

Personal Identity in Illness

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Observe an object in the room right now—for example, a pencil. If you come back to the same location in three days and see a pencil, is it the same pencil? More formally, is this pencil identical or distinct from the pencil you saw three days ago? You could further question what it means for the pencil you saw three days ago to be identical to the pencil you see now.

Ultimately, we arrive at the question of what does it mean for an object to exist through time.

Now think about that question in terms of different objects: a desk, a person, a building, etc. It

is possible that the answer to this question is dependent on the type of object. In his 1689 *An*

Essay Concerning Human Understanding, John Locke explains what it is for things of various

kinds to be the same thing over time. Ultimately, Locke argues that identity of persons—

personal identity— in particular consists in consciousness. In this thesis, I will prove that Locke's

view of personal identity is flawed. Personal identity does not solely consist in consciousness

and there is some element of bodily persistence also required for personal identity, made most

apparent in times of illness.

Locke understood the important role of medicine in philosophy and his writings were

deeply affected by medicine. Locke received his medical license from the University of Oxford in

1675 and became a personal physician in 1676. That year, he also met Thomas Sydenham, an

English physician, whose *Observations Medicae* became the standard textbook of medicine for

two centuries. Locke and Sydenham collaborated in writing *De Arte Medica* in 1669 and his

influence on Locke is clear. As Sanchez-Gonzales, a historian of medicine, notes: “[Locke's]

'plain historical method', the emphasis on observation and sensory experience instead of

seeking the essence of things; the rejection of hypotheses and principles; the refusal of

research into final causes and inner mechanisms; the ideal of irrefutable evidence and skepticism on the possibilities of certainty in science” (Sanchez-Gonzales 1990, 675–695).

The *Essay on Human Understanding* can be interpreted as Locke’s attempt to justify, substantiate, and promote Sydenham’s medical method as applied to epistemology.

Understanding the role of medicine and illness in personal identity, and wanting to supplement and ultimately correct Locke’s account in a way that he might appreciate, I turn to contemporary philosopher Havi Carel. In her book *Illness*, Carel introduces the distinction between the lived and the biological body. There she narrates her story of falling ill from a rare and often deadly disease, lymphangioliomyomatosis. By living a life where her identity is limited by her illness, Carel offers a unique perspective that Locke’s view lacks. Carel’s view accounts for identity in times of illness, where a person’s memory of their body’s capability is not aligned with their current biological ability.

I will proceed as follows. In section 1, I will reconstruct Locke’s view of personal identity. In section 2, I will offer my objections to Locke’s view and in section 3, I will offer others’ objections to Locke’s view. Then, in section 4, I will offer a solution to these objections by incorporating modern philosophy of medicine, Havi Carel’s notion of the lived and biological body. To conclude, in section 5, I will offer and respond to possible objections to my view.

1. Locke’s View

Locke begins his argument for personal identity with his principle of individuation: “for we never find, nor conceive it possible, that two things of the same kind should exist in the same place at the same time, we rightly conclude, that, whatever exists anywhere at anytime, excludes all of the same kind, and is there itself alone” (II.xxvii.1).¹ Thus, if X and Y are the same

kind, then X and Y cannot be in the same place at the same time. When considering anything as existing at a specific place and time, we compare it with itself existing at another time, deriving the ideas of identity and diversity. When we see an object at a certain place and time, we know that it is that very thing and not another thing that exists in another place, despite how similar the objects may be; therefore, we see the principle of identity, when the idea it is attributed to vary not at all from what they are in a former existence and in the present (II.xxvii.1). Therefore, those that had one beginning are the same things in different places and those that had different beginnings are not the same, but rather diverse. It is existence itself which determines a being of any sort to a particular place, “incommunicable to two beings of the same kind” (II.xxvii.4).

While it is seemingly easy to conceive of this idea of individuation for simple substances or modes, it is more difficult to comprehend in terms of compound substances. A complex substance or mode is a complex substance all of whose component parts are variations or combinations of a single simple substances, whereas compound substances or modes are complex substances whose components include several distinct simple substances, often including those derived from different experiential sources. Locke demonstrates this complexity with the following example:

In the state of living creatures, their identity depends not on a mass of the same particles, but on something else. For in them the variation of great parcels of matter alters not the identity: an oak growing from a plant to a great tree, and then lopped, is still the same oak; and a colt grown up to a horse, sometimes fat, sometimes lean, is all the while the same horse. Though, in both cases, there may be a manifest change of the parts; so that truly they are not either of them the same masses of matter, though they be truly one of them the same oak, and the other the same horse. The reason whereof is, that, in these two cases- a mass of matter and a living body- identity is not applied to the same thing. (II.xxvii.3)

In order to demonstrate how identity is applied to different things, Locke distinguishes three different kinds of identity: substance, man, and person. He divides substances into three categories: God, finite intelligences, and bodies. He distinguishes the identity of these substances by stating:

First, God is without beginning, eternal, unalterable, and everywhere, and therefore concerning his identity there can be no doubt. Secondly, finite spirits having had each its determinate time and place of beginning to exist, the relation to that time and place will always determine to each of them its identity, as long as it exists. Thirdly, the same will hold of every particle of matter, to which no addition or subtraction of matter being made, is the same. (II.xxvii.2)

Each of these types of substances excludes other substances of the same form from existing at the same place and the same time, however, there can be three different substances existing at the same location in space and time.

Locke creates further distinction between being the same man and being the same person. Locke writes that the same man consists in “a participation of the same continued Life, by constantly fleeting Particles of Matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized Body” (II.xxvii.7). So, Locke’s man is identical with a biological body. He then defines ‘person’ as “a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it” (II.xxvii.11). He continues this thought by claiming that the identity of persons extends backward and forward, into both the past and the future, only so far as this consciousness extends, which unites a person’s identity with their thoughts and actions.

Locke might appear to distinguish man and person to account for the immaterial aspects of humans. Since the distinction Locke makes is that a man is a material body, while a person is a thinking, intelligent being, it might seem that something extra is a quality belonging to persons, rather than bodies. Persons refers to the vitality or animate aspects of humans, whereas man is the inanimate body of matter. We cannot assume that Locke is equating person with immaterial substance, however. Locke denies that immaterial substances, as well as body, play any role in determining one's personal identity:

That if the same consciousness (which, as has been shewn, is quite a different thing from the same numerical Figure or Motion in Body) can be transferred from one thinking Substance to another, it will be possible, that two thinking Substances may make but one Person. For the same consciousness being preserved whether in the same or different Substances, the personal identity is preserved. (II.xxvii.13)

Locke's person is something that may reside in or be expressed as an immaterial substance, yet still remains independent of it. The sort of substance involved, material or immaterial, is irrelevant for the determination and preservation of personal identity. Therefore, a person is immaterial in the sense that it is not bound by substance, but exists so long as the same consciousness exists.

Locke shows the importance of distinguishing man from person in a thought experiment involving the Prince and the Cobbler. "For should the soul of a Prince, carrying with it the consciousness of the Prince's past life, enter and inform the body of a Cobbler as soon as deserted by his own soul, everyone sees, he would be the same Person with the Prince, accountable only for the Prince's actions: But who would say it was the same Man?" (II.xxvii.15). Locke concludes that the person identified as "prince" ends up living in the man identified as "cobbler", because the consciousness of the prince also goes with the soul of the

prince into the cobbler. This not only clarifies that a person goes where their consciousness goes, but also further distinguishes Locke's definition of "man" and "person."

Later in his *Essay*, Locke also distinguishes that 'person' is a "forensic term appropriating actions and their merit; and so belongs only to intelligent agents capable of a law, and happiness and misery," therefore, making a person more than merely a thinking intelligent being, but also an intelligent being that can be held accountable for their actions (II.xxvii.26). Because people can think of themselves existing over time, people are also capable of planning ahead while considering future punishment or reward. They are also, therefore, responsible for their actions. Being a person involves having rights and obligations. This suggests that an account of the identity of persons across time will have forensic, or normative, implications.

In order to address this idea of continuity of identity, Locke proclaims that consciousness makes personal identity:

This also shows wherein the Identity of the same Man consists; viz. in nothing but a participation of the same continued Life, by constantly fleeting Particles of Matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized Body. He that shall place the Identity of Man in any thing else, but like that of other Animals in one fitly organized Body ... will find it hard, to make an Embryo, one of Years, mad and sober, the same Man, by any Supposition that will not make it possible for ... Socrates ... and Cesar Borgia to be the same Man. For if the Identity of Soul alone makes the same Man, and there be nothing in the nature of Matter, why the same individual Spirit may not be united to different Bodies, it will be possible, that those Men, living in distant ages ... may have been the same Man. ... And that way of speaking would agree yet worse with the Notions of those Philosophers, who allow of Transmigration ... I think no body, could he be sure that the soul of Heliogabalus were in one of his Hogs, would yet say that the Hog were a Man. (II.xxvii.7)

The same consciousness means the same person, but not the same substance. Personal identity does not change as substances change. As we now know, though Locke did not, humans replace all the cells in their body roughly every seven years. Regardless, this provides support for

Locke's view. If a person's personal identity were tied to substance, then their personal identity would not be capable of extending longer than the 7 years that it takes the body to replace all of its cells. Thus, consciousness is not just the criterion of identity through time, but also through space. Locke states that "since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes everyone to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity" (II.xxvii.11).

To clarify Locke's argument of personal identity, I have formalized his arguments as (II.xxvii.10):

1. If person *A* remembers what happened to person *B*, then person *A* is the same person as person *B*
2. Person *A* remembers what happened to person *B*
3. Person *A* is the same person as person *B*
4. If "Person *A*", because it contains "person," is a forensic term, then Person *A* can be held responsible for the actions of the same person
5. "Person *A*," because it contains "person," is a forensic term
6. Person *A* can be held responsible for the actions of the same person
7. Person *A* can be held responsible for the actions of person *B*

This formalization demonstrates how, according to Locke's memory criterion, premise 1, a person can be held responsible for their actions. However, since Locke links personal identity to consciousness, problem cases for his view arise whenever there are interruptions in consciousness which intuitively do not make for a difference in person. Locke specifically considers the following examples of this: sleep, drunkenness, and amnesia.

The first example provided by Locke is his distinction between "waking and sleeping" Socrates. Socrates awake and Socrates asleep do not share the same consciousness, therefore, they are not the same person. Therefore,

If the same Socrates waking and sleeping do not partake of the same consciousness, Socrates waking and sleeping is not the same Person. And to punish Socrates waking, for what sleeping Socrates thought, and waking Socrates was never conscious of, would be no more of Right, than to punish one Twin for what his Brother-Twin did, whereof he knew nothing, because their outsides were so like, that they could not be distinguished; for such Twins have been seen (II.xxvii.19).

If Socrates has a different consciousness during the day than he does during the night, then waking Socrates should not be punished for sleeping Socrates' actions. Though Socrates is the same man during day and night, he is a different person during day and night and moral responsibility lies with persons, not man.

The next example is amnesia. In section 20, Locke ponders the following:

Suppose I wholly lose the memory of some parts of my Life, beyond a possibility of retrieving them, so that perhaps I shall never be conscious of them again; yet am I not the same Person, that did those Actions, had those Thoughts, that I was once conscious of, though I have now forgot them? (II.xxvii.20)

This directly confronts the issue of lapses in consciousness and memory, as amnesia causes a person to forget the thoughts and actions that they once were aware of. Locke responds that in this sense of the word, I is only applied to the man in this situation, not the person. While one might assume that the same man is the same person, this is not true. If it is possible for the same man to have distinct and incommunicable consciousness at different times, the same man would, at different times, be different persons.

The final example is a case of a man both sober and drunk:

...human laws not punishing the mad man for the sober man's actions, nor the sober man for what the mad man did,-thereby making them two persons: which is somewhat explained by our way of speaking in English when we say such an one is 'not himself, or is 'beside himself'; in which phrases it is insinuated, as if

those who now, or at first used them, thought that self was changed; the self-same person was no longer the same man. (II.xxvii.20)

Locke claims that if the man cannot remember what he did when drunk, then there is a lapse in consciousness, thus, also a lapse in being the same person. Because of this, it is not right for us to punish sober men for their drunken actions. However, because the legal system cannot “distinguish certainly what is real, what is counterfeit” drunkenness and sleep are not valid excuses (II.xxvii.20). Ultimately, however, God will know the truth on the day of judgement.

Locke accepts all these cases as following from his view. Despite his explanations, however, Locke recognizes that it is difficult to conceive than an individual man can be two distinct persons. He then considers what is meant by the same individual man. He claims that there are three main suppositions that define an individual man: it must be either the same individual, immaterial, thinking substance, or the same animal without any regard to an immaterial soul, or the same immaterial spirit united to the same animal (II.XXVII.20).

Considering any of the three suppositions, Locke claims it is impossible for identity to be tied to anything other than consciousness.

I will now offer my objections and others’ to show that Locke’s view needs fixing if it is to be acceptable at all.

2. My Objections to Locke’s

I start by offering four objections of my own and consider Locke’s potential responses. First, Locke’s view involves many metaphysical considerations. Since Locke claimed to write the *Essay* from an epistemological perspective, he should rely on experiences of a number of memories and conclusions drawn from these experiences to base his theory of personal

identity. In the introduction to his *Essays*, Locke demonstrates his exclusively epistemological view by stating:

This, therefore being my *Purpose* to enquire into the Original, Certainty, and Extent of humane Knowledge; together, with the Grounds and Degrees of Belief, Opinion, and Assent; I shall not at present meddle with the Physical Consideration of the Mind; or trouble my self to examine, wherein its Essence consists, or by what Motions of our Spirits, or Alterations of our Bodies, we come to have any Sensation by our Organs, or any *Ideas* in our Understandings; and whether those *Ideas* do in their Formation, any, or all of them, depend on Matter, or no. These are Speculations, which, however curious and entertaining, I shall decline, as lying out of my Way, in the Design I am now upon. (I.i.2)

Locke appears to make all knowledge *a priori*, meaning that all knowledge depends on reflecting and comparing ideas to each other in order to understand the relations between ideas. Yet, in tension with this, Locke instead relies heavily on thought experiments in imaginary cases. There is a way to ease the tension. If read from a purely epistemological perspective, Locke's claims appear to solely concern what we can know about the persistence of persons. Thus, Locke's claims on identity do not look to substance for answers. Nevertheless, as an empiricist, Locke believes that human experiences form a person's beliefs and knowledge, yet he goes beyond experience; thus, having rationalist presuppositions. Locke relies heavily on thought experiments for data to support his assertions throughout his *Essays*, specifically in Book II. Rationalists believe that knowledge can be gained independently of sense experience, whereas empiricists believe that this sense experience is the ultimate source of all our concepts of knowledge. Thus, not only does Locke go beyond empiricism to metaphysics, but also dabbles in rationalism.

Locke would likely respond that he is merely defining the terms to specify his argument rather than truly examining and studying what a substance, a man, and a person are. While, I

find this response to be unsatisfactory because his entire argument is based on conclusions about the nature of the three conditions of identity, this objection does not directly affect the argument in and of itself. So, I can permit Locke his speculation and put the worry aside.

Second, as Locke describes, although a hand is part of a body, cut it off, so that one is no longer conscious of it, and it then is “no longer part of that which is himself” (II.xxvii.11). This implies that my consciousness is the criterion for identity in space, therefore, what I am right now includes all that I can feel. Yet, on the one hand, if my hand is part of my consciousness, then essential organs such as my liver and kidneys should be. On the other hand, I cannot feel my liver or kidneys. So perhaps my hand is not part of my consciousness after all.

By taking Locke’s position, one would likely argue that since my liver and my kidneys are essential to my consciousness and health, then I am indirectly aware of them. Only when these internal organs begin to fail or malfunction, thus threatening my consciousness, do I become aware of them. However, I believe that this objection proves a flaw in Locke’s concept of identity through space and time since it demonstrates how unconscious organs and bodily processes are responsible for allowing people to be in a state to have an identity. If a person’s organs are responsible for contributing to their functionality, then I believe their organs have to contribute to their consciousness even though they cannot “feel” them.

Third, in a lucid dream, the person asleep is aware that they are dreaming, but may be able to gain control over their dreams. In this scenario, the person asleep is aware of their past consciousness, able to control their dreams, and able to consider awards and punishments of the future. Therefore, a lucid dreamer seeming to have a continuity of consciousness must also have a continuity of being the same person. However, the objection I raise is that in a dream a

person is able to control their actions so that they are able to do things not physically possible awake, such as own a cat they don't actually own in waking life or have a superpower. If there is no lapse in consciousness and personal identity in these scenarios, then there is no distinction between what is possible and actual and what is impossible and imaginary within a person's identity. Am I then a cat owner or superhero at one moment, and not a cat owner or superhero at the next, all while being the same person?

Locke would likely answer this objection by saying that full consciousness is not present even while lucid dreaming, therefore, there is still a lapse in a person's identity. I may be a cat owner and then not a cat owner because I may be two different persons. Despite Locke's anticipated response, I believe that lucid dreaming offers a scenario in which consciousness is continuous, but personal identity is disrupted, because there is continuity of memory.

My final objection to Locke's argument is that there is a limit to how far back memories can extend, thus, a limit to how far back a person's consciousness extends. While I can remember what I ate for breakfast yesterday, I can't remember what I ate for breakfast a year ago. However, a year ago I would be able to remember what I ate for breakfast the day before. Following this logic, I cannot remember my life as an infant, but in each stage of my life I remember my life in the immediately previous stage. Therefore, where does my consciousness, and also personal identity, begin? To further this thinking, while drinking I am able to remember my sober actions, but while sober I may not remember my drunk actions. Therefore, as defined by Locke, there would be a continuity of consciousness while drinking, so where does the lapse of consciousness begin when one cannot remember their drunken actions?

Locke would likely respond to these objections, firstly, by saying that since there is uninterrupted continuity of consciousness from one phase of life to the next, then personal identity also continues from one phase of life to the next, regardless if a person's memory is capable of remembering all the previous stages. I believe that this response is unsatisfactory as it is unclear how far back one must be aware of to have a continuity of consciousness. The continuation of the objection, I believe Locke would respond that when consuming alcohol, a person is altering their mental state, therefore, altering their consciousness.

I take these objections to show that Locke's view needs fixing if it is to be acceptable. To highlight this further, I will now discuss several well-known objections to Locke's argument made by others.

3. Other Objections to Locke

A common objection is known as the 'circularity objection'. Both Thomas Reid and Joseph Butler criticize Locke that memory, meant to establish personal identity, presupposes personal identity. Butler explains:

But though consciousness of what is past does thus ascertain our personal identity to ourselves, yet, to say that it makes personal identity, or is necessary to our being the same persons, is to say, that a person has not existed a single moment, nor done one action, but what he can remember; indeed none but what he reflects upon. And one should really think it self-evident, that consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity, any more than knowledge, in any other case, can constitute the truth, which it presupposes. (Perry 1975, 100)

Hence, if we use the memory criterion to find that person *A* is the same person as person *B*, we are able to analyze person *A* being the same as person *B* in terms of person *A* remembering enough of what happened to person *B*. However, any analysis of person *A* remembering what

happened to person *B* will mention person *A* being the same as person *B*. Therefore, Locke's argument is circular, because Locke defines 'personal identity' over time in terms of memory, but memory presupposes personal identity. Further, Butler's objection also raises the worry that Locke mistakes the heuristic we use for ascertaining our identity as the constitutive criterion for our identity.

Butler continues by arguing that consciousness of that past experience is not what makes the past experience me; rather consciousness of personal identity presupposes personal identity:

But though we are this certain that we are the same agents, living beings, or substances, now, which we were as far back as our remembrance reaches; yet it is asked, whether we may not possibly be deceived in it? And this question may be asked at the end of any demonstration whatever; because it is a question concerning the truth of perception by memory. And he who can doubt, whether perception by memory can in this case be depended upon, may doubt also, whether perception by deduction and reasoning, which also include memory, or, indeed, whether intuitive perception can. Here then we can go no further. For it is ridiculous to attempt to prove the truth of those perceptions, whose truth we can no otherwise prove, than by other perceptions of exactly the same kind with them, and which there is just the same ground to suspect; or to attempt to prove the truth of our faculties, which can no otherwise be proved, than by the use or means of those very suspected faculties themselves. (Perry 1975, 104-105)

While Locke views the unity-relation for person-stages as consciousness, Butler claims that the unity-relation is either in place or it's not, regardless of memory. Butler asserts that identity is tied inextricably to our patterns of concern and anticipation, but anticipation is justified only by strict identity, which Locke's view denies. Therefore, Butler argues that Locke's view denies the justification of anticipation. Reid puts the point succinctly, Memory is granted "a strange magical power of producing its object, though that object must have existed before the memory or consciousness which produced it" (Perry 1975, 116).

Reid also offers a second objection, concerning transitivity of one's identity. Locke is dedicated to the position that if a person cannot remember a past thought or action, then that person is not the same person who executed that thought or action. Reid claims, this makes it possible that "a man may be, and at the same time not be, the person that did a particular action" (Perry 1975, 114). He illustrates this with the following example. An elderly general can remember enough of what happened to a young lieutenant to be qualified as the same person as the young lieutenant. The young lieutenant in turn remembers enough of what happened to a young schoolboy to be qualified as the same person as the young schoolboy. But the elderly general can remember almost nothing of what happened to the young schoolboy. Therefore, the elderly general is not the same person as the young schoolboy based on the memory criteria. Yet identity should be transitive: if person *A* equals Person *B*, and Person *B* equals Person *C*, then person *A* must equal Person *C*. The elderly general is the same person as the young schoolboy.

Instead of considering how Locke might respond, I will offer Sydney Shoemaker's defense of Locke and his solution to the circularity objection. According to Shoemaker, memory claims have two universal characteristics which link their owner back to the remembered event: the Previous Awareness Condition and immunity from error through misidentification in regard to the first person. The Previous Awareness Condition states that if an individual states that they remember an event, then they must have directly experienced or had knowledge of the event when it occurred. The immunity from error through miscommunication in regard to the first person is simply the observation that if an individual claims to remember something, there can be no doubt that they are the person with that memory.

These two features are the characteristics of Shoemaker's strong remembering, which offers us a more detailed understanding of why Locke's memory test results in the circularity criticized by Butler and Reid. Shoemaker continues to define weak remembering, Q-remembering which is void of any reference to a specific self. According to Shoemaker's account, a person P at time t is identical to a person P_1 at a later time t_1 if P_1 at t_1 remembers P 's experiences at t . Since identity is transitive, it can also arise from overlapping strands of such memory links: if P_2 at t_2 does not remember P 's experiences at t , P_2 at t_2 and P_1 at t_1 are nevertheless identical if P_2 at t_2 remembers P_1 's experiences at t_1 , and if P_1 at t_1 remembers P 's experiences at t . Since, by definition, a person remembers only their own experiences, memory-based accounts often replace the notion of memory with that of quasi-memory in order to avoid circularity. Shoemaker continues to provide this example: Person A did Action Z but cannot remember doing Action Z , but Person B weakly remembers Person A doing Action Z . Even though we do not know who had the memory of Person A doing Action Z , we do have an appropriate causal relationship to the weakly remembered event, allowing us to causally link Person A with Action Z , which is sufficient to say Person A did Action Z . Therefore, Shoemaker argues that if we describe weak memories as described above, we can theoretically use them to link people with specific events at specific times. If we do this, then, Shoemaker argues we avoid the circularity objection.

Derek Parfit, building on Shoemaker's idea, claims: I have a quasi-memory of an experience if I remember having the experience, someone had the experience, and my apparent memory is causally dependent...on that past experience" (Parfit 1984, 220). Those who appeal to the notion of quasi-memory in accounting for identity claim that ordinary

memory is a sub-category of quasi-memory. From my quasi-memory of doing *X*, I cannot infer that I did *X*, but I can infer that somebody did *X*. Whether I am identical with the doer of *X* depends on what personal identity consists in. Defenders escape the circularity by arguing that, when they say that identity consists in memory, what they mean is that it consists in quasi-memory subject to certain constraints. These constraints are specified without presupposing personal identity between quasi-rememberer and the subject of quasi-remembered experiences.

In continuing to modify the memory criterion, it can be said that person *A* is the same person as person *B* if there is a Q-memory chain linking *A* with *B*, therefore, solving the problem of the schoolboy, the young lieutenant, and the elderly general. A second modification of the memory criterion extends it forward to include forward-looking psychological conditions. An example of this forward-looking psychological connection is the connection between current intention and future action/result. With these modifications incorporated, the memory criterion has become known as the psychological continuity criterion.

However, even with these modifications, the memory criterion still has a putative conflict with the transitivity of identity, as argued by Thomas Nagel. Making certain identifications in a fission case threatens the transitivity of identity. In a fission case, a person splits into two continuants, each psychologically continuous with the person at the moment of splitting. Fission scenarios emphasize the difficulty of deciding whether a thought experiment is acceptable or not. They assume the soon-to-be-realized possibility of commissurotomy, which is the perforation of the corpus callosum, and hemispherectomy, which is the surgical removal of the cerebral cortex of one brain hemisphere. Commissurotomy was a treatment for epilepsy

back in the 1950's (Nagel 1971, 396-413). An example of a fission case is hemispheric division, which assumes that one day it may be medically possible that person *A*'s still functioning upper brain is transplanted from person *A*'s body to the body formerly belonging to person *B*. Upon this transplant, this new person, called person *AB*, believes herself to be person *A* and can Q-remember what happened to *A*. This highlights the issue: is person *AB* the same person as person *A*?

Several philosophers have attempted to solve this issue and defend Locke's view. David Lewis argues that when person *A* was intact, there were two indiscernible individuals sharing a body, person *PB* and person *PC*. Robert Nozick furthers this solution by arguing that if both hemispheres of the brain are transplanted, neither of the consequent individuals who received the transplant are identical with the earlier person *A*. However, if only one hemisphere is transplanted, the resulting individual is identical to original person *A*. Derek Parfit builds on Nozick's view to offer his solution. Parfit distinguished between survival and identity. In the previously discussed case where both of person *A*'s hemispheres are transplanted, yielding person *PB* and person *PC*, person *A* survives as person *PB* and survives as person *PC*; however, person *A* is not identical with either person *PB* or *PC*.

Lewis, Nozick, and Parfit all take psychological continuity to be integral to personal identity; therefore, in cases where there is branching psychological connection, continuity of identity can be assumed. However, I continue to argue that personal identity does not solely consist in consciousness and there is some element of bodily persistence also required to extend the continuity of identity. There is a level of bodily persistence needed for personal identity to continue, because the functionality of the body impacts the ability of the person,

thus also impacting personal identity. In the transplanted brain hemisphere thought experiment, the body the hemisphere is implanted into plays an integral role to the person's identity- this is where Lewis, Nozick, and Parfit's solutions fail. For example, if person *A* was a 7-foot-tall basketball player, but person *AB* receiving the transplant is a 5-foot-tall amputee, then even if person *AB* remembers playing in the NBA, they have lost that ability and that part of their identity. There is now a disparity between their lived body and their biological body. However, the consciousness component still survives the objections raised.

4. A Suggested Fix to Locke's View

Locke's view can be summarized:

1. Consciousness is key to identity
2. Identity must be found in how I identify myself to myself
3. I identify myself as the same self through memories of prior events
4. Having memories of prior events requires having had consciousness during those events
5. Memory is the source of identity

For Locke, consciousness of my experiences brought forward to the present moment as a memory gives a person identity with his or her prior self. Because memories are being made all the time and my memory is not constant, identity is fluid under Locke's view.

I raised several objections and offered several other well-known objections to this view of Locke's. By utilizing the solutions offered by Lewis, Nozick, and Parfit to solve the circularity objection, I believe that the necessity of consciousness in personal identity survives the objection. However, the objections raise the issues of considering what is included as part of consciousness, lucid dreaming, and, ultimately, the need for some form of bodily persistence. This is where my suggested alterations to Locke's view is differentiated.

In answering the question of persisting through time, there are three broad categories of responses: the psychological-continuity view, the brute-physical view, and the simple view. Locke's view is a widely supported and discussed example of the psychological-continuity view. The brute-physical view argues that identity consists in some brute physical relation. A person is that past or future being that has existed in their body. According to this view, whether someone persists through time is purely biological, and not psychological. The simple view denies that personal identity through time consists in or necessarily follows from something other than itself. This view argues that mental and physical continuity are evidence for persistence, but do not guarantee it; therefore, there is no informative and non-trivial persistence conditions for people. The somatic criterion, associated with Eric Olson and Paul Snowdon, is a widely supported and discussed example of the brute-physical view (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy). The somatic criterion holds that the spatiotemporal continuity of the metabolic and other life-sustaining organs of a functioning human animal constitutes personal identity. My view is a hybrid of the psychological-continuity view and the brute-physical view.

As I argue, consciousness is the criterion for personal identity unless there becomes a rift between the lived and the biological body. The lived body is the body of a person's past. It exists in our memory- it is the body that a person remembers running a marathon or climbing a mountain. Ultimately, the lived body is the collective memory of the bodily functions a person had at one point in time. Conversely, the biological body is the body that we inhabit in the present. The biological body can be limited by some biological factor, whether it be physical characteristic, illness, or cognitive function, thus, creating a disparity in the lived body one

remembers and the biological body one currently possesses. The distinction between the lived body and the biological body is one of temporal nature. The lived body is the body of the past, where the biological body is the body of the present. In times of health, these two bodies are aligned, but in times of illness or disability, these two bodies are differentiated.

In order to address the case of personal identity, specifically in times of illness, I must go beyond Locke and turn to the contemporary philosopher Havi Carel. Due to her unique perspective as a philosopher limited by to her illness, Carel offers an important distinction between the lived and the biological body, which I pose as a necessary distinction in the discussion of personal identity. As she explains, the illness distanced her biological body from her lived body. In times of health, there is a flawless correspondence between the two, allowing us to forget the separation. However, in times of illness, the biological body behaves abnormally. The transparent and silent biological body is gone and has been replaced with an anxious and attention-seeking biological body. The otherness of the body is scrutinized, and the objective facts of the body no longer align with the lived experience of the person. What once was the objective facts of the biological body is now simply the recollection of the objective facts of the lived body. The body becomes a concern, a source of pain and fear, and, thus, a problematized body. Not only is it a source of practical concerns, but also metaphysical concerns as a person's previous position and relationship with its lived experience are no longer valid. By having a lapse between the biological body and the lived body, there is a lapse in consciousness and, thus, a lapse in identity. This lapse in identity raises questions of when one identity ends and another begins. Carel provides the following example:

Think of the way you do something that you do routinely: shave, play tennis, chop vegetables, sew, play the piano. These actions can be performed expertly,

efficiently, smoothly, because they have become habitual. Our body has learned to perform them and with each repetition the habit is reinforced, incorporated further into our bodily repertoire. We may perform some actions with little or no attention. Again, the actions are harnessed to the goal of the activity: getting to work, a cooked meal, an ironed shirt. It is only when we watch a novice, say, a child learning to ride a bicycle, that we appreciate the difficulty of the activity and the level of expertise our bodies have acquired. (Carel 2011, 32)

This break from normalcy exposes the gap between the biological body and the lived body.

Ultimately a new relationship between the two bodies may emerge and this new relationship would express not only the complexities of illness, but also the complexities of the body-subject as discussed by Merleau-Ponty. The body-subject is a material object and a subjective, thinking thing.

Someone might think that the distinction between the lived and the biological body is only terminological. Someone else might think that the distinction is only psychological. However, the distinction is physical. By arguing that this distinction is merely terminological, critics overlook the distinct and differing capabilities of a person's body in different stages of life. The difference between a person's lived and biological body extends far beyond the term we use to discuss them- the terms distinguish a person's abilities at different stages. For example, a person's lived body may remember the feeling of running marathons; however, after an accident resulting in an amputation, the same person's biological body is no longer able to perform this same action. Further, to say this distinction is only psychological is to ignore the physical implications of this difference. In the example of the amputee, the loss of the leg not only mentally affects the person in how they perceive themselves, but also physically affects the person in how they are able to live. The distinction between the lived and biological bodies extends beyond words and thoughts into the physical realm.

In defining personal identity, we must address this rift between the biological and lived body. If we adopt Locke's view, and view consciousness as the only criterion for identity, then we fail to account for instances when the biological body is limited. This is the basis for my view of personal identity:

1. The lived body's experiences are limited to the biological body's capabilities
2. Memories of the lived body's experiences are limited to the biological body's capabilities
3. Memories of the lived body's experiences constitute consciousness
4. Consciousness is limited to the biological body's capabilities
5. Consciousness constitutes personal identity
6. Personal identity is limited to the biological body's capabilities

Line 1 is derived from Carel's differentiation of the lived and biological bodies. The lived body's experiences are limited by the biological body's capabilities as a person is only able to remember performing an activity that their body was capable of performing; thus, memories are of the lived body's experiences. As line 3 states, it is the memories of the lived body's experiences that constitute consciousness. Since consciousness is derived from memories of the lived body's experiences and the lived body's experiences are limited by the biological body's capabilities, then consciousness is also limited by the biological body's capabilities. Line 5 is consistent with Locke's argument that it is consciousness that constitutes personal identity, which ultimately leads to the conclusion that personal identity is limited by the biological body's capabilities.

Identity exists through the continuity of consciousness and consciousness is based on memories of the lived body. The lived body was once the biological body. In certain cases, specifically in times of illness and disability, there can be a disparity between the experiences of the lived body and the capabilities biological body. This disparity in memory and current

capability creates a lapse in personal identity. One may misinterpret this view if they believe identity has to be constant for a person living in the same body even as the body evolves over time. However, this is where the distinction between man and person is critical to my view. The physical body is what constitutes being the same “man.” Identity is what constitutes being the same “person.” The same man can be multiple persons throughout his lifetime, all connected through the same physical body.

By limiting consciousness, and thus personal identity, to the overlap between the biological body’s capabilities and the lived body’s experiences, I am able to address the objections of what is considered part of consciousness, lucid dreaming, and the need for some form of bodily persistence. In different stages of life, the same man can be different persons, as identity is not only related to what a person has done but also what a person is able to do.

5. Testing the Fix Out

I will now test my understanding of personal identity against the thought experiments used by Locke. As I show, my argument agrees with Locke’s analysis for the first three thought experiments discussed and solves the issues that Locke’s view fails to solve in the remaining thought experiments. In the previously discussed thought experiment of The Prince and the Cobbler, Locke poses what happens if the soul of a Prince enters the body of the Cobbler. Locke concludes that the person identified as “prince” ends up living in the man identified as “cobbler”, because the consciousness of the Prince also goes with the soul of the Prince into the Cobbler. Under my suggested fix, the Prince will maintain his same identity, as argued by Locke, so long as the body of the Cobbler is capable of performing the same actions as the former body of the Prince. As identity is directly tied to a person’s actions, the Prince must still

be able to perform his princely duties in the body of the Cobbler and maintain a constant consciousness.

In the next thought experiment, Socrates awake and Socrates asleep do not share the same consciousness, therefore, they are not the same person. However, Locke argues that if Socrates has a different consciousness during the day than he does during the night, then waking Socrates should not be punished for sleeping Socrates' actions. Though Socrates is the same man during day and night, he is a different person during day and night and moral responsibility lies with persons, not man. Through my view, I agree with Locke on the distinction between person and man. Since there is a lapse in the continuity of consciousness while awake and asleep and there is a lapse between the lived and biological bodies when asleep, the awake and asleep Socrates are two separate persons that inhabit the body of the same man.

The case of amnesia directly confronts the issue of lapses in consciousness and memory, as amnesia causes a person to forget the thoughts and actions that they once were aware of. If it is possible for the same man to have distinct and incommunicable consciousness at different times, the same man would, at different times, be different persons. Under my view, I agree with Locke's argument. Continuity of consciousness is still a requirement for personal identity.

Regarding the sober and drunk man, Locke claims if the man cannot remember what he did when drunk, then there is a lapse in consciousness, thus, also a lapse in being the same person. He further argues that it is not correct for us to punish a sober man for his drunken actions, as they are separate individuals, but ultimately, God will know on decision day. Through my view, I agree with Locke's analysis. There is a lapse of consciousness that causes a

lapse in a person's personal identity while drunk. Further, there is a lapse of a person's biological body being able to match the experiences of the lived body while drunk. While inebriated, a person may find it more difficult to perform actions such as walking straight, talking coherently, and thinking quickly. This creates a disparity between the lived and biological body, thus, also creating a gap in personal identity.

An elderly general can remember enough of what happened to a young lieutenant to be qualified as the same person as the young lieutenant and the young lieutenant in turn remembers enough of what happened to a young schoolboy to be qualified as the same person as the young schoolboy. But the elderly general can remember almost nothing of what happened to the young schoolboy. Therefore, the elderly general is not the same person as the young schoolboy based on the memory criteria. However, the issue for Locke lies in the transitivity of identity: if person *A* equals Person *B*, and Person *B* equals Person *C*, then person *A* must equal Person *C*. This is where my view offers a solution. Under my view, in each stage of life, the schoolboy, lieutenant, and the general are distinct persons, as their biological bodies have distinct capabilities. The general can no longer perform the same tasks of the lieutenant and lieutenant can no longer perform the same tasks of the schoolboy. While there is continuity in consciousness, there is not continuity in bodily capability. One may question if an injury received as a schoolboy has contributed to the general's limited ability, such as arthritis. Would this not constitute an evolution of the same identity? This is why the distinction between man and person is critical. In this thought experiment, the schoolboy, lieutenant, and general are all the same man. They exist in the same evolving body as each other; however, they are not the same person. They each have a distinct identity that is identified by their physical capabilities at

each stage in their life. While the body of the man may be limited by past actions of a different man, this does not constitute a continuity of personal identity. Therefore, in each stage of life, this individual is the same man, but not the same person.

Consciousness constitutes personal identity when there is no lapse between the lived and biological body. In the cases where there is a lapse between the lived and biological body, consciousness constitutes personal identity as far as the biological body is able to perform the actions remembered by the lived body. Under my view, I take into consideration any and all essential organs, such as the liver and kidneys. The biggest flaw that I perceived with Locke's argument concerning what is considered in consciousness was how unconscious organs and bodily processes are responsible for allowing people to be in a state to have an identity. While functioning properly, these organs are not critical to a person's identity, as they are performing their task effectively and not limiting a person. However, in illness, these organs limit the biological body, thus, affecting a person's identity.

In the case of lucid dreaming, the objection I previously raised to Locke's argument was that a person is able to control their actions so that they are able to do things not physically possible awake. According to my view, the acts that are committed during a dream are not part of a person's personal identity, as their biological body limits them from actually performing these actions. Ultimately, by stipulating that a person's identity is limited by their biological capabilities, I address the need for some form of bodily persistence. A person does not have to remain in the same body to maintain the same identity, but rather, their identity in a different body is limited by that body's physical capabilities.

6. Objections

Now that I have established my position and tested the view against Locke's thought experiments, I will raise potential objections to and defend my position. The five objections that I will address, in order of complexity, concern distinguishing the lived body from the consciousness of the body, distinguishing the body from the lived body, extreme examples such as being comatose or losing capabilities for a few months, the unreliability of memory, and the role of relationships in identity.

6.1. It is hard to distinguish the biological body from consciousness of the body.

Consciousness contains awareness of the biological body. As I have described, the biological body is a person's own body as experienced by themselves, as themselves. It is what manifests itself to a person as possibilities of being in the world. The biological body is what allows a person to interact with objects through their senses and allows for the possibility of changing the person's physical point of view. This biological body, however, is distinct from a person's consciousness. Consciousness is an individual's awareness of their unique thoughts, senses, and movements. It is the awareness a person has of themselves and of the world around them. This includes a person's awareness of their lived body. The self-awareness required in times of consciousness must also include a person's awareness of their internal and external existence through their biological body. The lived body is the vessel that a person is able to experience the world through. Therefore, I have resolved this objection by demonstrating that the biological body is part of a consciousness.

Even beyond times of illness or disability, one is already limited by the constraints of their body, so they may be inclined to question if the objective facts of a body always determine one's lived experience. It may seem difficult to distinguish the limitations of the

body from the constrained lived body. The objective facts of a body always determine one's biological experience. Outside of illness, there are other constraints that limit a person. Thus, under my view, any new constraint on the body also limits personal identity. These constraints can range from physical to emotional to environmental, but what is essential to understanding my argument is that any time a constraint exists, there is a disconnect between the recollection of the lived body and the current biological body, which creates a disconnect a person's identity.

6.2. The existence of extreme cases. The first of these extreme cases is when a person is in a coma. While comatose, a person still inhabits the same physical body but there is a lapse in their consciousness. In this state, a person is incapable of the psychological continuity that is necessary for continuity of identity. While in a coma, a person does not have the ability to react to the surrounding environment and has minimal brain activity. Some may claim that the person who is in the coma is the same person they were before being in that state since there has been no disruption to the physical body. However, I argue that in the case of comatose, there is a lapse in personal identity. The biological body of the individual in question may be physiologically the same before and after the coma, but during the period of being comatose, there was a disparity between the lived body and the biological body, thus, also being a disparity in personal identity. This reasoning is in line with the earlier cases discussed, such as the sober and drunk man and waking and sleeping Socrates.

To further this objection, a critic may question what happens if losing capability is temporary and a person assumes a new identity for an extended period of time. This objection builds on the comatose patient discussed above. In both scenarios, there is a period of time

where the same man is not the same person. However, in this scenario, the person is able to live a new identity, whereas in a comatose state, there is so little brain activity that it is impossible for the continuity of consciousness necessary for identity to exist. I maintain that a person's identity is limited by their biological body; therefore, the body of the same man to have multiple personal identities. Critics may question where the differentiation lies between the two persons and how it is possible for an individual to assume a previous personal identity after a period of living a different identity. According to my view, this switch from one identity to a separate identity occurs when, and exactly when, a person's biological body no longer matches their lived body. This disparity between the lived and the biological body can be as large as losing a limb or as small as an elevated mood. This, consequently, leads to the potential of a single man having many different personal identities throughout his lifetime and the potential to reassume a former identity. The need for a form of bodily continuity justifies this fragmentation of identity, as identity is dependent on what a person's body allows them to do.

6.3. Inaccuracy of memory and its effects on identity. A person's memory can fail them due to their inability to accurately retrieve stored information. Further, memory is influenced by the setting in which it occurs, the events that occur immediately following, and the cognitive processes that are used to help a person remember. One possible implication of the inaccuracy of the memory on personal identity arises from the cognitive process of source monitoring. Source monitoring refers to "the ability to accurately identify the source of a memory" (Walinga and Stangor, 2014). For example, a person may have a very realistic dream and then struggle to remember if they actually experienced the event or only imagined it. This is potentially

troubling in terms of identity, because as I have established in this paper, a man awake and a man asleep are two separate persons which lack a continuity of consciousness.

I will respond to this objection in two parts. First, I will address how my view would deal with situations of unreliable memory. Second, I will present a psychological study that supports source memory accuracy for self-referenced items, thus eliminating the concern for this objection.

The concern of consciousness reliance on memory is not a new debate, as even Locke addressed the issue of memory unreliability:

There seems to be a constant decay of all our Ideas, even of those which are struck deepest, and in Minds the most retentive; so that if they be not sometimes renewed by repeated Exercise of the Senses, or Reflection on those kind of Objects, which at first occasioned them, the Prince wears out, and at last there remains nothing to be seen. (II.x.5)

Throughout the *Essay*, Locke presents a formulation that makes the possibility of knowledge and identity dependent on memory yet emphasizes the inescapable truth of the defects of human memory. Further, memory is figured as an inlet to the mind for ideas derived from experience. Locke addresses these implications in terms of personal identity that consists in consciousness:

For it being the same consciousness that makes a Man be himself to himself, personal Identity depends on that only. ... For as far as any intelligent Being can repeat the Idea of any past Action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same consciousness it has of any present Action; so far it is the same personal self. For it is by the consciousness it has of its present Thoughts and Actions, that it is self 'to itself' now, and so will be the same self as far as the same consciousness can extend to Actions past or to come. (II.xxvii.10)

Locke's recognition of memory's inability to access foundational moments in a person's life, including birth and infancy, presents a concept of identity which is derived from the accessible domain of living memory.

Building on Locke's description of the unreliability of memory, I will demonstrate that identity is dependent on self-acceptance of memory, even if the memory in it of itself is flawed. Since memory is a precondition of all knowledge acquisition, specifically knowledge of the self, memory makes possible personal identity by entailing consciousness that can be extended backwards. Remembering events of the past directly effects personal identity, however, it is a person's interpretation and potentially flawed recollection of events that creates the continuity of consciousness needed for the continuity of personal identity. Therefore, the way a person remembers an event is what effects their identity, rather than what necessarily happened.

Further, psychologists Eric D. Leshikar and Audrey Duarte conducted a study that revealed the source memory accuracy for self-referenced items. Self-referenced items are those which refer to themselves or their own referents. Self-referential processing takes place when an individual encodes information into memory in reference to the self. For example, rather than simply memorizing the events of 9/11, a self-referenced memory puts the event in terms of a specific person's experience. Perhaps, he was at work when the first plane struck or perhaps he was at home watching on the news. By putting the events in terms of his experience, he encodes the memory as a self-referenced item.

Prior to their study, little work had been done linking self-referencing and improved subsequent source referencing. What little work that had been done produced two lines of evidence that suggests self-referencing improved subsequent source memory. First, there is

existing evidence to suggest that source memory is improved for materials that are encoded in an emotional or social manner (Leshikar and Duarte 2012). Second, there is existing evidence to support that self-referencing yields higher subjective reports of recollection (Leshikar and Duarte 2012). Leshikar and Duarte's study was designed to assess the potential benefit to source memory accuracy for items encoded under self-reference. Ultimately, their study revealed that "processing stimuli in reference to the self supports source memory accuracy" (Leshikar and Duarte 2021, 143). The research done by Leshikar and Duarte demonstrates the accuracy of memory in terms of self-referencing events. Since our memory is based on personal experience, all memories relevant to identity are self-referencing, therefore, mitigating the risk of a person's memory being an unreliable source of identity.

6.4. Personal identity involves relations to others. Critics may argue that a person's identity is defined in terms of the cooperative and mutually promotive relationships with others. For example, these critics could argue that my identity consists of the roles I occupy: student, daughter, and friend.

Critics who argue for relational identity are likely to claim that my view is not compatible with theirs; however, my view encompasses the very relationships that define identity in their view. I have argued that identity is found in the continuity of consciousness so far as there does not exist a gap between the lived and the biological body. In this continuity of consciousness, I include interaction with others. However, where my view differs is that I include these relationships from a self-referencing perspective. I account for relationships from others in a person's consciousness which includes the memories of interacting with others and the relationships formed. Consciousness includes how a person feels when they interact with

someone, the power dynamic as the person interprets it, and all the other aspects of relationships that these critics argue support relational identity. My view simply puts these relationships in perspective of the person whose identity we are concerned with.

7. Conclusion

Locke argues that personal identity consists in consciousness, not the substance of either the soul or the body. I raised objections to Locke and offered criticism of Locke raised by others. Determining that an element of bodily persistence is necessary for the continuity of personal identity, I presented my view building on Locke's. I relied on Havi Carel's distinction between the lived body and the biological body to argue that identity exists through the continuity of consciousness and consciousness is based on memories of the lived body. The lived body was once the biological body. In certain cases, specifically in times of illness and disability, there can be a disparity between the experiences of the lived body and the capabilities biological body. This disparity in memory and current capability creates a lapse in personal identity. I then tested my view against a variety of thought experiments and responded to objections. I concluded that personal identity does consist in consciousness when the lived body and the biological body align. In times where there is a disparity in the two bodies, then there is a disparity in identity.

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¹ Citations to Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* are to book, chapter, and paragraph of Nidditch's 1982 edition.