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RETHINKING BORDERLINE CASES OF PERSONAL IDENTITY: A FIRST-PERSON PERSPECTIVE

abstract

Personal identity include both first-person and third-person identities. The objective of the essay is to demonstrate the primitiveness of first-person identity, or self-identity, by re-examining a few well-known thought experiments that are referred to as 'borderline cases of personal identity'. The primary goal of the essay is to demonstrate that no borderline case poses a significant challenge to first-person identity. The discussion is divided into three sections. The first section motivates the debate. Additionally, the importance of the first-person identity statement 'I am I', which is immune from error through misidentification, is established. In the second section, five well-known thought experiments are evaluated to demonstrate that none of them poses a genuine threat to first-person identity. In the third and final part, some real pathological case studies are analysed to strengthen the main argument.

keywords

personal identity, person, self, I, thought-experiment

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I

It is believed that the problem of personal identity is peculiar and paradoxical in nature. This is because the identity of a person is significantly different from the identity of any other object in the external world. Persons are intelligent beings; they have reasoning capacity and apperception. But the most peculiar characteristic of a person is that he can understand his own identity. Understanding identity makes personal identity peculiar, as it creates a sharp difference between persons and other beings. Within the domain of personal identity a sharp demarcation exists between understanding one's own identity and understanding the identity of others who are different from oneself. Understanding one's own identity is known as first-person account of personal identity, whereas understanding the identity of others is known as other-person or third-person account of personal identity. Both accounts of personal identity require distinct philosophical discourses.

Loosely speaking, the phrase 'personal identity' generally refers to first and third-person accounts. Significantly, however, the philosophical discourse on personal identity is usually centred around first-person identity, namely, how a person identifies himself through different episodes of his spatio-temporal existence. But whenever a thought experiment attempts to put forward a critical point of first-person identity, all the arguments are narrated from a third-person perspective. Naturally, whenever a special instance of first-person identification – as in a thought experiment – is used as the subject of third-person analysis, it invites needless complexity. Philosophers might have overlooked the fact that it is almost impossible to contest first-person identity.

Dutta (2020) argues that a criterion is necessary when someone seeks to establish the identity of others. No criterion is required to understand one's own identity. To be specific, in order to determine the identity of a person other than myself, I must look at all the necessary and contingent characteristics (i.e., nature) of that person. My identity to myself, however, is beyond any reasonable doubt; I do not need any criterion when I look upon my own identity. In the present article, I shall explore some famous thought experiments to establish the primitive characteristic of first-person identity. These thought experiments were invented by philosophers to probe the borderline cases of personal identity. To demonstrate that no thought experiment can deny the first-person realization of identity, I shall examine these hypothetical situations in turn. In addition to these thought experiments, I shall also look at some real-world examples of psychiatric disorders to provide additional support to my claim.

The discussion assumes significance from the perspective of finding a suitable answer to an unanswered question, namely, whether the knowledge of personhood presupposes the

knowledge of identity or vice versa. Unfortunately, every attempt to answer the question either commits the fallacy of infinite regress or the fallacy of circularity. If it is argued that the notion of a person cannot be understood without the notion of identity, then it is also reasonable to believe that the notion of identity requires the notion of person because identity in this context refers to a person's identity. This line of reasoning commits the fallacy of infinite regress. On the other hand, if understanding identity implies understanding personhood, and understanding personhood implies understanding identity, then the arguments fall prey to the fallacy of circularity.

Due to this apparently never-ending dispute, sometimes it appears that the issue is a pseudo-problem and has no importance in the discourse of personal identity. However, the problem is legitimate, because if we can answer this fundamental question satisfactorily, we might be able to rule out some significant problems of personal identity. For instance, there are conflicting views on what constitutes an appropriate criterion of personal identity. Philosophers differ on whether the criterion should be psychological, physical, or psycho-physical. Even according to some philosophers, identity is a matter of degree, and no criteria can provide a strict yes-or-no answer to the question of personal identity. Since the primary question has not yet been satisfactorily answered, the debate persists.

Approaching the question from two perspectives is one potential strategy for resolving the disagreement. That is, identity from the first person's point of view is completely distinct from identity from the third person's point of view. Identity refers to identification when referring to those other than myself. No one is able to determine another person's numerical identity. Imagine that I spotted two crows sitting in the same location at two different hours of a day. I cannot prove that these two birds are numerically identical; that they are one and the same. In the same way, I cannot assert that each time I refer to my father as father, he is the same person. Identity claims in the case of third-persons are merely based on inferential generalization; proving identity in these cases is impossible.

The issue of numerical identity is unquestionably settled from a first-person perspective. Here, a criterion is not required. First-person identity is considered primitive by philosophers like Locke and Shoemaker, who contend that consciousness, which is made up of memory and thought, constitutes personal identity. But except the consciousness of my own identity, does it really matter to me whether I can remember my own past actions for claiming my identity? I think it does not. By means of the thought experiments, I shall try to show that except consciousness, nothing is required to understand one's own identity.

Another point needs to be made here. The form of the statement that I am going to establish for the primitiveness of first-person identity is 'I am I' or 'I am myself', which is a variant of the assertion 'I am F'. In 'I am F, 'I' stands for the subject while 'F' stands for the predicate. 'I am X' or 'I am a teacher' is a statement of the form 'I am F'. Following the referential theory of meaning, 'I', the subject term, is a referring expression, an indexical that always refers to the (right) object it intends to refer to. Whenever someone utters 'I', 'I' infallibly refers to the utterer. It is not possible that someone utters 'I' and it does not refer to that person. 'F', the predicate term, refers to some properties of 'I', no matter whether the property is contingent or necessary for the identification of 'I'. If 'F' indicates some necessary properties of 'I', 'I am F' becomes an analytic proposition, whereas if 'F' indicates some contingent properties of 'I', 'I am F' becomes a synthetic proposition. 'I am Juliet' is a synthetic proposition since the name Juliet is only contingently related to me. If my name were Kim or Mary, I would remain the same. But the statement 'I am I' or 'I am myself' is by nature analytical, like 'Red flowers are red'. Every time the utterance 'I am I' is made, it refers to the utterer without failure and also refers to the identity of that utterer with himself at that

particular point of time. It does not matter at all whether the utterer knows himself to be a person. Being a person is only a secondary quality for the utterance 'I am I'.

One could argue that assertions of the type 'I am I' are meaningful but vacuously true, as they do not provide any factual information. Identity statements are generally of the form 'I broke the front window yesterday'. Definitely, the latter statement conveys some information regarding the continuity of someone who is conscious of one of his past deeds and, on the basis of memory, is claiming his identity with an earlier person. 'I am I' has no time reference, whereas, generally, personal identity statements contain time reference. The answer to this objection is that while I am claiming 'I am I' as a statement of personal identity, I am not at all rejecting statements of the form 'I broke the front window yesterday' or those of the form 'a person P_2 at time t_2 is identical with an earlier person P_1 at an earlier time t_1'. But there is a remarkable difference between any accepted identity statement and 'I am I'. While any accepted identity statement is not immune from error through misidentification, 'I am I' is. Secondly, one can utter 'I am I' having any time reference in mind. I may or may not remember some of my previous actions and experiences, but that forgetting cannot be a hindrance to saying that 'I am I'.

The requirement for the utterance of 'I am I' or 'I am myself' is consciousness. Here, 'consciousness' means bare consciousness, not preloaded with memory. No doubt, memory is a part of consciousness but it does not form a necessary part, rather a contingent one. If someone loses his memory, cannot remember any of his past deeds but otherwise behaves normally, can respond to external stimuli, he/she is an eligible candidate for uttering 'I am I'. There is no other prior condition for the utterance of 'I am I' or 'I am myself'. If somebody is conscious and is able to utter 'I am I' then without failure his every utterance of 'I' will refer to himself.

Every time we try to give self-identity an objective structure, the concept of self and its understanding becomes obscure, since objectivity calls for verifiability and invariably brings up the idea of others. The self, as it is portrayed in Western metaphysics, is purely an object of private investigation, and that is why no criterion is needed to understand self-identity. My self-identity is an object of my understanding. I may determine my identity on the basis of my consciousness and memory, but I do not know whether others, whenever they focus on their own identities, realize the same. Due to this peculiarity, the form of the self-identity statement cannot be 'I broke the front window yesterday', but rather 'I am I'. Even if I am unable to recall any of my past deeds or I find myself in a new body with old memories, the assertion 'I am I' remains genuine to me every time I say it. No abnormality can stop me from discovering who I am. Only I know who I am, and whoever I am, I am myself.

There is one crucial point that has to be mentioned. The distinction of 'I am I' resides in the fact that even if a person fully loses all sense of self, such words, if said, continue to be true. 'I' always refers to the intended object due to its indexical nature. If someone says, 'I am I,' whether he or she is a person, a Lockean 'man,' or something else, the statement nonetheless refers to himself without failure.

II Let us start our examination of well-known thought experiments with John Locke's Prince and Cobbler example (Locke, 1979; p. 340). In Locke's experiment, a prince's soul with the memories of his past life enters the empty, soulless body of a cobbler and immediately afterwards the cobbler's body becomes the person prince. For, according to Locke, consciousness makes personal identity, no matter which body that consciousness is annexed to. In Locke's view, consciousness is the only criterion for deciding who is who. Thomas Reid (Reid, 1941; pp. 213-214) argues that by the term 'consciousness' Locke essentially means memory. In Locke's view, if I can display full consciousness of a past action, that is, if I can

distinctly remember some of my past actions, then I am the person who did those actions and I am also accountable for those actions, no matter which material body I am conjoined with. Locke purports to show that because the cobbler's empty body with the prince's soul shows the consciousness of prince's past life, it is the prince.

In Locke's theory, one's own identity is a matter of first-person verification, for according to him, "Consciousness makes a man be himself to himself" (Locke, 1979; p. 340). Only a person can know whether he is a person and whether he is identical to himself. Locke, in his essay, differentiated between first-person accounts and third-person accounts of personal identity. He used different terms to explain different sorts of identities. The term 'person' was used to explain first-person identity, whereas the term '*man*' was used to explain other-person identity. What Locke failed to realize is that any constitutive criterion of personal identity actually implies its verifiability by others who are not persons but *men.* But how can a *man* who is not a person guarantee that a person is the same person every time he remembers his own past? Two alternatives lie here. Either I have to admit that first-person identity does not require any criteria, or I have to admit that only *men* exist; there is no person. Locke's theory would reject the second alternative altogether; hence, only the first alternative remains acceptable. That is, criteria are required for the identification of others (in Locke's terminology, *man*), but not for establishing personal (or self) identity. Whether or not I can remember some of my past actions, therefore, does not affect my knowledge of my identity. It follows that Locke did not fully appreciate the true sense of first-person identity: which is that a person himself does not require any criteria of identity to be identical with himself.

Thomas Reid (Reid, 1941; pp. 213-214) imagined a brave officer who is at present an army general and is conscious of taking a standard from the enemy on his first campaign, though he cannot remember robbing an arcade when he was a schoolboy; although, when he took the standard as a young officer, he was conscious of having been flogged at school for robbing the arcade.

Reid speculated on the thought experiment of the brave officer to show an absurdity in Locke's theory of personal identity. The absurdity is that a person may be, and at the same time not be, the person who did a particular action. Briefly, if the person who was flogged at school is identical to the person who took the standard, and if the person who took the standard is identical to the general, then following the logic of transitivity, the general is the same person as the boy who was flogged at school. But as consciousness is 'momentary' and 'transient', therefore the general cannot be the same person who was flogged at school as his present consciousness is not identical with his past consciousnesses. Due to this momentariness, consciousness cannot constitute personal identity as 'identity supposes an uninterrupted continuance of existence' of the person, who by nature is 'indivisible', substantial (as he equates person with Leibniz's *monad*) and 'permanent'.

Reid's major line of critique is as follows: If and only if the subject (or self) associated to x_1, x_2, and x_3 are the same, then x_3 at time t_3 is identical with x_2 at an earlier time t_2 and x_1 at an even earlier time t_1. Since mental states are fleeting and temporary, none of them—including thinking, memory, and consciousness—can suggest that x_1 and x_3 are the same. I do not care whether I can recall some of my prior deeds as long as I am aware that it is 'I' whose past deeds they are. Despite all the physical and psychological changes that I have experienced throughout my life, I, the person, the self has remained constant and unchanging. I am, according to Reid, a *monad* or a substance.

The problem is that Reid is silent about the nature of the unchanging stuff whom he named 'self' or 'I'. Let us investigate the character of that stuff or substance. God, mental substance, and physical substance are the three types of substances recognized in Western philosophy. Indivisibility, non-spatiality and capability of continuous thinking are the main

characteristics of mental substances. Some philosophers claim that this substance is the 'I', while others assert that it is the 'self' or the 'person'. A person is a thinking, intelligent being, and as consciousness is a necessary component of thinking, persons are conscious beings. It is impossible to imagine a person without consciousness, even though consciousness can be fleeting or constantly changing. Moreover, nobody can say 'I' or 'I am I' if they are not awake. 'I am I' is meaningless if proclaimed by a machine.

Reid's thought experiment, though it successfully challenges Locke's idea of personal identity, cannot challenge the importance of the idea of consciousness of a person. No unconscious being can be identified as a person. Despite giving sufficient importance to first-person identity, he did not fully appreciate the fact that personal identity and continuity of consciousness are complementary to each other. As a result, his thought experiment failed to establish the primitiveness of first-person identity on sufficient ground.

Sydney Shoemaker's (Shoemaker, 1971; p. 26) famous thought experiment in Brown-Robinson-Brownson case again points out that there is no fixed criterion of personal (self) identity. In a nutshell, the brains of two persons, Brown and Robinson, were exchanged. Brown's body with Robinson's brain unfortunately ceased to exist, and Robinson's body with Brown's brain survived. In this context Shoemaker opines that the third-person version of personal identity (which in most cases is a matter of dispute of words) needs a criterion based on convention. On the other hand, the first-person version of personal identity is person-dependent in the sense that only a person can answer how he considers his identity. According to Shoemaker, memory assures personal identity; one knows one's identity by recollecting one's own past. In Shoemaker's body-swap case the problem is not whether Brownson is a person but rather who is who, i.e., is Brownson Brown or Robinson?

The Brown-Robinson thought experiment clearly shows that the third-person version of personal identity is based on the nature of persons, and from the third-person point of view, identity is identification that depends on the characteristics of persons. We know all the facts about Brown and Robinson's latest incidence. We know that the new person with Robinson's body and Brown's brain shows all the psychological continuity of Brown and all the bodily continuity of Robinson. Supporters of the psychological criterion will claim that the surviving one is Brown, and supporters of the bodily criterion will claim that he is Robinson[1]. From a third-person standpoint, the decision is completely convention-based, and according to our adopted convention about the nature of persons we decide upon the criteria of identity. However, the nature of identity from a first-person point of view is a different matter and cannot be analysed from a third-person viewpoint. Nothing more can be said on this matter since this thought experiment is merely a modified version of Locke's prince-cobbler example.

I shall now discuss the well-known reduplication experiment of Bernard Williams (Williams, 1973; p. 4). In this experiment, a person named Charles seems to recall various incidents and deeds that he did not actually carry out. Instead, all of those incidents are consistent with the life and history of an old man named Guy Fawkes. Similar to Charles, another person called Robert also asserts that he can recall Fawkes' earlier actions and experiences. The question is: who is who. Here, the following questions are of importance:

Is Charles the same person as Guy Fawkes?

Is Robert the same person as Guy Fawkes?

1 Though it is a matter of debate whether supporters of bodily continuity criterion will accept that the resulting person is Robinson; as Bernard Williams argues that bodily continuity provides the necessary criterion of personal identity, but without the memory continuity criterion the bodily continuity criterion alone might not be sufficient.

Is Charles identical to Robert if both of them share Fawkes' characteristics?
What should the conclusion be if the last three questions have negative answers? In other words, how can we know who is who?

Here also, the concern is not about the ascription of person-property to Charles and Robert. Williams has no hesitation in considering both Charles and Robert as persons, since both Charles and Robert display all the essential characteristics of being a person. Williams constructed the thought experiment to indicate the insufficiency of any psychological continuity criterion of personal identity and to point out the necessity of bodily continuity as well.

However, this experiment is significant for the following reasons. First, it apparently raises a serious problem for self-identity. If a person undergoes irreversible loss of all kinds of autobiographical memory (as Charles and Robert did), then it would be impossible for that person to identify himself as himself. Charles, while claiming that he was Guy Fawkes, could not claim that he was Charles. Second, it questions the logical character of identity. If at the same time both Charles and Robert claim to be identical to Guy Fawkes, then three people, who are not spatio-temporally co-existent claim to be identical. Can two or more spatially and temporally separate objects be identical?

Two things can be said here. First, consonant with the observation made in the last section, self-identity is primitive and cannot be contradicted. The point is that when a person claims, 'I am myself', his claim is absolutely certain from his own point of view. If Charles claims to remember everything that fits with the life and actions of Guy Fawkes and if Charles has no memories regarding his (i.e., Charles') own past, then it would be a major problem for the supporters of the psychological continuity (including brain continuity) criterion to ascertain whether Charles is Charles or Charles is Guy Fawkes. Verily, when I claim to remember some other person *X*'s actions and experiences as my own, I have no doubt regarding my identity. It is the problem of other people who want to decide whether I am *X*, for they have to rely on some criterion to come to a conclusion.

Second, Williams' thought experiment is silent about Charles' present experiences. Let us take the present experience of feeling pain. If a person asserts that he is in pain, then it is beyond any reasonable doubt (provided the person does not make a false assertion) that his statement is true. Now when Charles says, 'I am in pain', his claim is true whether he is Charles or Guy Fawkes. Even if Charles claims that he is Guy Fawkes and thinks and experiences in the same way that Guy Fawkes used to think or experience, the assertion 'I am in pain' cannot be falsified. When Charles claims that he is Guy Fawkes, he does not claim that he is Charles. When I say 'I am I' or 'I am myself,' my claim is true, no matter whether I know what my name is or whether I am a person. It appears that these experiments are alike in one respect. Almost all of these experiments question the notion of criteria of personal identity and create a borderline case by putting a person's consciousness in a new body. But none of them poses any serious problem to the notion of self-identity.

We now turn to Derek Parfit's thought experiment on teletransportation (Parfit, 1984; pp. 199-200). Parfit provides two versions of teletransportation. In the first version, the person loses consciousness for about an hour. On earth, the scanner destroys his original brain and body while recording the exact states of all his cells. The replicator on Mars creates exactly the 'same' person out of new matter and out of the original person's recorded state of cells. As Parfit says,

> It will be in this body that I shall wake up. Though I believe that this is what will happen, I will hesitate. But then I remember seeing my wife's grin when, at breakfast today, I revealed my nervousness. As she reminded me, she has often

> been teletransported, and there is nothing wrong with *her*. I pressed the button. As predicted, I lose consciousness and seem to regain consciousness at once, but in a different cubicle. Examining my new body, I find no change at all. Even the cut on my upper lip, from this morning's shave, is still there (Parfit, 1984; p. 199).

In the second thought-experiment of teletransportation, the person does not lose consciousness. The scanner records his blueprint without destroying his brain and body and creates a replica. Even the original person can see his replica and communicate with that organic replica. Parfit imagines,

> The attendant later calls me to the intercom. On the screen, I see myself just as I do in the mirror. But there are two differences. On the screen, I am not left-right reversed. And, while I stand here speechless, I can see and hear myself in the studio on Mars, standing to speak (Parfit, 1984; p. 200).

No doubt, Parfit's example of teletransportation is highly imaginary, but nevertheless it does not put our claimed relationship in jeopardy. Rather, it questions any accepted criteria for personal identity. Parfit argues that problems of personal identity are about numerical identity and qualitative similarity. He says, "...we claim that he, the same person, is not now the same. We merely mean that this person's character has changed. The numerically identical person is now qualitatively different" (Parfit, 1984; pp. 201-202). In both cases of teletransportation, the organic replica is no doubt qualitatively similar to the original person, but it is not numerically identical. Parfit argues in favour of degree of identity, or degrees of persistence, and if personal identity is a matter of degree, one person can be at most exactly alike with his temporal predecessors but cannot be identical.

The above two thought-experiments point to an absurdity. In the first example if I know that I shall cease to exist after teletransportation, and shall be revived in Mars and continue to exist thereafter, then my knowledge includes a contradiction, namely, 'I shall cease to exist and I shall not', and therefore it is not a knowledge at all. Either I shall die or I shall not. If I do not die, then I shall remain myself. My first-person identity shall remain as it is. If I die, then whoever survives post teletransportation is not at all my concern. Again, in the second case of teletransportation I can see my organic replica and I know that it is my identical double and not myself. My double may in all respects be identical to me but I know that she is only my *'double'*. I shall remain myself unless and until I cease to exist. Both the speculative cases cannot challenge my (self) identity.

Finally, we would like to discuss David Wiggins' case of fission (Wiggins, 1967; p. 50), where two hemispheres of a person's brain are inserted into two empty skulls of two different human bodies. If each hemisphere is capable of retaining all the psychological features of the original person, then after the event of replacement, two new persons arise from an earlier person. Each of the resulting people has memories of living the life of the original person. The problem is, if at all, who retains the numerical identity with the original one?

It may appear that if this sort of highly improbable scenario actually materializes, the significance of numerical identity is called into question. Because it is impossible to prove the identity of two future individuals with an earlier individual since identity implies (in the case of individuals) both spatio-temporal and psychological continuity. In Wiggins' case, significantly, both the resulting persons no doubt retain psychological continuity with the original one, but none is spatio-temporally continuous with the original person. Therefore, none of them can be identical with the original person. More clearly, if a person *X* is identical

with two persons *Y* and *Z*, where *Y* and *Z* retain psychological continuity with *X* but do not retain physical continuity (as it is impossible that more than one physical objects are identical), then it is impossible that *X* is identical to *Y* and *Z*.

But the problem of self-identity cannot be resolved in this simple manner. Every time I think that I am going to become two future persons, an uneasiness arises. I start to contemplate my future situation because I would like to survive not as two but as one. There are two possibilities. I may think that I shall survive as one of the two future persons. The other person, though will carry my consciousness and memory and half of my brain, will not be myself since he or she will collect new experience and memory after the surgery; or I may think that none of them will continue as myself, as both of them have a common past but will enjoy different futures. Individually, each of them will have a distinct identity. It would be the problem of the rest of the world to find out who they actually are if they bear witness to all my previous experiences. But, whoever they are, each time they utter 'I am myself', it will be true to them unquestionably.

The issues raised by Wiggins' thought experiment, however, are disturbing, because to think that I, presently existing as one, shall continue as two is meaningless, and I cannot think in this way. Every time I think that 'I shall remain identical with two future persons,' it violates the law of identity as a primary law of thinking. The question is, is it at all possible to find out which of the two future persons I am contemplating at present will retain my identity? The answer is no. If I try to find the answer, I have to divide myself into three (which is absurd to think about). The first one is myself, the first-person, the 'I'; the second and the third are the two future persons, the 'others' who are going to survive. Is it possible for me to contemplate my identity with both future persons or with any of the two future persons? As I have already pointed out, the first alternative results in a contradiction. But I can choose to retain my identity with one of the two resulting persons if and only if there is some criterion. Only on the basis of a criterion I may select my future substitute. More specifically, I must utilize certain objective criteria in order to choose my future continuer when I, as other, attempt to prove my identity with one of the two other persons. Whoever I shall be, either I survive or I do not. If I do not survive, the experiment will not create any difficulty for me. If I survive, I shall remain as I am now. No alternative can compel me to compromise my first-person identity.

III

I now discuss a few real life cases that seem to go against the claim of first-person identity. The discussion of these cases serves, among other things, to show that, similar to the borderline cases, no pathological case can contest the primacy of first-person identity. To fix ideas, let us assume that there is a sixteen-year-old schoolboy named Rahul. One fine morning, he started claiming that his younger brother Raja is Rahul and that he is actually Raja. He began acting in the manner Raja does. The question that arises is, is Rahul Raja or Rahul? It is a legitimate concern for everyone, except Rahul, who has no trouble claiming his identity.

Patients with some psychiatric conditions, such as delusional misidentification syndrome (DMS), tend to mentally duplicate or misidentify people, places or things, even though they are otherwise perfectly normal. Capgras Syndrome (Capgras and Reboul-Lachaux, 1923; pp. 6-16) is one of the most common DMS whose essence lies in the delusional belief in the patient's mind that a person or persons have been replaced by their respective doubles or imposters. In an actual case study found in 1979 (Feinberg *et al.*, 2005; p. 101), a forty four year old man who sustained a traumatic brain injury claimed that his first and actual wife and five children had been replaced by substitutes. Some patients even claim that their parents, siblings, and friends are not 'real' but are 'look-alikes' or 'doubles' of the originals.

In contrast to the Capgras syndrome, patients suffering from Frégoli Syndrome (Courbon

and Fail, 1927; pp. 121-124) misidentify people or places. In a certain instance, a 61-year-old man suffering from a traumatic brain injury developed Frégoli misidentifications for many members of his rehabilitation hospital, claiming they were actually sons, daughters-in-law, co-workers, and town officials, and he even claimed that an ice skater on TV was himself.

From the above examples, it appears that patients suffering from DMS do not misidentify themselves but other people. They have no problem identifying others as others, but their identification is not based on predetermined and fixed social identification marks; rather they identify others with a new identification sign. It is really hard to determine whether DMS patients are actually using any criteria for other person identification. But this sort of circumstantial misidentification indicates the contingent character of other person identification. The so called 'new identity' is problematic only to a third-person, who is different from the DMS patient. Here the debate is between other and another, whereas the first-person identity remains untouched and unaltered.

Patients suffering from amnesia cannot distinctly remember their past actions due to loss of autobiographical or episodic memory.[2] One particular type of amnesia is confabulation or the production of fictitious narratives[3] (as Charles does in Williams' thought experiment), which can be understood as a specific form of autobiographical memory disorder. Another kind of amnesia is Korsakoff syndrome. In his well-known book, Oliver Sacks (Sacks, 2021) described his encounter with Jimmie G, a forty nine year old man with Korsakoff syndrome who is unable to recollect events after turning nineteen years old. Jimmie forgets what he has learned since then and sees the world through the eyes of an adolescent. He describes himself as a nineteen year old young adult who can remember the days of serving as a marine in World War II, but nothing that happened after 1945. Even though this illness is undoubtedly challenging for a psychiatrist, it poses no threat to first-person identity as long as the patient has a minimal concept of self, or can consciously utter 'I am myself'. It is claimed that complete and irreversible loss of the entire autobiographical memory is really rare among all psychiatric diseases.

The peculiarity of these psychopathological cases attains a new height in the mirror sign delusional misidentification syndrome, where persons otherwise normal become abnormal only in front of the mirror or any reflecting surfaces (Postal, 2005; pp.131-146). The patient cannot recognise himself in the mirror; rather, he identifies the reflection in the mirror to be some other person. Some patients can even recognize themselves in photographs but cannot recognize their reflections in mirrors. These cases indicate that at some point in a person's life, self-identity merges with other identities. When a person in front of a mirror identifies himself as other, it implies that in identifying oneself, one does not necessarily take into account the information regarding how one looks. This case evidently shows that sometimes bodily features are not necessarily included in the notion of self, and identifying oneself in terms of a particular body becomes problematic. The empirical evidence of such cases points to the fact that there is no strict line of demarcation between self, 'I', and the other. Nevertheless, such

2 Laboratory tests differentiate among various types of memory, e.g., episodic memory (often used interchangeably with autobiographical memory), semantic memory, perceptual memory, priming, and procedural memory. Episodic memory and autobiographical memory are the two main types of memory. "Episodic memory requires conscious and self-related reflections, or autonoetic consciousness and the experiencing self, allowing time travel to the past and containing context embedded specific and distinctive events" (Fujiwara and Markowitsch, 2005; p. 66). Autobiographical memory frequently stands for the retrieval of personal past experiences. Episodic or autobiographical memory is closely related to the knowledge of self and identity.

3 (According to the narrativity theory of self,) in which a person narrates or describes his life-history in the form of a story.

cases do not violate the primitive character of the first-person identity. Self-identity does not necessarily contain the identification of a particular body. Body is only contingently related to one's own identity.

All the speculative thought experiments and the psychopathological cases listed above indicate that problems related to personal identity are actually problematic from a third-person viewpoint. Any 'problematic' self-assertion becomes a matter of investigation for someone who did not make that assertion. This is where the peculiarity of self-identity lies. Every time an individual makes a claim about his self-identity, other individuals evaluate the appropriateness of that claim. But to the individual making the assertion this type of evaluation may seem absurd. It is even possible that a person does not pay any attention to what others think of his identity as long as he can utter 'I am myself'. No identifying marks can influence one's sense of self; they can only interfere with the perceptions others have about that individual. It is perhaps impossible to find out how a person identifies himself as every assertion he makes about himself is not analysable by any person other than himself.

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