

I4. THE SELF

Memory Theory – No Competitor Version

Y-tomorrow is identical to X-now iff

- (i) Y seems to remember X's experiences
- (ii) Y's seeming memories are caused "in the right way"
- (iii) no one else has seeming memories of X's experience caused "in the right way"

This goes against our intuitive feeling that identity is intrinsic. Whether Y is the same person as X is a matter between Y and X and nothing else.

BODILY IDENTITY

Is Weirob's bodily identity theory any better? Some say it's refuted by the possibility of body-swapping.

Julia North in the course of saving a young child was herself run over by a train. The horrified mother, Mary Frances Beaudine, suffered a stroke wherein her brain suffered permanent serious damage. That left Julia's healthy brain and wasted body, and Mary Frances' healthy body and wasted brain. Enter Dr. Roderick Matthews, who inserts Julia's brain in Mary Frances's skull and splicing the nerves together to created a functioning person. This person looked like Mary Frances but was clearly Julia, whatever Mr Beaudine might think.

Weirob: Dr Matthews has just offered me the same deal; my brain would go into so and so's brainless receptive body. I rejected it. Acceptance would be suicide! The so-called body transplant is really a brain transplant. I would die and Ms Y would go on.

Court: Usually we can rely either on memory or on bodily identity: both give the same result. In this case the memory criterion makes the survivor Julia North, whereas the bodily criterion makes her Mary Beaudine. The original concept doesn't decide the issue, so we need to extend it. Most Americans (we had opinion polls done) feel that the memory criterion captures more of what was important in the original concept. So the most natural extension of our concept gives priority to the memory criterion. (Actually the opinion polls suggest that people think that sameness of moral outlook is more central, but the result is the same).

Who gets up off the operating table is conventional, a matter of how some unelected body decides to use the words "same person"? What if they change their mind? Aspirin example. Does it make any difference if it is my own decision about how to use the words.

No way. There has got to be some objective difference between the cases where one is entitled to anticipate and feels special concern about the survivor's experiences and the cases where one is not. Identity is what gives rise to and legitimates this special concern. Aspirin and anaesthetic.

Objection to bodily theory: Why should I feel special concern about this body, with every trace of personality, outlook, memory, etc stripped away? It doesn't diminish the special concern at all if my body is drastically altered, provided only that the resulting creature is psychologically connected to me. What matters is the persistence of my psychology.

However my body has one big advantage; there's at most one of them around tomorrow. Nothing can preserve identity which is capable of being duplicated in a number of successors. So maybe we can splice the mind and the memory theories together:

Memory & Body Theory

Y-tomorrow is identical to X-now iff

- (i) Y seems to remember X's experiences;
- (ii) Y's seeming memories are caused "in the right way";
- (iii) "the right way" requires Y to have the same brain as X.

Problem of self-reidentification. Never mind looking under the covers, I'd have to drill through my skull. But maybe this is a skeptical worry we can ignore.

Problem of special concern. If what matters is the preservation of my psychology, I should be equally concerned about the survivor who doesn't share my brain.

IS THERE A FACT OF THE MATTER?

Maybe what matters in survival is not identity but just psychological connectedness. If there wind up being two survivors connected to me, then I get what I want even if I don't continue existing.

Identity: which future persons will be me?

Survival: which future lives will be mine?

We have been using second to answer first. But then we ran into the logical problem that identity is transitive. Maybe the question is really survival. And maybe survival is not an equivalence relation; it is more like similarity. And maybe it comes in degrees. Compare the Ship of Theseus.

Parfit: the simple (further fact) view and the complex (no further fact) view.

Should this *reflect* our ethical views? Might it *change* them?

Desert: the statute of limitations.

Promising. The Russian Nobleman example.

Utilitarianism and respect for persons. Maximization within and across lives.

The method of reflective equilibrium.

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