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Personal Identity, Psychological Continuity, and Survival

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Abstract

In this paper, I consider the question of personal identity, namely: in virtue of what is one person the same person at two different points in time? I first raise objections to theories which argue it is in virtue of physical continuity or continuity soul, then argue that an account of psychological continuity is most successful. One might object to psychological continuity on the grounds of reduplication and fusion problems. I argue that strict numerical identity is a bar set too high and rather that survival (construed as the continuation of a first-person perspective) is what matters for personal identity. I then propose an account of psychological continuity which depends upon survival and demonstrate how it can overcome objections previously raised to views of psychological continuity. Finally, I defend this conception of survival against objections (such as gaps in one's perspective) and conclude that psychological continuity based on survival best accounts for personal identity.

This paper will consider the diachronic question of personal identity: what makes one the same person over time? Asking this question first raises another question: why should we care about personal identity? Whether or not one is, and how one is, the same person over time has many different real-life implications—for example, in most "normal" cases, punishments and rewards both presuppose that the recipient is the same person who committed the act warranting reward or punishment. Further, many relations within society assume this as well; we assume our spouse is the same person we married years ago, we assume our president is the same person we elected years ago, that we are the same person with a degree is the one who earned it years ago, that the person who has a job is the same person who got hired for that job, etc. We *do* assume that there is some type of personal identity over time (demonstrable by such practical points where we act as though there is), but this raises the question of how it is possible for two different things to be identical. If two things do not have all and only the same properties, they are not strictly identical, and thus we have the question of what exactly accounts for some person

being the same over two different times. Some argue that what answers this question is a matter of physical continuity, while others argue it is some "further fact" (something like a soul or a bare particular). I argue that both of these theories fail, and instead propose that psychological continuity is the best answer to the question of how one is the same person over time. The standard objection to the psychological continuity view is by raising the problems of reduplication and fusion. I reply to this objection by first developing and then defending a survival account of psychological continuity, as opposed to numerical identity, to solve the problem; on this survival account, survival is construed as the continuation of a first-person perspective, which can (I think) solve these problem cases.

Broadly, there are three main views about personal identity, what I will label the physical continuity view, the psychological continuity view, and the soul view. The first of these, the physical continuity view, posits that what makes one the same person over time is a continuity in one's physical states, most commonly seen as continuity in one's body (though other versions, such as the brain theory or animalism, do exist) (Kind, 2017, 73; cf. Baker, 2008, 372-3). Next, there is the view that what accounts of personal identity is psychological continuity. On this view, what accounts for one person's being the same as another person over time is a matter of psychological continuity. This can include (but is not limited to) continuity between memories, apparent memories, beliefs, thoughts, and intentions (Kind, 42). (The including apparent memories as opposed to just memories is to avoid the charge of circularity; apparent or quasi-memories do not suffer from the charge of circularity that the original version of the psychological theory—the memory theory—does.) Finally, there is what I will call the soul view (what Kind calls the "further fact" view); according to this view, personal identity is not reducible to physical or psychological facts (hence Kind's "further fact" label) as the other views

posit, but rather is due to some other irreducible "further fact" (43). Because this is usually considered to be some sort of non-physical or immaterial soul, I will call it the soul theory, though objections to this theory usually apply equally to soul views, bare particular views, substratum views, and other versions of the "further fact" view.

With the basic theoretical groundwork laid, let us first consider the physical continuity theory. For the purposes of this paper, we will focus primarily on the version of the theory which holds that bodily continuity is what matters as this is the most common version, as opposed to versions such as the brain theory (which holds brain continuity is what matters) or animalism (which holds that biological continuity is what matters). Despite some benefits this may have intuitively (it seems like my body is important to who I am in some way, there are problem cases for this theory; namely case where it seems there are multiple (different) persons with a single physical manifestation or body. If these cases do in fact show this, it seems hard to explain how different persons could exist within the same body with the same bodily continuity, if this continuity is sufficient for personal identity. This is most clearly seen in cases of dissociative identity disorder (DID) and cases of brain bisection (see Nagel, 1971). In such cases, it seems as though there are different persons with the same physical body and thus with the same bodily continuity; if there can be different persons with the same bodily continuity, then bodily continuity cannot be sufficient for personhood—thus the physical theory would not be sufficient for providing an account of personal identity and would be false.

In some cases, such as those of brain bisection, under the appropriate conditions, it appears that each hemisphere of the brain is operating independently and functioning as a distinct center of consciousness, unable to communicate with each other and capable of communicating on their own; if this is an accurate understanding of what is going on in cases of brain bisection,

then there appears to be different persons within the same body (and thus with the same bodily continuity leading up to the moment of continuity) and therefore, the bodily continuity theory is false. It seems like in cases of DID that there are also multiple persons within one body. One might reply that in such cases, there are simply multiple characterizations of one person within one body, rather than multiple persons; that is, while it is one metaphysical person, this person (at different times) takes on different characterizations. To address this response it is important to first clarify what is meant by characterization.

Characterization, roughly, is what makes some person the person that they are. While it seems that most people are simply consistently "who they are" (very roughly meaning that they seem to think and act similarly throughout time), it is perfectly fitting with our experience for people to "be" (i.e. act, speak, and behave, etc.) different in some situations than others. For example, when one is around their high school friends with whom they have not seen or spent time with for ten years, they can "regress" back to who they used to be ten years ago. It seems, one might argue, perfectly plausible to think then that characterization changes can be a bit more extreme than such situations—in such cases, one person can experience different characterizations at different times; one's characterization does not seem to simply be fixed in a one to one correspondence between persons and their characterization since it seems that one person can have different characterizations. Some might argue that this response relies on undercutting our intuitions about personhood (despite any intuitive benefits a physical view might have; pp. 75ff) or that it is not a proper analysis of cases such as those of DID (99-100). More importantly, even if one grants this explanation in cases of DID, it does not seem to be as applicable to cases of brain bisection, unless one wants to argue that a single person can have multiple characterizations at the same time (as the left and right hemispheres seem to be distinct

centers of consciousness) which seems to be a very difficult argument to make. Thus, there are very difficult problem cases with the physical theory, and resolving them seems to rely on very strange conceptual moves which might undercut our intuitions, and even in these solutions do not seem to solve every problem case.

Next, let us consider the soul theory. As previously mentioned, the criticisms raised against a "soul" theory (which posits some kind of unchanging, immaterial soul as the basis for one's personal identity) apply to other versions of what Kind calls the "further fact" theory, thus we will focus on souls for simplicity sake. This view has some very attractive qualities, at least *prima facie*; for example, it provides a way for one to have strict numerical identity between a person at two different times, as the soul remains unchanging over time and there also is a certain appeal to having some sort of "you" beyond your physical or psychological traits (which may seem to be "accidental" to who 'you' are—i.e. it may seem you could have a different body or a different psychology). Oftentimes, however, this theory is partially, if not wholly, motivated by concerns or beliefs unrelated to personal identity (at least directly), such as religious beliefs (43), however there is some intuitive appeal towards the view that what makes us the same person over time is more than either physical continuity or psychological continuity due to the aforementioned reasons.

Nonetheless, there are some problems with the soul theory. For example, in the case of brain bisection, there is a question about what appears to be multiple persons in one body. In this case, if we assume that what makes on the same over time is an immaterial soul, is it the case that there are two souls occupying one body, or is it one soul functioning as two centers of consciousness? In either case, it seems strange to appeal to a soul without prior commitments to their existence; on the one hand, it seems to face the same difficulties as the physical view, and

on the other hand it just seems to not be an accurate analysis of what occurs in brain bisection. Similar problems arise in the cases of people who suffer from DID when appealing to a soul to explain the view.

Further, there are unique problems for the soul theorist. There are two primary problems: a synchronic problem and a diachronic problem. The first is: what individuates souls at any given time? If one posits that souls are necessarily attached to a body, then one could argue that the body is what individuates the soul. However, if this is the case, the soul theory suffers from the same criticisms as the body theory just with the addition of a soul. The same could be said for attaching a psychology or mind to the soul; it seems to face the same problems of the regular theory. If souls are not necessarily embodied (or attached to a psychology), however, there seems to be no way to differentiate between souls. What is it that makes it the case that one soul exists instead of two? What is it that would make it such that there are two souls instead of five, or five instead of ten? If there is no difference between one soul or two, or two souls or five, then it seems the concept of soul is almost (if not certainly) incoherent. Any features which might distinguish souls (such as characteristics or properties relevant to a characterization or necessary embodiment) seems to suffer from the problems (much like the problems for embodied souls) raised for other theories.

Further still, let us assume it is indeed possible to distinguish between souls at a single time. Then comes the diachronic question; in virtue of what is one soul the same over time? It seems here that the only (or at least the most common) answer would be by connecting a soul to some person, but such an answer would obviously presuppose a person's identity over time. This however would, of course, be circular and thus an unacceptable answer. Thus, the soul theory seems to suffer from both a unique synchronic and diachronic objection—the theory seems

unable to distinguish between souls at any single time without suffering from problems faced by other theories and is unable to account for some soul being the same over time in a non-circular way.

Now, let us consider the psychological theory. This theory has the benefit of a very strong intuitiveness. It does seem as though my continuity of psychology has a lot to do with my being the same person over time. We, in fact, have many movies which have been made off similar premises. One example of this would be the popular movie *Freaky Friday*. In this movie, a mother and daughter switch bodies. The mother, in the daughter's body, recognizes herself as the mother, simply in the wrong body. In such movies, despite two people "swapping" bodies, they are still themselves, and recognize themselves as so because of some kind of psychologically continuity. Not only do such stories make sense (when they would not, if a body theory is correct), but their prevalence further cements the intuitive pull of this view, thus providing further support for the view. Certainly every view enjoys some level of intuitive support, however our intuitions regarding psychological continuity seem stronger than many of our other intuitions.

Nonetheless, there is one primary objection to the psychological theory: the problem of reduplication. The problem of reduplication attempts to show cases in which there are two distinct people (and being distinct, they are not identical) who have the same psychological continuity, thus attempting to show that psychological continuity is not sufficient for identity. (This approach is similar to the one given earlier against a bodily continuity approach.) Kind provides an example of the problem in this scenario: suppose some person uses a teleportation pad, but the teleportation pad malfunctions and recreates the original person in two different places. In this case, they are clearly distinct (say, one reappears in New York, while the other in

Los Angeles), yet they have the same psychological continuity with the original (53ff). There are three possible answers to the problem of reduplication: either (1) both are identical to the original, (2) one is identical to the original but the other is not, or (3) neither are identical to the original.

If one opts for the first option, there is a contradiction. As noted in the example, the new persons are distinct from one another, and thus cannot be identical. Yet because identity is transitive, if one argues that both are identical to the original, then this would entail that the new persons are identical, and thus we have arrived at a contradiction. Thus (1) is unacceptable. If one goes with (2), there is an issue regarding which person would be identical. Considering both persons have the exact same psychological continuity up until the moment of their creation, any reason given for one being identical to the original over the other seems like it could be argued for the other, thus reducing the decision to arbitrariness and thereby rendering (2) unacceptable. Finally, if one accepts that in a normal teleportation case the person created after the teleportation (whether in the intended destination or not) would be identical to the original, then (3) seems untenable, as there is no difference between a normal teleportation case and the problem case except the creation of the extra person. Both persons in the problem case would hold the same relation to the original as the recreated person would in the normal case, and therefore it seems that if a teleported person would be identical to the original in a normal case, they should be in the problem case also, rendering (3) as unacceptable.

In response to this problem, I argue that the problem of reduplication can be solved by appealing to survival as opposed to strict numerical identity. There are two issues with requiring numerical identity in discussions of personal identity: first, that it is almost impossible to

achieve, and second, that it is not what is sought in discussions of personal identity in everyday discourse.

First, numerical identity appears to be a bar set too high for personal identity. For two objects to be numerically identical is for them to share all and only the same properties. This seems almost impossible to achieve in cases of personal identity. We are constantly changing and taking on new properties. One can easily see this when cases are spread over a longer period of time, say from my 10-year-old self and my 30-year-old self, or even my 20-year-old self, but it still holds true between myself today and myself yesterday. Even more so, every minute we are receiving different stimuli, performing different actions, having different thoughts, our cells are changing, etc., so it seems as though we are, on some level, constantly changing; thus, whether one is a psychological theorist or a physical theorist, there seems to be constant change going on, making numerical identity impossible. (Potential ways around this might look something like having all properties being time-indexed, such that you always possess every property, they are just only actualized at specific times; this, however, has a large drawback in the sense of being somewhat counterintuitive and extremely complicated. For example, saying that the one-year-old me had the property of being six feet tall, it just would not be actualized until I was eighteen [thus being time-indexed to me at 18-years old] seems very bizarre.) Thus, numerical identity seems almost impossible to achieve, so if this is what is required for personal identity, then it also seems almost impossible that we could have any sort of personal identity.

Furthermore, it seems that when we ask something like how my spouse is the same person I married, we recognize they are not numerically identical to who we married, but that they are still (in some way) the same person *despite* not being numerically identical. In our discourse, most people do not look for some sort of strict logical identity when asking about the

persistence of the self, but rather are looking for some more loose sense which can still connect some person from one time to another. Thus, I think numerical identity fails to both achieve what is meant in our everyday discussions, and is also a far more difficult bar to achieve.

I propose that personal identity be thought of in terms of survival, rather than strict numerical identity. What do I mean by survival? Kind states survival to be "the continuation of my self-narrative" (137). I, however, object to this definition that it fails to solve certain problem cases, partially due to some ambiguity in exactly what a self-narrative is and whether or not they require active reflection and forming of the narrative. If a self-narrative does require conscious or active reflection on one's life and experiences, then in the case of people who do not actively form a self-narrative, these people fail to "survive" due to their self-narrative not continuing (in virtue of not existing). Even if a self-narrative does not require conscious reflection, there are cases of people who cannot form a self-narrative and therefore can neither be people nor are capable of surviving due to their inability to form a self-narrative. So it seems then that either way, this definition might exclude people from surviving who we would want to say survive, simply because they do not form a narrative; or it prevent agents from being persons who we would want to say are because they cannot. Even further, there are also people whose self-narratives are drastically out-of-line with reality, which seems problematic to make this the benchmark of survival.

Thus, I argue this definition of survival is insufficient, and instead propose that we should think of survival to be, roughly, the continuation of a first-person perspective, rather than in terms of a continuation of a self-narrative. While one having a self-narrative would require one having a first-person perspective, a first-person perspective does not entail one having a self-narrative. This definition thus avoids some of the difficulties which face the one presented by

Kind at least insofar as it requires no active reflection or forming of your narrative from the "self" experiencing it. Furthermore, in cases where someone suffers from some condition like amnesia and their self-narrative disappears, their first-person perspective continues, and thus they can still survive as themselves despite such problems. Further still, it deals well with cases where someone simply fails to have their narrative accurately reflect reality because what matters is their having a first-person perspective, rather than their self-narrative itself.

Baker (2008) conceives of a first-person perspective as "the ability to conceive of oneself as oneself … it requires that one can *conceive of* oneself as the referent of the first-person pronoun independently of any name or description of oneself … Even if I had total amnesia and didn't know my name or anything at all about my past, I could still think of myself as myself" (381, emphasis original). While this is oftentimes demonstrated in the English language by the use of first-person pronouns in first-person sentences such as "I wish I had a million dollars," it is more than simply the ability to use first-person pronouns, and does not require it.

While I think this is on the right track, one modification I would propose is rather than a first-person perspective being the *ability* to conceive of oneself as oneself (which, at least in this sense, sounds like a category error to define a perspective as an ability), a first-person perspective (and actually) simply *is* one's conceiving of themselves as themselves. It is one's point of view from where they view and experience the world and themselves. We all (at least seemingly) have an intuitive view of where we are located and our awareness of ourselves—this is what one's first-person perspective is.

One final issue to be resolved in this definition would be to answer: what does it mean exactly for there to be continuity of some first-person perspective? The continuity of one's first-person perspective, I take it, to be a sort of subset of one's psychological continuity, as it relies

on certain psychological capacities, and its continuation seems to depend on a continuity of these capacities. On a psychological level, I am admittedly unsure as to what capacities or faculties this depends on and to what extent; however, one's subjective experience of their first-person perspective continuing seems to depend on there being an appropriate causal connection between the perspective at two different times. Let's imagine two perspectives at two different times, say the perspective I had this morning making breakfast and the perspective I have now writing this paper. One could think about it as like two points on a line, where the points are perspectives at any given time and the line is the entire path of that perspective over time. What accounts for this being the same perspective over time (or being "on the same line") is the causal connection between the two—or at the very least it seems that way to me.

With a definition of survival laid out, and a case made for thinking of personal identity in terms of survival rather than numerical identity, I will address objections to this version of the psychological theory. (Despite arguing that we should think of personal identity not in terms of numerical identity, the term "personal identity" will continue to be used due to its entrenched nature in these discussions; however, "personal identity" should be recognized from here on out to refer to survival, rather than strict numerical identity.) First, one might object that my account of survival presupposes identity; second, that it fails to resolve problem cases; third, that this definition suffers from problems like gaps in one's first-person perspective; and finally, one might raise questions about cases where one's perspective is far from their body (i.e. flying a virtual reality drone on another continent).

The first objection one might raise is that survival on this view presupposes some sort of identity. The idea can be most clearly seen by speaking of *my* survival (the continuation of *my* first-person perspective), rather than survival in the abstract. Roughly, the objection is that if

survival is based on the continuation of my first-person perspective, then because it is *my* first person-perspective, it seems to presuppose that there is some enduring 'me' behind it. Because of this, one might think the definition ultimately in circular, as it defines identity in terms of survival, but this survival presupposes identity.

While this is true that there seems to be something behind the first-person perspective which possesses it, this problem seems to arise for any theory (with the exception of the soul theory, which will be addressed later). On other versions of the psychological theory, for example, one could ask about the 'me' possessing the psychology which is continuous; on a body theory, one could argue that having bodily continuity assumes that it is the same body. The theory (like these others), however, bases the identity of the possessor of some psychology, perspective, or body in terms of that continuity of a psychology, a continuation of a first-person perspective, or of a body. So, what makes it *my* first-person perspective and *my* survival is the fact that I am the one who possess this perspective which is appropriately continuous (i.e. causally connected) such as to account for survival. In the case of a soul theory, while this does seem to have an unchanging soul which endures without something else behind it, the soul theory faces unique problems of its own (as previously mentioned). Furthermore, this could likely be chalked up to imprecision in our language. When we ask "How am I the same person I was ten years ago?" we are already assuming that I am the same person, we are just asking in virtue of what is this the case. However, we also recognize (as discussed on p. 8) that we are not *numerically* identical, but when we ask how we are the 'same,' this word carries in our minds both the loose, imprecise sense and the strict, logical sense, thus leading to confusion in our discussions because of these constraints of our language.

The second objection is that it fails to solve two of the biggest problems in personal identity: reduplication (which was discussed earlier; also known as fission) and fusion. The problem of fusion can be seen by an inverse scenario to the problem of fission. Imagine two people step onto teleportation pads in different places, but due to a malfunction are fused together at the same location at the end. The resulting person is a mix of both the original persons—personality and physical traits combine and are, for lack of a better phrase, "averaged out" so that the new person has a mix of both persons. Each of these problems will be considered in turn.

First, the problem of fission can be more easily resolved by survival. Of the three options presented, numerical identity entails that (3) is correct, neither of the new persons are numerically identical to the original. On a survival account one would agree that (3) is correct—neither is numerically identical to the original—however, this does not matter, because we are looking for survival, rather than numerical identity. If we think in terms of survival rather than identity, then we can reformulate the choices as follows: (1') the original survives through both, (2') the original survives through one but not the other, or (3') the original survives through neither. Both (2') and (3') have the same problems presented earlier, however (1') avoids the problem presented. The problem given to (1) is that if both are identical, then both persons are distinct, and distinct persons are not identical. However, identity is transitive, and thus the original would be identical to two distinct persons, thus resulting in a contradiction. On (1'), however, this can be avoided. Survival, unlike identity, is not transitive and thus there is no contradiction is holding the original to survive through two distinct persons. While this may seem strange, it also seems true. If you were duplicated into two persons with two different first-person perspectives, you would survive through both. Each would, of course, believe themselves

to be the 'real' you, but this would not change the fact that you would survive through both, and neither would be identical to you. Your first-person perspective continues through both of the new persons, so you would survive through them both, and thus both new persons would be you in the same sense.

Fusion cases are a bit stranger due to their nature, but it still seems that they are resolvable. In the case of fusion, both original persons would survive through the new person. Each person would likely feel as though the first-person perspective being experienced would be their own, as opposed to the others, but both would have their first-person perspective continued through this new person. Thus, they would both survive through this one person, so both persons would "be" this one person (and should they ever fission again, would presumably go back to surviving through their own bodies).

While it may seem strange to think of our identity as being able to branch or fuse, this is because of our ingrained thoughts about personal identity and its connection to numerical identity (at least in much of Western thought). Had evolution gone differently and we evolved to the same sort of cognitive capacities (being capable of our first-person perspective, for example) however we animals who reproduced by binary fission, for example, our conception of our personal identity would be quite different. Problem cases in personal identity demonstrate, in my opinion, the need to jettison the traditional account of numerical identity in favor of something like this survival account. Outside of the traditional thoughts about personal identity being based on numerical identity that we still hold onto, it is hard to explain what exactly is so strange about these cases where a person survives through two different persons.

The third objection to be considered is that concerning some other problem cases, such as gaps in one's first-person perspective. If the mark of survival is the continuation of a first-person

perspective, then there are times when one has gaps in their first-person perspective, which would entail that during these times they stop surviving and stop being the same person. While this definition avoids some of the more difficult gaps that a narrative view might face (like Kind's proposed definition), there are still gaps in any first-person perspective, for example when one is sleeping or if one falls into a coma.

In response to this objection, I propose a slight refinement of the definition of survival. Rather than thinking about it in terms of the continuation of an actual first-person perspective, survival ought to be thought of as the continuation of the capacity for a first-person perspective such that some person S survives if and only if their capacity for a first-person perspective continues. This modification allows us to easily analyze cases where one has gaps in their first-person perspective. While one is asleep, despite no longer being able to conceive of themselves as themselves (have their first-person perspective), they still maintain the capacity for this perspective. (This also helps more easily demonstrate the relationship between this conception of survival and the psychological continuity theory, as the capacity for having a first-person perspective is presumably part of one's psychological capacities, and its continuity accounts for the continuation of the capacity for first-person perspectives.) So in the case of someone falling into a coma (or even just being asleep), they can still be the same person they were earlier in life when they were capable of this in virtue of their still having that same capacity for that first-person perspective (i.e. when they wake up or come out of the coma, their perspective continues). (At what point exactly one first develops or loses these capacities, or how early or late in one's life, I am admittedly unsure of, as I am unaware of all the psychological capacities which play into this ability, however it seems then that one's personal identity would begin with these capacities and end when they lose them—whether that is at some point in childhood or if

one could lose them due to extreme mental deterioration before death. An important practical

point regarding a concern about ethical questions surrounding this would be that one might be,

but is not necessarily, a moral patient without having this sort of capacity; this theory brings no

bearing on whether they are or not.)

The fourth and final objection I will consider is regarding the location of one's

perspective. Imagine that in the United States some person puts on a virtual reality headset. All

of the sudden, their perspective is in Afghanistan. The question this raises is, where are *you*? Are

you with your perspective, thousands of miles from your body and 'you' before you enter the

virtual reality, or are you located where your perspective is?

As a simple answer, on this theory one would be located where your perspective is;

however, this might be different than one would think. While you might feel as though you are in

Afghanistan through the virtual reality headset, there is an important sense in which you are not,

but rather your perspective is mediated by the headset. When one is in the movie theatre, it is not

as though they are 'where' the movie is, despite the potential of them to become captivated by

their perspective in the theatre.

On the other hand, in James Cameron's *Avatar* we see a very different way in which this

perspective is portrayed. In this movie, the main character enters into an 'avatar' and, through

this avatar, lives and acts on another planet across the universe. In this movie, it certainly seems

as though he is where his perspective is (namely, in his acting and functioning through the

avatar). But what is then that distinguishes these two cases? One potential answer could be the

medium through which one's perspective is changed (i.e., watching on a screen versus acting

through a body), but regardless, one might argue that if what matters is one's perspective and

where it is, that the medium through which one's perspective is somewhere or experiences

something does not matter.

In response, I think part of the reason such cases seem confusing is that when we think of

a scenario like *Avatar* where one's body is in one location but their psychology and perspective

is elsewhere, the confusion comes from the intuitive pull (as mentioned earlier) that a body

theory enjoys. It does seem to us that part of what makes us the same person is our body but, like

the soul theory, there seem to be issues that might outweigh such *prima facie* appeals. Thus, if it

is examined from this psychological perspective, one would be, in a real sense, located where

their perspective is. However, part of this issue may be resolved by the earlier appeal to survival.

We might think that if our "real" body is destroyed while our perspective is elsewhere (or vice

versa) that we might cease to exist. Yet, because the relationship of survival simply requires the

continuity of a perspective, one could survive despite their original body being destroyed or a

medium through which their perspective experiences the world being destroyed, as long as the

perspective continued elsewhere. So, if, like in *Avatar*, my "real" (original?) body was destroyed,

but my perspective was able to be continued through this avatar (such as through a complete

psychological upload), I would still survive through it. On the other hand, in the case of your

perspective being through something like a movie theatre, your perspective could not continue if

your original body was destroyed, and thus it does not seem as though "you" or your perspective

are truly there. So, in response to this challenge, the answer depends highly upon how one

considers your perspective (or the capacity for this perspective, as mentioned earlier in response

to a previous objection) as being "transferred" through these mediums—the location of one's self

depends on where one's perspective is, and this location depends (at least in part) on whether

surviving or not depends on whether one's original body is still the center of one's (capacity for)

a perspective (through movies or virtual reality) or whether or not one's perspective could continue without this body. It seems as though the location of one's self depends on the location of one's capacity for this perspective, so if one's capacity cannot continue without one's body, then their "location" would be with this capacity. If it can (i.e. if their psychology and consciousness is uploaded into an avatar or computer), then they are located where this capacity is.

Thus, I argue that both the soul theory and physical theory face very difficult problems, while the psychological enjoys more benefits with less problems. Moreover, the problems with a psychological theory (such as the problem of reduplication) can be resolved by appealing to a survival account of personal identity rather than numerical identity. Survival seems to be not only a much more realistic bar set for identity, but also resolves problem cases such as fusion and fission. Many of the problems in personal identity arise from the impossibility of achieving numerical identity in problem cases—impossibility which arises upon reflection, even in everyday life. While problem cases are certainly strange on a survival account, they are no less strange than they would be on any other theory with the benefit of providing more plausible answers, given the rejection of the need for numerical identity, and I believe I have sufficiently argued that objections to a survival account fail.

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