

# Philosophy Pub at Rozz-Tox

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“What Is Called ‘I’?”

## I. Noonan - Various Criteria Of Personal Identity

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### 1. Bodily Criterion - Olson 1997

Person B is the same as Person A because B has A's **body**.

#### Strengths

- Identity is clearly measurable
- Fairly intuitive

#### Caveats

- Afterlife effectively impossible
- Some body parts seem to matter more (brain v. knee)
- Shoemaker 1963 and Parfit 1984: **Brownson case**
  - **Brownson case**: Brown's brain is transplanted into Robinson's body. The new human is seemingly Brown, just appearing as Robinson

### 2. Brain Criterion

Person B is the same as Person A because B has A's **brain**.

## Strengths

- Identity is clearly measurable
- Tolerates organ transplants
- Typically preserves what we value - memories and personalities

## Caveats

- Sperry 1968 and Nagel 1971: Brain hemisphere transplants - modified **Brownson case**
- Afterlife remains impossible

## 3. Physical Criterion - Wiggins 1967 and Parfit 1984

Person B is the same as Person A because B has ***enough of A's brain.***

## Strengths

- Avoids issues with brain damage and the **Brownson case**
- Brain hemisphere transplants tolerable

## Caveats

- Afterlife remains impossible
- Williams 1970 and Williams 1973: Seems to take the wrong side in consciousness transplants
- Cannot explain immaterial persons

## 4. Memory Criterion - Locke 1961

Person B is the same as Person A because B has A's ***experience-memories.***

**Experience-memories** are first-person recollections of the past.

## Strengths

- No issues with material transplants
- Allows for afterlife

## Caveats

- Continuity issues - it is normal to forget about some days while remembering others
- Transitivity issues - I might share memories with Luca from 15 years ago, who shares memories with Luca from 20 years ago, but I do not share memories with Luca from 20 years ago

## 5. Psychological Continuity Criterion

Person B is the same as Person A because B's memories, character traits, intentions, beliefs, and experience-memories are causally continuous with A's.

## Strengths

- Captures growth and personality
- Solves memory gaps and transitivity issues

## Challenge: Circularity Objection Butler 1736

Memory cannot be the criterion for personal identity because a personal identity is a prerequisite for memory.

## Response: Circular Objection Shoemaker 1963

There are **quasi-memories**, which feel real but were never experienced by the subject. So memory does not presuppose a

personal identity.

## 6. Reduplication Argument - Williams 1957

What if two people vividly remember being Guy Fawkes?

### What this means

- Memory can't determine identity if multiple people could share it

### Responses

- Only X and Y Matter:** third parties are irrelevant
- Closest Continuer:** strongest candidate gets identity Nozick 1981 and Shoemaker 1970
- Multiple Occupancy:** two minds shared one body pre-fission Robinson 1985

## 7. Simple View

Identity is intrinsic, first-person known, not reducible to observable traits.

### Strengths:

- Sidesteps fission puzzles
- Prioritizes subjectivity

### Caveats:

- Hard to verify or apply

## 8. Determinacy Thesis

Questions about personal identity have definite answers.

## Challenges:

- **Parfit:** Fission creates indeterminate identity
- **Swinburne's Dilemma:** Either identity is absurdly precise or sometimes vague

For more: Parfit 1971 and Swinburne 1974

## 9. Parfit's View

Psychological continuity - not identity - is what matters.

### (a) Semantic intuition

In fission cases, the original person stops existing because identity cannot be one-to-many.

### (b) Practical intuition

It is irrational to fear fission in the way one might fear death.

### Nurse Thought Experiment:

- You undergo brain fission into two people
- Option: destroy one hemisphere to "stay you."
- **Result:** irrational to prefer destruction—suggests identity is not central to survival

## Responses:

- David Lewis rejects (a).
- Jerome Shaffer rejects (b).

## II. Heller - Endurantism (3Dism) v. Perdurantism (4Dism)

Objects and persons extend in all three spatial dimensions, as well as the 4th, temporal dimension. Just as a 3D object *might* be thought of being composed of individual pieces across a given space, a 4D object is composed of individual pieces across time.

## Issue of 3-Dimensionalism

3-Dimensionalists must *deny* at least one of the following mutually-inconsistent standards.

- a. There is such thing as my body
- b. There is such thing as my body without my left hand
- c. An object can continue to exist after losing a part
- d. Two distinct objects cannot perfectly spatially overlap at a given moment in time
- e. Identity is transitive

## Perdurantism (4-dimensionalism) bypasses (d).

Two distinct objects do not perfectly spatially overlap at a given moment in time. Instead, there is only one temporal part which can be shared by two distinct 4-D objects.

## Matters of personal identity

What marks a particular personal identity is some sort of relation between separate parts across time. So two temporal slices share a particular identity because they relate to each other across time in a particular way, not because either part meets some momentary criterion.

Heller does not take a camp about what particular way two slices relate.

# III. Huemer - Permissive v. Restrictive Identity

One's existence is evidence that identity is **permissive** and **recurring**.

**Permissive view:** It is possible to live multiple times.

## Problem with restrictive view

**Assume:**

1. Big Bang/Big Crunch model of universe
2. **Restrictive view:** you can only live once
3. There is nothing statistically anomalous about the present

**Therefore:**

- You must've already lived
- So, you cannot be alive right now

**Solution:**

Adopt a **permissive view**. One must be able to exist multiple times.

## Objections and replies

- **Heat Death:** Entropy can fluctuate or reset; cosmology may allow recurrence.
- **Physicalism:** Reincarnation doesn't require continuous bodies—temporal gaps are fine.
- **Cartesian Dualism:** Souls can re-enter bodies. Even dualism fails if souls only live once over infinite time.

## Works Cited

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