

PHILOSOPHY 4360/5360 – METAPHYSICS

Topic III: Personal Identity

The Main Alternatives

Alternative 1: Global Non-Reductionism

No reductionist account can be given of the diachronic unity relation in the case of any sort of entity – including either persons, or inanimate objects.

Alternative 2: Non-Reductionism and Immaterial Minds or Egos

In the case of persons, a non-reductionist account can be given of the diachronic unity relation, but this cannot be done in the case of non-persons. As regards the latter, either a reductionist account is called for, or the idea of identity doesn't apply to such things at all.

Alternative 3: Reductionism and Immaterial Minds or Egos

The Immaterial Mind Criterion: Personal identity in the case of humans is based upon identity of an immaterial mind, first, identity of an immaterial mind is a **sufficient** condition of personal identity; and secondly, identity of an immaterial mind is a **necessary** condition of personal identity.

Three interpretations of the “necessary condition” claim are as follows:

Interpretation 1: It is a **necessary** truth that identity of an immaterial mind is a **necessary** condition of personal identity in the case of humans.

Interpretation 2: Though it is not a necessary truth that identity of an immaterial mind is a **necessary** condition of personal identity in the case of humans, humans do, as a matter of fact, have immaterial minds, and because they do, identity of an immaterial mind is in fact a **necessary** condition of personal identity in the case of humans.

Interpretation 3: *If* humans have immaterial minds, then identity of an immaterial mind is a **necessary** condition of personal identity in the case of humans.

Alternative 4: Reductionism and Bodily Identity

The Bodily Identity Criterion: Personal identity is based upon bodily identity, where this involves two theses: first, bodily identity is a **sufficient** condition of personal identity; and secondly, bodily identity is a **necessary** condition of personal identity.

Alternative 5: Reductionism and Brain Identity

The Brain Identity Criterion: The diachronic unity relation is the relation of having the same brain (or at least one hemisphere of the same brain, when the other hemisphere has been destroyed.).

Alternative 6: Reductionism and the Diachronic Unity of Occurrent States, Especially Mental Ones

The Broad Psychological Criterion: The diachronic unity relation in the case of persons is the relation of psychological continuity and connectedness, holding between occurrent psychological states, where **the basis** of that continuity and connectedness is irrelevant.

Alternative 7: Reductionism, and the Diachronic Unity of Occurrent States, Especially Mental Ones, and Psychological Powers

The Psychological Powers and Mental States Criterion: Any complete temporal slice of a person must involve certain powers – such as the powers of thinking, remembering, experiencing, etc. – and if A and B are any two complete temporal slices of a person, then A and B stand in the diachronic unity relation if and only if not only the occurrent states of A and B causally linked, but also the corresponding psychological powers of A and B.

Alternative 8: Reductionism, and the Diachronic Unity of Occurrent States, Especially Mental Ones, and of Psychological Powers, Plus an Underlying Substance

The Occurrent Mental States Plus Powers Plus Persisting Substance Criterion: Any complete temporal slice of a person must involve states of some persisting substance, and if A and B are any two complete temporal person-slices, then A and B stand in the diachronic unity relation if and only if not only are the occurrent states of A and B – or at least those that are relevant to personal identity – causally linked, but, in addition, A and B are temporal parts of one and the same **persisting substance**.

Alternative 9: Reductionism, and the Diachronic Unity of Occurrent Psychological States and an Underlying Substance

The Occurrent Mental States Plus Persisting Substance Criterion: Any complete temporal slice of a person must involve states of some persisting substance, and if A and B are any two complete temporal person slices, then A and B stand in the diachronic unity relation if and only if not only are the occurrent states of A and B – or at least those that are relevant to personal identity – causally linked, but, in addition, A and B are temporal parts of one and the same **persisting substance**.

If one focuses, not upon persons in general – who may include non-embodied persons, and embodied persons with immaterial minds – but upon embodied persons with minds that are identical with their brains, the above analytical account of the diachronic unity relation can be viewed as giving rise to the following, **non-analytic criterion**:

The Narrow Psychological Criterion: The diachronic unity relation is the relation of psychological continuity and connectedness, where the relevant causal connections are normal ones, and where normal ones are ones that are based upon the continued existence of **underlying neural structures**.