Julia body.” No need to investigate mental lives. Thus, one might think of identity as fundamentally body identity.

These two views are familiar to common sense, to our ordinary way of thinking. *Hylomorphic* accounts, or “form-matter” views, are another historically prominent view. In these views, a human being is a combination of the matter, or the physical “stuff,” and a form, some organizing principle or arrangement of the matter. Such views might differ whether the “form” or the hylomorphic composite is the locus of identity.

A variation of the psychological view, proposed by John Locke, provides a starting point for examining these different views.

I Remember Me: A Psychological View

John Locke is perhaps best known for his *Second Treatise on Civil Government* and its influence on the thinking of the framers of the US Constitution and other advocates of the rights of the governed. His contributions to metaphysics and epistemology are significant, too, including his memory criterion of personal identity. Locke argued that a person's identity consists in the chain of remembered experiences. Here, we should note, he was speaking about numerical identity. In particular, he was worrying about what features account for a person remaining the *same* or *identical person* over time, even through various changes. But a second sort of question can be raised about numerical identity: What constitutes the identity of a person; what features or properties make some being *this* person and not some other? These two questions are sometimes characterized as a **persistence question**: what makes this the same person as that one earlier; and an **individuation question**—what makes someone this person and not someone else at the same time.³

My remembered experiences make me who I am; your remembered experiences make you who you are. (They are important, perhaps, to all senses of “identity” listed above.)

Now this needs a little clarification, but first consider the intuitive motivation for adopting Locke's memory criterion for persistence. Normal growth or changes in the body do not affect or determine who one is, we suppose. Changes in size or hair color, loss of some body part, we think, still leaves you *you*. Your body keeps discarding old tissue, and building new, so after one year, virtually 100% of the atoms in your body have been replaced. But you are still there. We suspect, therefore, that something else determines persistence identity. In a movie early in Tom Hanks's career, *Big*, Hanks plays a character who is magically transformed from a child into an adult. The “big” version of his character persuades his closest friend that he—in his “big” form—is the same person, by recounting—*remembering*—various experiences. Similarly, the 2000 movie *Bedazzled* imagines the hero—after a bargain with the devil—occupying successive, very different bodies (in some very different circumstances), in order to win the heart of his true love. A bit more recently,

3 These designations due to Macdonald 2005, Chap. 4.

13 *Going on 30* imagines the dramatic change in a teenager who wakes up to find herself in the body of a 30 year old woman—yet her “psychology” remains the same.

A less fictional and a more heartbreaking example is perhaps illustrated in later stages of Alzheimer’s. Those suffering from the disease no longer *remember*—family members, friends, or even what they were doing a few moments ago. Indeed it’s not too far amiss to say that they don’t remember themselves. Some suspect that as the memory of personal experiences disappear, the earlier *person* disappears, as well. We might want to say then that *in a literal sense* this Sally, deep into Alzheimer’s problems, is not the Sally we knew—is not numerically identical with her.

Locke argues for this idea: a person’s memory is determinative of personal identity. The *person* is whatever the person’s memory encompasses. We have then a psychological or **memory criterion** of persistence identity: a person’s identity is determined by conscious memories, or a little more clumsily, by the memories contained in consciousness. Locke himself was not intent on distinguishing between one’s memories and one’s consciousness. He notes, for example, that a person’s identity “extends” as far as consciousness extends. Thus, he seemingly intends memory and consciousness to be indistinguishable, at least as far as personal identity is concerned. Perhaps this works for individuation identity as well. Deirdre then is a different person than Sara insofar as her memories differ from Sara’s. Deirdre remembers jumping off Rainbow Bridge into the American River the day before graduation; this memory, however, is not “shared” by Sara. They are thus two different persons. Similarly my current memories constitute my identity, just as your memories constitute your identity. And if, for example, Sam’s memories include those of Nestor—an ancient Greek king who participated in the Trojan War, according to Homer—then Sam is indeed *the same person as* Nestor. (What is meant here is not merely that Sam *remembers that* Nestor met Telemachus after the Trojan War; what is meant here is that Sam *remembers* meeting Telemachus after the Trojan War.) Thus, there seem to be some puzzling implications of the view. Locke himself acknowledged that some of his “suppositions will look strange to the reader.”

Locke dismisses the idea that *substance* plays a role in determining identity. Locke seems to consider substance, in this context, as the “whole particular,” a combination of physical and mental. In ordinary cases, consciousness is a part of the whole particular. But a person goes wherever that consciousness goes. So in Locke’s view, my consciousness might find itself attached to the

body that we recognize as Carrie Underwood, yet my identity is unaffected. So long as consciousness extends or includes the memory of any past action, it is the same person:

For it being the same consciousness that makes a Man be himself to himself, *personal identity* depends on that only, whether it be annexed only to one individual Substance, or can be continued in a succession of several substances.

The same consciousness, in Locke's view, can occur in different bodies, different substances. What matters for identity is consciousness:

For it is by the consciousness it has of its present Thoughts and Actions, that it is *self* to it *self* now, and will be the same *self* as far as the same consciousness can extend to Actions past or to come....⁴

So in Locke's view, if Sam wakes today and remembers the French toast he had for breakfast yesterday, the "Sam remembering" is the same person as the "French toast-eating" Sam. Personal identity is not dependent on the body or some immaterial thing. I am me because of the thoughts and memories that I have when I am conscious. Period.

Our ordinary view considers that temporary losses of consciousness, including sleep, are no threat to one's identity. But if Locke is right and my identity is determined by my consciousness, when my body falls asleep and there is no consciousness, I temporarily cease existing.

There is a more challenging worry about the memory view: we are of course forgetful. I remember but a few things from my experiences in second grade. Indeed for most of us, experiences from but a few weeks ago are no longer remembered; they are no longer part of consciousness. Yet we are inclined to think that, yes, it is us that did these things, even if the experiences have been forgotten. Deirdre no longer remembers her going with her cousins to see *The Lion King*, but we think she is still that same person. A person *persists continuously over time*, we think, even if that person has forgotten certain events or experiences. But Locke's view seems to disallow this. This is but a version of one of the earliest criticisms of Locke.

⁴ Locke 1975, Bk. II, Chap. XXVII, Sect. 10.

Thomas Reid: The Brave Officer and Locke

Thomas Reid (1710–96), associated with the Scottish school of Common Sense, and one of Hume’s earliest critics, thought he saw a consequence of Locke’s view of identity that he suspects Locke did not see:

“It is, that a man be, and at the same time not be, the person that did a particular act.”⁵

Reid supposed a brave officer, who as a boy was flogged for stealing from an orchard. In his first military campaign, he acted bravely, and later became a general. Now Reid supposed that the brave officer remembered his childhood punishment. But later as a general, he remembers only those military actions, not the childhood punishment.

Notice the apparent consequence for Locke’s view: The general *is* the brave officer, and the brave officer *is* the young boy. But the general *is not* the young boy. The general remembering the younger brave officer makes the general the *same person* as the brave officer. And that brave officer, because he remembers the punishment, is the same person as the youthful offender. Seemingly then, the general is that offender—he is the brave officer who is the young thief. Yet the general has no memory of the theft. So, he is not the thief. And now the general is and is not the young thief.

Reid’s puzzlement is now clear. Locke’s memory criterion conflicts with our normal “transitivity” intuition about identity. It leads to apparently self-contradictory claims.

This type of criticism led defenders of a psychological criterion to a *continuity view*.

Indeed, in Locke’s view, it looks as if there may well be multiple persons occupying Sam’s body! For example, suppose that Sam now remembers walking through Aldo’s, while visiting New Orleans five years ago. Call Sam’s body then BODY X. Now, body X contained someone who was remembering playing in a little-league baseball game 15 years earlier. So body X contains the person who played in that game. But since Sam doesn’t remember playing in that game, that person is not Sam. It appears to follow that body X contains both Sam and someone else!

5 Reid 1975, p. 114.

Perhaps an obvious solution to some of these difficulties is to suggest that it is *continuity* or overlapping sets of memories that determines personal identity. A *chain* of memories—overlapping sets of memories—enable us to trace the connection between earlier and later memories. Thus, Reid’s general is the same as the young boy because the general remembers his actions as a brave officer, and as a brave officer, he remembered the orchard thievery. This *continuity* version of the memory criterion of personal identity—overlapping sets of memories constitute the identity of a person—has prominent defenders.⁶

But consider Alzheimer-afflicted Sally, mentioned above, who has no memories of any past, is numerically identical with no earlier person. There’s no overlap between her and any earlier person. Of course, her earlier individual identity is now, we might think, totally destroyed; but still, that person back then, with the different individual identity, was numerically Sally. She’s just changed a whole lot.

The memory continuity criterion invites a branching or **fission objection**, that is, we can imagine a person “dividing” into two equivalent beings. The fission objection is a version of the *duplication* problem. Imagine that someday we can transfer the “mental life” of someone near death (call this person U) into a complicated cybernetic system.⁷ Suppose further that for some reason, the “transfer engineer” is overly cautious and makes two cybernetic “homes” for U’s mental life. U suffers bodily death, but two creatures remain that lay claim to U’s memories. Call them U-1 and U-2. You can see the problem. U’s mental life, is continuous with both U-1 and U-2. But $1 \neq 2$! Identity means one ... and only one! How are we to decide? Can we?

Bernard Williams suggested this “branching problem” many years ago:

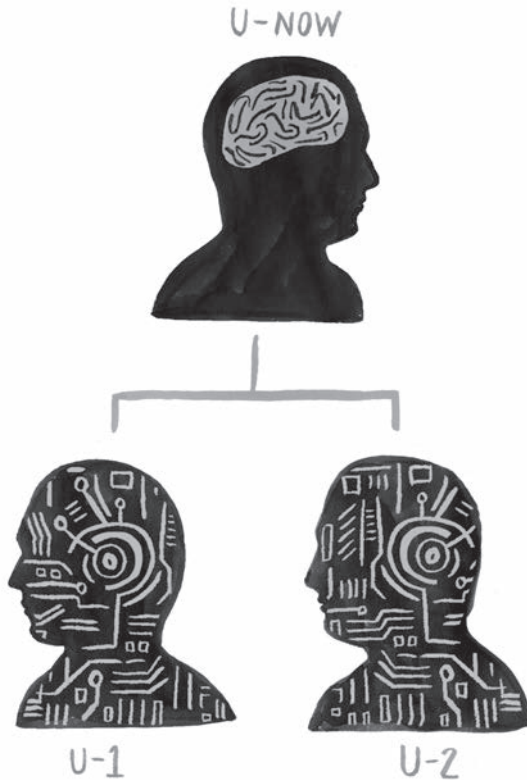
It is logically possible that some other man ... should simultaneously undergo the same changes ... What should we say in that case? They cannot both be Guy Fawkes [our U] ... Moreover, if they were both identical with Guy Fawkes, they would be identical with each other, which is also absurd.⁸

Advocates have two types of response to his fission problem. Roderick Chisholm (1916–99), extremely influential in both metaphysics and epistemology, claimed that U is *in fact* identical with one of U-1 or U-2. We just can’t tell which. That, is suppose that you somehow undergo fission: U “branches”

6 E.g., Shoemaker and Swinburne 1984, pp. 67–132.

7 Daniel Lyons 1998.

8 Bernard Williams 1973, p. 8.



into U-1 and U-2. Chisholm claimed U are *in fact* one—and only one—of those branches. The other is someone mentally very much like U, but not *identical* to U. We will just never know which one. So, in Chisholm’s view, there’s a metaphysical answer to the question. It’s just that the metaphysical answer brings with it an epistemic problem, namely, that we can’t tell which of U-1 or U-2 U now is.

This response sometimes strikes people as arbitrary. Yet Chisholm held that we are not identical with a body, but rather a “self” that continues in some one of the bodies. That we are unable to *decide* which body “contains U” does not lead to the conclusion that U is not one of them:

In such a case there may be no sufficient reason at all for deciding that you are or that you are not one or the other of the two different persons. But from this it does not follow that you *will* not in fact be one or the other of the two persons.⁹

9 Chisholm 1976, p. 112.

Others are less sanguine about Chisholm's approach and suggest that neither U-1 or U-2 is U. Sadly (you might think), U no longer exists. These two branches are in fact two different people who happen to share many of the same memories. This leaves but one option. Fission—branching—brings an end to U.

Occasionally some wonder why branching brings an end to the original U. Why can't U be two? It seems fundamental to our notion of identity that a person can't be in two places at once; one can't be both at home, watching reruns of *Gilligan's Island*, and simultaneously sitting in the library, reading about personal identity.¹⁰ But someone might urge: what if the person is a nonphysical thing? Can't a nonphysical thing be in two places at once? (Another chapter considers *universals*, objects that can be in two places at once.) But that won't help here—to be you is to be some *particular* thing, not some universal.

Still some are tempted to ask, couldn't some person be “distributed” throughout space? Consider a company that outgrows its original offices and moves into two new offices (call them O-1 and O-2) in separate buildings. Does O-1, or O-2, or neither, contain the original company? Clearly both do. A company can exist in two places at the same time. (Note, in passing, that a company can also be an intermittent object—a status that was worrisome when it appeared to follow from Locke's view of persons. A company can cease to exist for a while, then start existing again. Maybe people are like companies?)

But perhaps it's better to think that *part* of the company is now located in each new office. We are not wondering about U dividing into *two parts of one thing*. The branching problem concerns U-1 and U-2 are each *two whole persons*.

We have then three options available to us upon branching: 1) U comes to an end; 2) U is one of U-1 or U-2, but we can't tell which; and 3) the unattractive “option” of saying that U, U-1, and U-2 are all the same person.

These difficulties have led many to think that in the end we should abandon a memory criterion of personal identity. And they turn to the other seemingly obvious criterion of personal numerical identity: that of having the same body.

Same Body, Same Person

Identifying and re-identifying persons by means of their bodies is no doubt the everyday norm. Sara sees that *Sam* is walking towards her because she recognizes the body. Yet she doesn't think “Oh, here comes Sam's body”; she just sees Sam.

10 Parfit 1986, p. 199.

This routine practice suggests a view of personal identity as consisting in having the same body: same body, same person. This is the **body criterion** of personal numerical identity, and perhaps it answers both the persistence and the individuation questions. Of course, we should be reluctant to interpret “same body” in some ways. Bodies change over time. Bodies grow—and shrink—in various ways, in height or weight. Hair color changes, sometimes naturally, sometimes helped along. A person may lose a toe or a finger, an appendix or even a limb. In order to understand “same body, same person,” we need to understand what exactly is meant by this “same body” criterion of identity. One thing it can’t mean is *exactly the same physical stuff*. It’s almost certain that not a single atom of a person’s body stays there for more than a few years.

Same Body—Having the Right History

Bodies come from somewhere. The body that each of us has right now has a history. The history of the body that is “me,” or that body that is “you,” can be traced. Initially this history leads to a body of a few hours ago or a few days or months. A complete history will of course lead back to the originating zygote. This body then, like any other human body, has a continuous history, beginning with its origin. Of course, we don’t tend to think of zygotes as bodies. Still from whatever point at which we are willing to say that we have a human body, “this body” has a continuous history.¹¹

Perhaps we can use this idea of a continuous history to give us a clearer sense of “same body.” Intuitively, we think that a body is the same body as before because it is *continuous with* all the previous moments or times in that body’s history. We can trace back successive moments of Sam’s body to the first moments in the history of Sam’s body. *Continuous* implies that there is an uninterrupted chain of “moments” of Sam’s body. Indeed if we could somehow draw a line on a graph or chart, a line representing the history of Sam’s body, it would be a continuous or uninterrupted line. We might impose a grid on that graph of Sam’s “body line,” which allowed us to talk about Sam’s body today or last week or last decade. We should not be misled, however: Sam’s body remains continuous.

How does this help us with an account of personal identity as same body? First, we have an idea of what makes me *me* and you *you*—our respective and different bodies. Second, it also gives us a way of answering the persistence question: it provides a way of explaining or defining continuous identity

11 E.g., Forbes 1986.

through the *same body*. That is, a body now is the same body as a body then, if they are both “located” in this continuing, uninterrupted “body history.” Julia’s identity is determined by her body, and *you* are your body. And Julia is the same person today that she was six days or six months or six years or six decades ago because of this continuous, uninterrupted “body history.” It doesn’t matter which two points we choose from this body history; we get a definitive answer to the persistence question.

You might worry that this can’t be the “same body” simply because a body has a shape and size, along with other physical attributes. Change the shape and size, you might ask, and haven’t you changed the body? Wouldn’t this be a different body? Doesn’t “identity” mean “exactly the same”?

An analogy might help allay this sort of worry. Suppose Andy returns to Graeagle to revisit his childhood home on Chilula St. The paint color of the house may have changed; a room might have been added; the living room window might have been replaced by a larger window; the roof might have different shingles. Despite these changes in color, shape, size, “décor,” we could trace this house back to the very same house of Andy’s earliest days. In principle, some group, making an odd documentary, could have taken turns with their iPhones video-recording every moment of that house, from the time cheap wooden stakes and twine first marked out its foundation until now, as Andy pulls up alongside the curb. And time-lapse video would show that Andy is now looking at a house *continuous with the origin* of the same house of those bygone baby bassinet days. We might even suppose that a large number of small renovations have resulted in a house which has no material in it that was there in the old days.

Similarly Andy’s body now is continuous with the origin of the body that—let us put it like this—was first Andy. Something may have been added, something taken away. Still we can trace the continuous, uninterrupted history of this body. And this body is Andy. And as long as this “body history” remains continuous and intact, we’ll know where to find Andy: go find Andy’s body.

We have some understanding then of “same body, same person.” Still, even if we accept that bodies persist over time, we might still want to know if there are good reasons for thinking of a body as determinative of identity. Two natural suggestions occur to us almost immediately. The first is already suggested: we count and distinguish persons by their different bodies. That’s all we see. A second natural suggestion is that we engage with the world as bodies. Julia’s acts—visiting a library, watching a movie, showing a child how to do long division—are the actions of a body. It might be further claimed that

our fundamental orientation in the world is a bodily orientation. Directions, spatial relations, perceptual relations are part of our bodily connection with the world. The French phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, explored this idea at length in one of his seminal works, *The Phenomenology of Perception*.¹² Some would go further, insisting that our psychological lives, our thoughts and feelings are tied to our bodies (which, of course, include our brains and the rest of our nervous systems). In recent decades various authors on consciousness and our emotional and mental life have argued that even our mental life must be understood as tied to the body.¹³

“Beam me up, Scotty?”

Should you be willing to walk into that transporter of the fabled starship *Enterprise*? Even if someone that looks, walks, and talks exactly like you shows up at the other end of the transporter travel, perhaps it isn't you after all.

Suppose the transporter works by making a “blueprint” of you at this end, and at the other end, that blueprint is used to assemble “you” out of completely different matter. Would you still think it's you? Derek Parfit first imagined a transporter case like this.¹⁴

Or suppose that the transporter disassembles you into sub-atomic particles which it whisks to your destination, and again, a blueprint is used to put you back together out of those particles. Why would you think it's you at the other end, rather than just a duplicate?

According to one expert,¹⁵ the writers on *Star Trek* were inconsistent about how the transporter actually worked. In some episodes it appears that the transporter sends the person's actual matter through space; but in others, it appears that it just sends a blueprint. This might make a difference about whether you'd like Scotty to beam you up to the *Enterprise*, or you'd rather just be left to face the Klingons on the surface of the planet Wombax.

Perhaps you might insist instead that none of this matters because you are nonphysical—but then that might make you wonder whether Scotty's transporter beam could lock on to “you” at all.

12 Merleau-Ponty 1962.

13 Damasio 2000; Edelman 1992.

14 Parfit 1986, Chap. 10.

15 Krauss 1995.

The above illustrates that your view of the transporter depends, at least in part, on your view of personal identity—and that thought experiments involving the transporter can help clarify these views.¹⁶

If I Only Had a Brain

In the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, Scarecrow wishes his head weren't just stuffed with straw:

I could while away the hours, conferrin' with the flowers
 Consultin' with the rain.
 And my head I'd be scratchin' while my thoughts were busy hatchin'
 If I only had a *brain*.

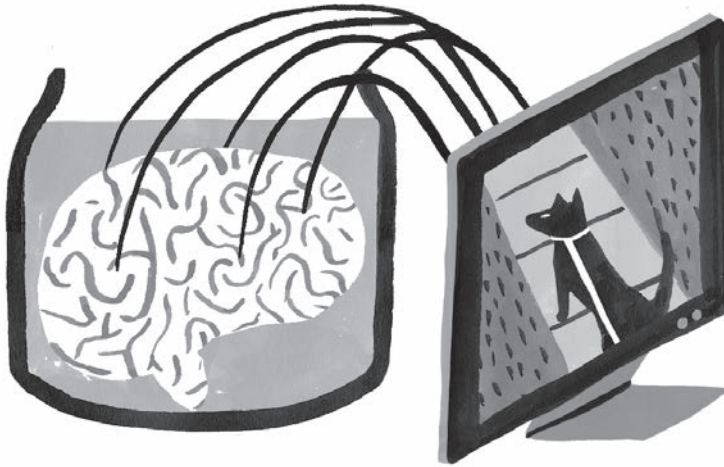
Brains play a significant part in our lives, as Scarecrow tells us. Despite the apparent simplicity of the same body criterion, various considerations suggest to some that it's not the body, but the *brain* that matters for personal identity. Once again science fiction may not outrun real possibility by that much.¹⁷ But to prevent our discussion from seeming a bit “creepy,” let's treat this as a bit of science fiction—one that illustrates a rationale for a view of personal identity in the real world.

Can we imagine losing parts—even significant parts—of the body, yet still being ourselves? Not only might we lose a limb or an eye, imagine losing the whole body, except for the brain. If we could find a way to preserve the brain—to allow it to continue functioning—then we might think that our identity is still preserved. Recent philosophy sometimes describes this preservation *sans* body as a “brain in a vat.” As long as our brains continue functioning, we continue. Our identity therefore is determined by or constituted by a functioning brain: persons remain the same over time, if their brains continue. Deirdre is the same person today as she was yesterday if she has the *same brain* she had yesterday. And here we can understand “same brain” in like manner as we understood “same body.”

We see the brain as constituting personal identity, again, because it is fundamentally implicated in that “part” of us that seems to matter most, namely,

16 These and other similar transporter cases are outlined in Carroll and Markosian 2010, Chap. 5. See also Merricks 2001 and Corcoran 2001b.

17 Tyson 2010.



our psychological life. Emotions, desires and goals, actions and their motivations all seem inextricably tied to a functioning brain. Thus, it is claimed, personal identity is determined by the brain.

MORE SCIENCE FICTION

As before, we can test the thought that the brain really carries what we think of as personal identity—versus the same-body account—with a science-fiction story. Imagine that Sam’s brain and Sara’s brain are swapped. Now consider the Sam-body with the Sara-brain. This person has Sara’s memories and personality traits, but Sam’s body. Is this person Sam or Sara?

Here’s a more complicated science-fiction thought-experiment, this time with a bit of connection with reality. The reality: In the 1950s, neurosurgeons began performing a special kind of brain surgery, commissurotomy, in order to help patients suffering from debilitating epileptic seizures. This operation severed the corpus callosum, a network of fibers that allows normal communication and coordination between the two brain hemispheres. Roger Sperry and Michael Gazzaniga studied extensively the effects of this surgery on the patients, finding that the two halves of the brain, when separated, could function independently.¹⁸

Now to let reality meet science fiction: Imagine for a moment that we can not only “split” brains, but do so in such a way that each hemisphere retains the same psychological life—same memories, same knowledge, same hopes,

18 Godwin and Cham 2013.

desires, goals, wishes. And now combine this idea with that of transplanting the separate hemispheres. Again—not entirely disconnected from reality: some very young patients can have half their brain removed, but grow up functioning almost normally.

Let us imagine first that Kiersten, through some medical emergency, is told by doctors that, along with the rest of her body, half of her brain is dying, but that they have been able to “reconfigure” the other hemisphere so that it contains her entire mental life. This half will be transplanted into a new body. If Kiersten is an advocate of the same brain view of identity, she should not be particularly alarmed about whether or not *she*—Kiersten—will continue to live. After all, she will continue as long as her brain continues.

Some brain theorists typically do not require that the *entire* brain continue. Rather they require first that the “new” brain is a continuant of the original brain. Some body theorists and some brain theorists are alike in this respect. It is the *same* if there is a continuous history. Second, some brain proponents assume that the relevant functional aspects of the brain, such as memories, cognitive abilities, and values, continue. Kiersten survives then so long as the brain (or brain hemisphere) is continuous with her “original” brain and the relevant functioning remains.



Now imagine a variation. Kiersten is dying from cancer that has spread all over her body except for her brain; the doctors decide that they can save her by transplanting her brain into another body (brain-dead, but with the rest of the body okay). But they’ll make sure she survives this risky operation

by having a “backup”: one separable functioning hemisphere into each of two bodies—another case of “fission.” So Kiersten’s medical emergency will produce two independent yet psychologically equivalent hemispheres. (Imagine that doctors desire a “backup” in case one of the transplants fail.) Now suppose that prior to the surgery Kiersten wonders what will happen if both transplants succeed. What should Kiersten think is about to happen to her?

One thought, widely held, is that Kiersten is about to cease to exist! Just as we saw above with the case of U-1 and U-2, a fundamental principle of identity is that $1 \neq 2$. And we now have Kiersten-left and Kiersten-right. But she can’t be both. So, Kiersten ceases to exist, and is replaced by these two new “Kierstens.” So fissioning of the brain can also lead to identity problems.

(Cases such as this and others are variations of a case originally imagined by Sydney Shoemaker.¹⁹ Considerations of the “Brownson” case—the name given by Shoemaker to one transplant recipient in his original scenario—can even be found in the pages of *Psychology Today*.²⁰)

Notice: the same brain view encounters the same problem as the memory criterion: we can always imagine there being two beings that have exactly the same identity-determining characteristics, each of which comes into being at the same moment.

We have been concentrating, for the moment, on persistence identity, but the split-brain phenomenon also raises questions about a person’s individuation identity. Because the right hemisphere of the brain controls the left side of the body, and the left hemisphere the right side, real people who have had the split-brain operation sometimes exhibit strange behavior. One, for example, was observed to be pulling up his pants with one hand, and pulling them down with the other. Does one of these actions represent the real intentions of that person? Or do we now have two persons in one body?

Does Being Me Depend on the Absence of Competition?

The duplication problem (or fission or branching), along with the various responses to it, highlights an important issue for identity. Identity should, it seems, depend on internal or intrinsic features of an object or person.²¹ Continuity of psychological states or continuity of a body or brain require

19 Shoemaker 1963, pp. 24 ff.; also Shoemaker and Swinburne 1984.

20 Burton 2012.

21 For example, Wiggins 1967, Chap. 1.

only that we look at some feature of the person. We don't need to check and see what is happening in the vicinity.

Yet the two hemisphere transplant case seems to raise the suggestion that identity can depend *extrinsic* or *external* conditions. If both transplants are successful—if there are post-transplant *competitors*—there's reason to think Kiersten ceases to exist. On the other hand, Kiersten continues if but one transplant survives; so her identity is preserved.

Now imagine that after the operations, one of the transplants, the right hemisphere, awakes before the other. What should she think? Well, she will certainly recall herself as Kiersten. But whether she really is Kiersten seemingly depends on the success or failure of the other transplant. Kiersten must wait to find out who she is! She is either Kiersten or “Kiersten-right.” This seems odd that the “first-awake, post-transplant” Kiersten should have to see what happens to *someone else* to find out who she is! Fission cases produce competitors. And the notion of competition seems to lead to the idea that identity depends on extrinsic features, which seems to have odd implications.

Survival vs. Identity

Faced with these sorts of difficulties some wonder whether numerical *identity* is what we really care about. Might we care about something else that does not require identity? Some philosophers have wondered whether what we really care about instead is survival.

Survival

This survival view first became prominent in Derek Parfit's influential *Reasons and Persons*.²² And this novel suggestion attempts to avoid the difficulties of identity while retaining something important.

How does survival differ from identity? A person, according to Parfit, is constituted by beliefs, goals, and values, around which actions and projects are organized.²³ Sometimes the person envisions these goals and values in some detail. Or they may only be drawn in broad strokes, such as wanting to be a millionaire, or wanting to be your own boss, or wanting by the time you're 30 to know more about poetry than anyone else. Here Parfit seems to be talking about individual identity, and perhaps personhood identity.

22 Parfit 1986.

23 Perry 1976.

A person cares rather that *this set* of beliefs, goals, values, and projects continues. Personal numerical persistence identity doesn't matter. That is, when we shift the emphasis from identity to survival, the persistence question gets a very different answer. *I survive*, in some sense, if these projects of mine, together with my beliefs and values, continue to exist, and in some way, my "survivor" can continue to carry out these projects or fulfill these aims or act according to my current beliefs and values. Or as David Lewis describes the view:

When I consider various cases in between commonplace survival and death, I find that what I mostly want in wanting survival is that my mental life should flow on. My present experiences, thoughts, beliefs, desires, and traits of character should have appropriate future successors.²⁴

Suppose then that Deirdre wants to major in mathematics to become an actuary, raise a family, and help rescued animals. She identifies with these projects and values. As long as she is able to pursue fulfillment of those projects, she might well be indifferent to whether *this* body or *this* brain continues.²⁵ In this survival view, Deirdre should be unfazed by the possibility of multiple survivors. Still a critic might note, as Lewis does, that prior to any transplant operation, Deirdre might reasonably—and compellingly—wonder which *one* will be *me*? But a more central question is this: if Deirdre's goals and values survive—say, in her children—but she dies, is that all she should be interested in? No, say critics: she wants to survive.

Substance and Souls

Animalism

Recently a view intriguingly known as *animalism* has attracted a number of defenders, most notably Eric T. Olson.

Olson holds that human persons are fundamentally animals; we are not essentially persons. The concept of person describes a characteristic of humans, but not a defining characteristic. The kind of being we are is determined by our biological properties, and the continuing of some individual is coincident with the continuing of various biological processes. As animals, we temporarily have certain psychological characteristics, but

²⁴ David Lewis 1976, p. 17.

²⁵ Perry 1976.

these are ultimately due to our biological or animal nature. Our identity is not determined by our psychology, as the subtitle of Olson's book indicates: "*Personal Identity without Psychology*."

Animalism insists that *person* is not a kind of substance. This view is considered to be opposed to Lockean or psychological continuity views. Indeed there has been considerable exchange over the past decade or so on the rival virtues and vices of Lockean and animalist views.²⁶

Perhaps you wonder why we have not considered a view that has been around, in one form or another, for a long time: that sameness of *soul* determines sameness of person? Of course, if we are to accept it, it will help to know what a soul is, and when we have the same one.

Plato, according to many commentators, held that persons are their souls. In the *Republic*, several of the arguments apparently identify a person with a soul and its characteristics. The *Phaedo*, Plato's dialogic and literary recounting of Socrates' last hours, explores several ways to think of the soul and whether those accounts of the soul might support a notion of immortality or survival after death.²⁷

Aristotle's view of the soul depends on his more general view of form and matter. As we will discuss in more detail below, matter and form provide a way of thinking about the nature or structure of each individual object, including persons. In his view, various objects—living ones—have a special type of form, namely, a soul.

These ancient philosophers' views of the soul have had substantial influence on subsequent metaphysical views. Plato influenced early Christian thinkers, such as St. Augustine. Aristotle influenced St. Thomas Aquinas, who relied on and synthesized the Aristotelian metaphysics to provide a coherent framework for Catholic thought in particular and Christian thought in general—a framework still very much in evidence in present day views.²⁸

Form and Matter: "Stuff" and Organization

In thinking about an object, we might adopt one of two perspectives. We might think about the "stuff" of an object, asking, for example, "Where's that wooden candle holder you used to have?" Along the same lines, we might

26 Eric T. Olson 1999; Shoemaker 2008.

27 Plato 1961c; see discussions in Burger 1984 and Rosen 2008.

28 Gilson 1940, especially Chaps. IX and X.

naturally ask of Michelangelo's masterpiece sculpture, the Pietà, "What is it made of?" We do not marvel, however, at the mere fact that the statue is made of marble. We marvel at the marble stuff because of the way it is shaped or carved—*because of the way it's organized*. There is an "organizing principle" to this rather large clump of marble. Similarly the candle holder: it's not just that it's made of wood, but that the wood is shaped or structured in this particular way. This piece of wood might have been organized or shaped in some other way; for example, it might have been fashioned into a small bowl.

We have only one object in each case: a marble statue and a wooden candle holder. Yet we "analyze" each object as comprising what it's made of—the "stuff"—and how that stuff is put together. By now you have likely surmised that these two aspects are the matter and form in Aristotle's view, which we discussed at length in Chapter 7. Here is a bit of review of the parts of that view that are relevant here.

Hylomorphism is the view that any individual object or substance can be analyzed as a unity of form and matter. The "stuff" of an object is its matter. The form is the organizing principle of the object, or how the stuff is arranged or put together. Not just the candle holder, but the candle too is a "unity" of form and matter—the matter is the wax, while the form is the structural arrangement of that clump of wax. Again, it is important to emphasize that candle, candle holder, and statue are each *one* object composed of matter and form. And this is true of any object—it is constituted by its matter and its form.

Soul as Form

Some objects, like the statue or the candle holder, have their forms given to them, imposed by an artisan or a sculptor. We are interested in living things, however. And these seem to have their form *intrinsically*. Living things are of a certain type because of their form. The matter of the lilac bush or the matter of a monkey or the matter of a person is organized according to an innate principle. To be a monkey, to be a "monkey kind of thing" is to have a monkey form. The form *informs* or organizes the matter and guides the development of the matter. Aristotle called the form of any living thing a "soul." Although he distinguished the types of soul characteristic of plants, animals, and people, our focus is the human soul or the form of persons.

The kind of soul distinctive of people is the *rational soul*. Rational souls guide both the physical development and sentience—our sensory ability—of human beings. More importantly, the rational soul structures our rational features, our cognitive or intellectual characteristics. We are thinking creatures

in virtue of our having a rational soul. Indeed people are *rational animals*, according to Aristotle. They belong to the genus of animal, but are a distinctive species, namely, thinking animals. (Aristotle understood thinking as an attribute of people, not of nonhuman animals.)

So a person is a basic or primary substance, a single object composed of soul—that is, form—and matter. If we ask, however, what makes a person *this* person and not *that* one, we get an interesting answer from Aristotle. His view might be more easily understood if we return for a moment to our simple candle holder.

Imagine that a candle holder company machines many teak candle holders of the same size, shape, finish, and weight. The form—the shape, the arrangement—of the teak clumps is the same. The form doesn't distinguish one candle holder from another. So, it must be the wood, the matter, that distinguishes. That is, *this* candle holder is made from *this clump* of teak and *that* candle holder is made from *that clump* of teak. More technically, it is the matter that *individuates* candle holders. Matter, not form, individuates.

Analogously, Sam and Sara are of the same type: rational creature. Thus, they are alike in form. Sam and Sara differ, however, in their matter. Then while persons are basic or primary substances, a unity of matter and form, the individuating principle is the matter of the person. Perhaps what we have here is a body criterion for individuation numerical identity. Yet Sara remains the same person over time because she remains *this unity* of matter and soul. Then, it seems, we have a different test for persistence numerical identity.

You might wonder why the sameness of person over time is not also determined by the matter. Were this same matter to lose its organizing principle, to lose its form (soul), we no doubt would be disinclined to call this the “same person.” Indeed it's not just the calcium, water, and other chemical elements and compounds that make a *person*. It's that these chemicals—this stuff—are organized in a particular way, by a form—a soul—of a certain kind.

Summarizing then, in Aristotle's view a person is the body plus soul. Different matter distinguishes individuals, but a person persists because the unity of form and matter remains. What we want to know from Aristotle, then, is: Is this how we tell it's the same person? Fred now and Fred-as-a-child back then do not have the same matter (though there is a spatio-temporal continuity, with small changes, as we've noted). But do they have the same form? If form is rationality, then every human is endowed with this universal characteristic. But if we're looking at individual types of rational thought, then it's for sure that Fred now and Fred-as-a-child are wildly different.

Medieval and Contemporary Understandings of the Soul

Plato's view may seem a little more typical: namely, soul constitutes identity. Jack goes where his soul goes, just as Julia goes where her soul goes. And Julia is the same person today as yesterday if and only if she has the same soul. In a widely held and well-known, if controversial, set of views, persons continue in the after-life if and only if their souls continue. Thus, no amount of bodily change or even "bodily disintegration" damages personal identity. How are we to think of this type of soul? We look—as a start—to Thomas Aquinas.

Aquinas utilized the Aristotelian framework for understanding the soul: the soul, as form, organized the matter. Like Aristotle, Aquinas too held that the person was a basic substance, a unity of form and matter.²⁹ Of course Aquinas, as a Christian, was also concerned about an issue that troubled Aristotle far less. Aquinas needed a metaphysical understanding of persons and personal identity that guaranteed not only survival after death, but that it was *this person* that survived.

Aquinas, like Aristotle, held that persons are numerically individuated by their matter. We have different ways to characterize this matter—flesh and bones or a continuing genetic structure—but the matter is the body as physical. Whether we describe it in modern or medieval terms, it is the matter that is the individuating principle. And, to an extent, Aquinas followed Aristotle's view about the numerical persistence of individuals: He would say that Sam, for example, persists as long as there is a continuing unity of soul and matter.

Now, however, consider Sam's eventual death. Aquinas held, consistent with the Christian view, that his soul continues to exist, even though his body ceases to function or even disintegrates. He further held that eventually the soul would be reunited with a "resurrected" body. Christian thinkers continue to puzzle over the nature of this resurrected body.

But another question arises for Aquinas. We know that the *person* Sam is "restored" when soul is reunited with the resurrected body. What becomes of Sam while soul is separated from body? In the Thomist³⁰ view, Sam is distinguished from Deirdre by virtue of his matter. And Sam remains the same person as long as the unity of soul and body continue. There seems to be a gap, however, in Sam's existence between the time the soul slips his mortal coil and the time it is united with a resurrected body.

29 E.g., Leftow 2001, p. 137.

30 "Thomist" is the conventional adjective form for St. Thomas Aquinas.

Recognizing the difficulty, Aquinas seems to admit that it is *not* Sam that exists while his disembodied soul exists: “The soul, since it is part of man’s body, is not an entire man, and my soul is not I.”³¹ Of course, this runs counter to the views of many Christian thinkers, as Goetz and Taliaferro observe. Similarly Brian Davies, a noted Thomist scholar, also holds that “my soul is not I” for Aquinas. Davies argues that, in the Thomistic view, the survival of the soul is not the survival of a human being. It is only an *intellectual* being that exists.³² Yet Aquinas’ view that Sam is not his soul does not seem to bode well for *Sam’s* existence post-mortem, at least during that time that body and soul are separate.³³

If Davies is right, then a consequence of Aquinas’ view is that there is a gap in the existence of the person, from death until the soul is united with a resurrected body. (By analogy, imagine that a house burns down, and nothing is left for a while except the original blueprints, from which the same house is reconstructed later.) Perhaps Davies’s interpretation helps Aquinas. One might still wonder what it is that is special about the soul and not some other part of the person. Would preserving all, or even some special part of the body, be sufficient, as well? Clearly, Aquinas would reject this possibility. Otherwise, Sam would have become a “split person,” existing both wherever his soul is and wherever the preserved parts of his body are. Indeed, Davies notes that for Aquinas, the *human person* Sam exists only after the soul is reunited with the body.³⁴

A different view of personal identity as constituted by the soul, and one that seems closer to the conventional religious view, is found in Richard Swinburne’s *The Evolution of the Soul*. Swinburne has written extensively about theological and related philosophical issues (see Chapter 11). Swinburne argues that, while the soul is *part* of a person just as the body is part of a person, a person’s soul constitutes personal identity.³⁵ Souls individuate persons, and the continued existence of the soul explains the persistence of persons over time.

Swinburne views souls as immaterial, as nonphysical subjects. Those items we typically identify as mental, such as beliefs and desires, or intentions and hopes, are in fact *states of the soul*. The beliefs and desires give a structure to the soul. The way in which beliefs and desires are related, how they affect

31 Aquinas n.d., Sect. 924.

32 Davies 1992, pp. 216–17.

33 For a different view, see Stump 2003, Pt. II.

34 Davies 1992, pp. 217–19.

35 Swinburne 1986, p. 147.

our acquisition of other beliefs and desires, how they affect the judgments a person makes, and consequently, the person's behavior—this complex network of belief and desire determines the structure of the soul.³⁶ This evolved structure constitutes a person's character. Swinburne summarizes the nature of the soul thus:

Souls are immaterial subjects of mental properties. They have sensations and thoughts, desires and beliefs and perform intentional actions. Souls are the essential parts of human beings, and humans have sensations etc. and perform intentional actions in virtue of their souls doing so.³⁷

This description of what souls are, however, does not yet answer the question of personal identity—what makes a soul *this* soul, and how *this* soul constitutes *this* person. Swinburne claims that souls are connected to a body: Julia's soul is connected to her body, and Jack's to his body. A body, however, is not an essential part of the person; it is only contingently a part of the person, and so it contributes nothing to the person's identity. Julia's body—while a part of her—is not Julia. Again, Julia *is* her soul.³⁸

Yet this still leaves us wondering how we are to link souls to personal identity. If it's logically possible for a soul to exist apart from the body, our normal way of identifying Julia, or distinguishing her from Jack, is no longer available—these two souls are in principle separable from their respective bodies. Indeed, one who doubts the truth of dualism, will wonder how it is that we “track” or identify a person's psychological states. So what is it that makes one soul *this* individual soul and *that* soul that individual soul?

Swinburne argues that there is a fundamental *thisness* or *haecceity* to each soul. *Haecceity* is a Latin term coined by the medieval philosopher John Duns Scotus (1265–1308). In English, it means *thisness*. For Scotus, haecceity is the source of the unity of the soul.³⁹ The thisness of a soul is a basic, unanalyzable feature of souls, according to Swinburne. In a sense, because a soul exists, it always exists as *this soul*. To put it roughly, any soul has essentially its special “I'm this one” feature.

Some contemporary views of haecceity or “individual essence” hold that an object's thisness is itself a property. In addition to having properties, such as

36 Swinburne 1997, Chap. 8.

37 Swinburne 1997, p. 333.

38 Swinburne 1986, p. 146.

39 Cross 2014.

being the author of *Huckleberry Finn* or having been born in Florida, Missouri, Mark Twain also had the individuating property *being identical with Mark Twain*.⁴⁰ Of course, this is a quite special property, and whether this type of property exists is still the subject of debate.

Swinburne recognizes that some critics may think that the haecceity view is “irrational.” Two things (souls) can’t just be different; they must differ in some respect, or in some characteristic. Indeed our normal way of distinguishing individual things is by means of some property or characteristic. These two glasses are distinct: although both are ruby red, both crystal, both eight inches tall, *something* physical distinguishes them. Similarly we normally distinguish persons’ bodies by means of some physical characteristic. In the case of physical objects, then, like glasses or bodies, we can point to physical differences, which make them *distinguishable* from all other physical objects. But what will we point to with an *immaterial* object like a soul? If souls are identified with sets or collections of nonphysical mental characteristics, isn’t it possible that there would be two apparently identical souls, having all the same mental characteristics, and thus indistinguishable?

Swinburne’s main positive argument can be laid out simply. First, consider a world in which Deirdre’s soul is attached to her body and Danny’s soul is attached to his. Now, Swinburne asks us, imagine a world in which Deirdre and Danny switch bodies. But these two worlds are obviously different, he suggests: “What could be more obvious?”⁴¹

It may be obvious that these two worlds are different, but how is that supposed to address the *thisness* of souls? Assuming that the worlds are different, it is not Deirdre’s or Danny’s bodies that make them different. All that changes is the souls connected to these bodies: *this* soul (Deirdre’s soul, say) is now attached to a different body, Danny’s. And similarly for Danny’s soul. If soul changes are sufficient to make the two worlds different, then it would seem that each soul must have a *thisness*. One soul must be intrinsically different from the other. For Swinburne, there would be a difference in worlds even if the mental characteristics are the same for each soul. Thus, the difference between these two hypothetical worlds can only be explained, in Swinburne’s view, by the *thisness* of souls.

But there are still questions one might have about the *disembodied* souls. Could such beings come into contact with one another? We might wonder about the “contact mechanism,” since disembodied souls will not have our

40 Robert M. Adams 1979.

41 Swinburne 1997, p. 341.

normal perceptual apparatus. And *thisness* is similarly a nonphysical, imperceptible characteristic.

Some will dissent of course from the idea that life after death is the life of a disembodied soul; it is the life of a soul in some new (?) body. *Thisness* is a metaphysical fact, it might be further claimed, recognized only by God perhaps. Swinburne does not address the details of life after death, however.

Soul Concerns: Soul Trains and Soul Copies

In a little monograph read by many beginning philosophy students, John Perry imagines a series of conversations over three evenings, occurring between two friends, one whom is about to die.⁴² Perry raises two concerns about souls of interest for us here. The first concern is the individuation of souls: there appear to be no clear “identifying characteristics” for a soul. What difference would there be whether a body had just one soul, or series of souls all having the same characteristics—a soul train—moving through?

Swinburne of course has a response to the problem of the soul train. Souls are by nature individuated. This is what it means to say that every soul has an intrinsic *thisness*. There is in principle then a *metaphysical difference* between souls—that is, uniqueness is one of a soul’s metaphysical properties.

The second concern for our purposes is raised by the following hypothetical case. Imagine that you die. Your soul—that is, your self—goes to heaven. Upon your arrival, imagine that God—perhaps because yours is such a remarkable or extremely praise-worthy soul—makes a duplicate of your soul. That is, whatever mental or psychological characteristics possessed by your “original” soul, God manufactures or creates an identical soul. This newly minted soul possesses all the same properties. And so our familiar and fundamental principle of identity reappears: $1 \neq 2$. By being so enamored of you, and making an identical “soul mate,” God has effectively killed you off. Again recall that when it comes to identity, competition can be deadly.

Leaving aside whatever other worries a theist might have about this thought experiment, notice that Swinburne’s view has a ready, if controversial, response to concern about soul competition. *Not even God can make a soul competitor*. Not even God can make $1 = 2$. The *thisness* of a soul guarantees that it can’t be copied in the way imagined.

42 Perry 1977.

Key Concepts

- qualitative identity
- numerical identity
- individual identity
- personhood identity
- persistence question
- individuation question
- memory criterion
- fission objection
- body criterion
- hylomorphism

Reading/Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is the strongest objection to Locke's view of personal identity? Do you think the continuity view fares better? Explain.
2. Suppose someone claimed, drawing on the movie *Bedazzled*, that as someone occupies several different bodies in turn, even though some memories are retained, there is still a different person with each new body. Different bodies would yield different sensations, even different emotional reactions—hence, a different person. How might you defend the “same consciousness, same person” view against this sort of claim?
3. First, explain the problem presented by fission or branching cases. Suppose you were the person about to undergo a transplant of a hemisphere; should you be concerned about competitors, that is, duplicates? Explain.
4. Briefly describe Swinburne's view of personal identity. Describe what you see as a major problem with this view. How might Swinburne's view be defended from this objection?
5. Suppose a human person were to receive a bionic part in place of some human body part. Now suppose that someone claims that this bionically modified being is no longer a *human* person, perhaps a bionic person, but not a human person. Given that some discussions now suggest that the implanting of microchips in a person is only a decade or two away, what do you think of this claim? That is, is a bionically enhanced person still a human person? Would a human “Luke Skywalker” cease to be a human person with a bionic hand? How much of a human person's ordinary

human body could be replaced by bionic parts, yet still be a human person? Try to identify the principle behind your answer.

For Further Reading

David Wiggins 1967, perhaps a challenging work for the beginner, identifies a number of important aspects and arguments for both identity generally and personal identity. John Perry 1977, as noted in the text, has served as the introduction for many students to the problems of personal identity; it is both rigorous and readily accessible to anyone. Perry 1975 is an anthology containing some of the more important readings on personal identity. Shoemaker and Swinburne 1984 is an exchange between a materialist, Shoemaker, who nonetheless views himself as a “neo-Lockean,” and a dualist, Swinburne. Shoemaker defends the psychological continuity view, based in part on his functionalist view of the mind. Swinburne defends the same soul view; Swinburne’s notion of the soul comprises various aspects of our mental life, as noted in the text. This same soul view is also detailed in his 1986, 1994, and 1997; as noted in the text, Swinburne defends a *haecceity* notion of the soul. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty 1976 includes contributions by David Armstrong, Derek Parfit, and David Wiggins, all of whom have significantly contributed to recent discussions of personal identity. Parfit 1986, while about much more, contains an extended and influential discussion of personal identity. Bernard Williams 1973, similarly influential in discussions of personal identity, defends the same body view. Corcoran, ed., 2001b contains a number of essays, authored by philosophers who have played pivotal roles in these discussions, on identity and related matters. A recent, sometimes challenging book surveys historical and contemporary views, including a section on animalism, and standard, well-known objections to the various views, is Harold Noonan 2003. Dwayne Godwin’s and Jorge Cham’s “Of Two Minds” in the “The Mind in Pictures” section at the back of the March/April 2013 issue of *Scientific American: Mind* is an annotated and illustrated introduction to matters related to split brains.