

First-person Perspective on Personal Identity:

Where Will I Wake Up?

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Abstract

Personal Identity is one of the hot topics in Western Philosophy. Among the various interpretations, the Reductionist explanation given by Derek Parfit has had a profound impact. However, his depersonalization of experience is counterintuitive and fails to sufficiently address the controversies surrounding the continued existence of the self, especially in scenarios involving Fission and Mind-Switching—where will I wake up? These conundrums epitomize the challenges faced by Reductionism. To resolve this predicament, we must first clarify the essence of personal identity. This paper begins with this question and then elucidates the specific meaning of the statement ‘I am X’—it signifies that ‘I am perceiving things from X’s first-person perspective’. Adopting this internal, first-person perspective, we re-examine the cases offered by Parfit, Williams, and others, reanalyzing their reductionist strategies. Our purpose is to address the fundamental controversies within philosophical literature and ultimately provide a complete explanation of the continued existence of the self over time.

Key words: Parfit; Reductionism; Impersonal; Fission; First-person

Introduction

Since the mid-20th century, Western Philosophy has extensively explored the classic philosophical problem of Personal Identity, leading to numerous theoretical approaches. Among them, the explanation given by Derek Parfit, a representative of Reductionism, has had a profound impact. Parfit rejects the Dualistic View of personal ontology and develops the explanation: 'a complete description could be impersonal', intending to dissolve all dilemmas of Identity. For example, consider the Ship of Theseus paradox: as the ship's planks were gradually replaced, and eventually none of the original timber remained, with the old planks being used to construct a souvenir. A question arises: which of the two ships is the same ship as the initial one? Parfit, as a Reductionist, argued that if we knew the process by which each new plank replaced the old one and each old plank was made into a souvenir—after a 'complete description'—we would know everything there was to know. According to Parfit, any further discussions were simply a matter of selecting among several different descriptions of the same course of events.¹

However, Parfit's explanation does not resolve all questions. The philosopher Roderick M. Chisholm, a proponent of the Simple View, raises the following question: If the ship of Theseus, like us, had consciousness and its own first-person perspective, it might ask, 'After many years, would I continue to float upon the sea and be busy transporting goods, or stand quietly somewhere and watch people come to visit?' When considering the philosophical dilemma of 'Fission', Chisholm poses the question again: After undergoing the division process, on which side shall I wake up, the left or the right? These questions have entirely definite answers. The answers will be simply 'Left' or 'Right', 'Yes' or 'No'.² Parfit's 'impersonal description' appears

incapable of providing such definitive answers.

The purpose of this paper is to address these questions. We start with the problem of personal ontology and establish our reductionist position. We then elucidate why we assign identity to a future person who is not exactly similar to the current self: because I will perceive things from this person's first-person perspective in the future. This insight helps clarify the fundamental issue of personal identity. After that, from an internal first-person perspective, we reconsider the cases of personal identity—Fission, Mind-Switching, Spectrum, and others—and reanalyze the Reductionist Approaches in Parfit's theory. Finally, we resolve the questions and controversies in philosophical literature raised by these cases and provide a complete explanation of the continued existence of the self throughout the diachronic process.

1. Problem of Personal Ontology

Before exploring the problem of personal identity, it is essential to clarify the problem of personal ontology—namely, what is a person. This paper aims to address Chisholm's questions and follows Chisholm's view that a person, or 'I', is the subject of conscious activity. The 'I' is the initiator of conscious activity—the subject of consciousness.³ However, diverging from Chisholm, we reject the Dualistic Explanation of the 'I', finding neither entity dualism nor emergent dualism tenable. Instead, we embrace Parfit's Reductionist Explanation, which claims that a person ('I') is not a particular brain and body but its existence must consist in the existence of a brain and body.⁴ The concept of *the subject of consciousness* can be likened to *the center of gravity*—just a useful abstract concept. The relationship between it and the brain is similar to that between a smile and a face.⁵ In

summary, we need not understand the concept of *the subject of consciousness* under a presumption of Dualism.

2. What is the "identity" we are discussing?

There are various arguments and theories regarding personal identity, and it is challenging to reach a consensus among them, largely because personal identity is not a single, well-defined problem, but rather a complex field that encompasses numerous sub-problems. Many theories and ideas seem to be discussed at different levels, and confusion often arises between them. For example, some theories focus on the continued existence of the 'I', which is a metaphysical problem. Others concentrate on evidence and judgment, operating at the epistemological level. Still others focus on the practical aspects of personal identity, such as the meaning of life, the objects of commitment and trust, the question of moral compensation and punishment. To dispel confusion and resolve controversies, it is crucial to clarify in what sense we are exploring personal identity. In other words, what specifically is the problem of identity that we are discussing?

In this paper, we discuss the metaphysical problem of personal identity: what does it mean for the continued existence of the 'I' over time? What is it for someone in the future to be the very same person as this person who is here now today?

Let us consider the following: Should I learn that I am to be subjected to agonizing pain tomorrow, I would be deeply distressed. However, if I learned the same about someone else (Linda, for example), my reaction would be very different. Although concerned, I would not have the same kind of deep, prudential concern. Even if the person (Linda) was very similar to me, my reaction would be significantly different from the first scenario. The reason for this difference

e seems obvious: Linda is not me.⁶ That is, in the first scenario, I can expect that tomorrow I shall actually experience the agonizing pain from my own first-person perspective, which underscores the importance of personal identity, whereas in the second scenario, I am at most a spectator.

It follows that whether someone is me depends on whether I am perceiving things from that person's first-person perspective. I am A, which means that I perceive things from A's first-person perspective, encompassing notions such as 'I have free will as A' and 'I have proprioception as A'. This concept extends over time: Whether a person (A0) at a specific time (t0) in the past was me depends on whether I perceived things from A0's first-person perspective at that time; similarly, whether someone (A2) at a future time (t2) will be me depends on whether I will perceive things from A2's first-person perspective at that time. By employing the mathematical concept of limits, we can infinitely subdivide times t0, t1, t2, ... to obtain the trajectory of the first-person perspective point through time and space. This trajectory is the very nature of the metaphysical Self-Identity. Since 'I' can only perceive things from one specific perspective point at a specific time, this trajectory must be singular, which is why metaphysical self-identity must logically be a one-to-one relation.

With the concept of the first-person perspective's trajectory, our goal becomes clear when we consider the problems of personal identity as presented in philosophical literature and real-life scenarios. When we ask, 'Will someone in the future be me?', we don't mean to question if this person is qualitatively identical with me, if this person is numerically identical with me, if this person and I are exactly alike, if this person and I are one and the same person, what the relationship between this person and I is, or if this person should bear my responsibilities and obligations. We should not consider all

of these questions—they are either chaotic and unclear or stray from our subject. In fact, what we are really concerned about is, 'Will I perceive things from this person's first-person perspective in the future?' Accordingly, the various arguments and claims regarding personal identity—specifically, the Psychological Criterion (or Psychological Approach), the Physical Criterion (or Biological Approach, including Somatic Approach and Animalism), the Simple View, the Narrative Approach, and the Reductionism—will be clearly presented in relevant cases within Western philosophical discourse. Let's take a brief look at the following section.

3. Mind-Switching and Teletransportation

The case of Mind-Switching offered by Bernard Williams⁷ is one of the focal points of the debate between psychological and physical principles. The case can be succinctly described as follows:

Mind-Switching: Assume my name is Carroll and I am lying on the left, while Linda is on the right. After being rendered unconscious through hypnosis, the surgeons swap our psychological features. If Reductionism is true—the brain is the carrier of psychological features—then exchanging mental features is like exchanging programs and documents between two computers. After the mind-swap, the person on the left will have my (Carroll's) body as well as Linda's psychological features (henceforth, let's refer to this person as 'Carroll's Body with Linda's Mind'). The person on the right will have Linda's body as well as Carroll's psychological features (let's refer to this person as 'Linda's body with Carroll's mind'). Williams poses the question: after the mind-swap, which person will be me?

The general view of the Psychological Criterion claims that the person on the right ('Linda's body with Carroll's mind') would be me, as there is psychological continuity between this person and me, and this person is the sole entity maintaining psychological continuity with the former me, thus meeting Nozick's 'Closest Continuer Schema'⁸; The strict version of the Psychological Criterion (the Narrow Psychological Criterion) argues that neither of these two persons is me—the one on the left has no psychological features of me, and the one on the right's psychological features are artificial and do not have the normal cause.⁹ Furthermore, the memories of person on the right do not meet the M-relation as proposed by John Perry;¹⁰ The Physical Criterion (including Animalism) asserts that the person on the left would be me, as this person retains my animalistic physical body (brain and body), without any other branches;¹¹ The Simple View contends that the answer hinges on a further fact—perhaps it is the whereabouts of my soul (or some other separately existing entity) following the Mind-Switching;¹² The Narrative Approach suggests that the person on the right is me (but this 'me' is a posteriori shaped by the narrative process), because this person has my original memories, characters, desires, beliefs, and so forth, and will act in accordance with my wishes. My life story can be coherently linked through this left-to-right narrative experience. Despite the absence of physical continuity and altered physiological features—which engender a pronounced sense of self-fragmentation—internal psychological elements such as memories and personality are deemed more significant and are capable of mending this fragmentation;¹³ Derek Parfit, a reductionist, argues that if we knew the facts about both physical and psychological continuity of Mind-Switching, we would have known everything there was to know. There is no further need to resolve the question, 'Which of the two resulting people will be me?' In short, these facts can be described in an impersonal way.¹⁴ In Parfit's view, Williams's question is empty.

However, the Reductionist View is now untenable—when Williams's question is modified from 'Which person will be me after Mind-Switching?' to 'On which side will I wake up after Mind-Switching', we find that the question requires entirely definite answers. The answers will be simply 'Left', 'Right', or 'Not waking up'. Therefore, it appears that the distinctions among these five theoretical perspectives are inherently irreconcilable.

The same is true in the case of Teletransportation offered by Parfit (see Reasons and Persons), which is briefly described as follows:

After I fall asleep in bed and lose consciousness, the Scanner records the exact state of my body while destroying it. Afterwards, the Replicator will then create a body exactly like mine (based on the recorded information from the Scanner). Question: Is this Replica me?

What exactly is being asked with 'Is this Replica me'? It is the conceptual problem of personal identity, which we can understand in many different confused ways. We now concentrate the question on 'Will I wake up in this Replica on the next day (just as I would wake up in my own body on a normal morning)?' Again, this question requires entirely definite answers. The answers must be either, and quite simply, Yes or No.

4. Duplication and Fission

Bernard Williams's Case of Duplication presents a challenge to the Psychological Criterion because personal identity must logically be a one-one relation—it is logically impossible for one person to be identical to more than one person. I cannot be one and the same person as two different people. Williams then argues that, to be acceptable, a criterion of identity

must itself be logically a one-one relation. It must be a relation which could not possibly hold between one person and two future people. Given that psychological continuity is not logically a one-one relation—considering the case of duplication, where two different future people could both be psychologically continuous with me—the criterion of identity cannot be psychological continuity.¹⁵ In contrast, the Physical Criterion should be a better one.

However, the Case of Fission, as described by David Wiggins,¹⁶ poses a similar challenge to the Physical Criterion. The case can be summarized as follows:

***Fission:** I am the eldest of three identical triplets. In an accident, my body is fatally injured, as are the brains of my two brothers. To ensure my survival, the surgeons divide my brain into two, transplanting the left hemisphere into my second brother's body, resulting in a person named 'Lefty', and the right hemisphere into my third brother's body, resulting in a person named 'Righty'. Both operations are successful, and shortly thereafter, Lefty and Righty both wake up. Wiggins poses the following questions: Did I survive the surgery? If so, which one of the two am I?*

In this case we assume that my left and right hemispheres are very similar, so each of the resulting people seems to remember living my life, has my personality, and is in every other way psychologically continuous with me. And they each have a body that is very like mine. It can be observed that in this case, both my psychological continuity and physical continuity of the brain have been split. Applying the one-one relation requirement that critics use against the Psychological Criterion, we find that the Physical Criterion also fails.

How can we resolve this dilemma? The method of this paper is to abandon confusing and artificial words and definitions, and to stop thinking

about questions such as: 'Will the resulting person be me?'; 'Is this person qualitatively or numerically identical to me?'; 'Are this person and I the same, or just exactly alike?' Instead, we should focus on more essential questions. We should consider, in scenarios of Duplication and Fission, whether I would wake up, and if so, on which side—left or right?

In the case of Duplication, there is a physical break between me and my Replica, making it difficult to analyze for the moment. Let us begin with Wiggins's Fission Case.

The idea of the Fission Case originated from Roger Wolcott Sperry's research on split-brain operations. In the 1960s, Sperry's team performed surgeries to sever the corpus callosum—the nerve bundles connecting the left and right brain hemispheres—to treat epilepsy. The treatment goal was achieved. But later, Sperry's team discovered an unintended consequence—these operations seemed to create two separate centers of consciousness. Philosopher Thomas Nagel argues that these two centers of consciousness function independently from each other and cannot be regarded as a single mind.¹⁷ Physiologist Michael Gazzaniga and others view this as a well-established fundamental finding—if you split the brain, you split the mind.¹⁸ What really happens when the brain divides? In Sperry's own words: 'Instead of the normally unified single stream of consciousness, these patients behave in many ways as if they have two independent streams of conscious awareness, one in each hemisphere. Instead of the normally unified single stream of consciousness, these patients behave in many ways as if they have two independent streams of conscious awareness, one in each hemisphere, each of which is cut off from and out of contact with the mental experiences of the other. In other words, each hemisphere seems to have its own separate and private sensations; its own perceptions; its own concepts; and its own impulses to act, with related volitional, cognitive, and learning experiences. Following the surgery, each hemisphere also has therea

fter its own separate claim of memories that are rendered inaccessible to the recall process of the others, each of which is cut off from and out of contact with the mental experiences of the other. In other words, each hemisphere seems to have its own separate and private sensations; its own perceptions; its own concepts; and its own impulses to act, with related volitional, cognitive, and learning experiences. Following the surgery, each hemisphere also has thereafter its own separate claim of memories that are rendered inaccessible to the recall process of the others.¹⁹

It is not difficult to understand that, according to Sperry's explanation, if I had undergone a brain bisection, then after the surgery, both 'I'm perceiving things from the first-person perspective of my left hemisphere' and 'I'm perceiving things from the first-person perspective of my right hemisphere' would occur. They would occur independently and in parallel with each other.

Wiggins's Fission Case is a combination of Sperry's brain bisection and brain transplantation. If my left hemisphere is successfully transplanted into my second brother's body to create a person named 'Lefty' and my right hemisphere is destroyed, I shall wake up in Lefty's body. If my right hemisphere is successfully transplanted into my third brother's body to create a person named 'Righty' and my left hemisphere is destroyed, I shall wake up in Righty's body. Now in Wiggins's Fission Case, both my left and right hemispheres remain undamaged and are successfully transplanted into the bodies of my second and third brothers, respectively. What happens? As Parfit argues, it cannot plausibly be thought that whether I shall wake up in Lefty's body depends on what happens in the other wing of the hospital—such as whether the right hemisphere is also successfully transplanted or whether it is accidentally dropped onto a concrete floor. The same principle applies to Righty.²⁰ Therefore, we can apply Sperry's explanation to Wiggins's Fission Case. After the surgery, the two events—'I wake up in Lefty's body and perceive things from Lefty's first-person perspective

ive' and 'I wake up in Righty's body and perceive things from Righty's first-person perspective'—will both occur. Moreover, these events will occur independently and in parallel with each other.

5.Spectrum

The Spectrum is a range of possible cases conceived by Parfit to argue for the indeterminateness of personal identity. The cases in the Spectrum, each of which is very similar to its neighbors, involve all of the possible degrees of physical or psychological connectedness.

The first is the Physical Spectrum. In the case at the leftmost end of this spectrum, nothing would be done. In the first case immediately adjacent to the leftmost end, after I had fallen asleep and lost consciousness, the surgeon flipped only the first switch, and one in a million cells in my body were replaced with exact duplicates; In the second case, the surgeon flipped the first two switches, and two in a million cells in my body were replaced with exact duplicates; In the case in the middle of the spectrum, 50% of the cells in my body were replaced with exact duplicates;...in the last case at the rightmost end, all one million switches were flipped, my body was destroyed, and an exact Replica of me was created.

In the case at the leftmost end, there would later be a person who would be fully continuous with me as I am now, both physically and psychologically (and physiologically). In the case at the rightmost end, there would later be a person who would be psychologically (and physiologically) but not physically continuous with me as I am now. The leftmost end is the normal case of continued existence. The rightmost end is like the case of Teletransportation. The question is, in which cases would the resulting person still be me, and which cases would the resulting person not be me?

The reductionist Parfit lists three possible alternatives: (1).The indetermination of personal identity—in those few cases near the left end, the resulting person would still be me. In those cases near the right end, the resulting person would not be me. In many of the intervening cases, neither answer would be true, and the question is empty (the question itself becomes meaningless); (2).There is a sharp borderline between two cases. On the left side of the borderline, the resulting person would still be me, while on the right side, the resulting person would not be me; (3).In all of these cases, the resulting person would be me.

It is hard to accept (2) that the difference between life and death could just consist in any of the very small differences—if the surgeons replace slightly fewer than these cells, it will be me who wakes up. If they replace the few extra cells, I shall cease to exist, as Parfit discusses on page 239 of 'Reasons and Persons.' It is also hard to believe (1) because it is counterintuitive and difficult to understand. (3) therefore seems to most people the least implausible. Consequently, the Physical Spectrum seems to corroborate the Psychological Criterion, indicating that my Replica will be me.²¹

The Psychological Spectrum is a range of cases which involve all of the different possible degrees of psychological continuity. When a switch is flipped, this would cause me to lose a few memories, cause a small change in my character, and to have a few apparent memories that fit the life of Linda. There are still three corresponding alternatives, and for the same reason, (3) is the least implausible. Thus, the Psychological Spectrum appears to support the Physical Criterion, suggesting that my continued existence hinges solely on the continued existence of my brain as a living organ, irrespective of the specific psychological features that I have.

PS: (1) The Physical Spectrum changes only the person's material comp

osition—the molecules that compose the person's body are replaced, but the features of the person (psychological and physiological features) remain the same. In contrast, the Psychological Spectrum changes the person's form—psychological features change gradually, but the material composition—the molecules—are mainly remained.

(2) In some cases, psychological features can be expanded into general features that encompass both psychological and physiological aspects. For instance, in the General-Feature Spectrum, my attributes, both psychological and physiological, gradually change, but the materials composing my body remain largely unchanged. Similar to constructing various structures from a single set of building blocks.

(3) Physical continuity differs from physical or physiological features. For example, in the case of Teletransportation, the physical continuity of the person is completely broken, but the physical, physiological, and psychological features (the General Features) remain unchanged.

In Parfit's Combined Spectrum, both my physical continuity and my psychological and physiological continuities change. At the leftmost end of this spectrum is the normal case in which a future person would be fully continuous with me as I am now, both physically and in terms of psychological and physiological features. This person would be me in just the way that, in my actual life, it will be me who wakes up tomorrow. Moving from the left to the right in this spectrum, with each switch flipped, one in a million of my cells are replaced by exact replicas of Linda's corresponding cells, until at the rightmost end of this spectrum, where the surgeon would destroy my body and then create a perfect replica of Linda. Clearly, the resulting person at the rightmost end would not be me, making option (3) implausible. Option (2) still presents the dilemma of defining a precise borderline, leaving only option (1) as a viable alternative.

Thus, Parfit defends his 'indetermination of personal identity'—in man

y of the intervening cases, the question 'Would the resulting person be me?' has no answer. However, when we understand the extent of my physical and psychological connection with the resulting person, we grasp everything there is to know. Parfit extends this argument to the relationship between my present self and my future self—once I know all the facts of the physical and psychological continuity (with an emphasis on the latter) between my present self and my older self, I know everything. In Parfit's view, personal identity is no longer a simple binary of 'yes' or 'no', but a matter of degree.

However, in light of the discussion in Section 2 of this paper, personal identity is clearly definite—whether the resulting person is me depends on whether I perceive things from this person's first-person perspective. Assuming no accidents occur, I would naturally and certainly perceive things from the first-person perspective of my self tomorrow, indicating that the me of tomorrow would be the same person as the me of the present. (My memories can offer evidence of this continuity, but memories are merely evidence.) This is the essence of why I care about my future self. Yet, this concern seems unrelated to physical and psychological features as mere attributes.²² As Swinburne, a proponent of the Simple View, argues, in the concern for the future, such continuity has no inherent value.²³

When applying the view of Section 2 to the Combined Spectrum, we transform the earlier question 'Will the resulting person be me?' into 'Shall I wake up in the resulting person's body?' It is clear that the answer to this question is a simple Yes or No. Consequently, Parfit's view of the 'indetermination of personal identity' does not hold. Option (2) still has the difficulty of determining how to draw the borderline and what could make it true that in one case I would wake up and in the next I would cease to exist, so it's also ruled out. Only option (3) remains as the logical alternative.

It must be acknowledged that from an external observer's viewpoint, at the extreme right end of the Combined Spectrum, the previous self (Carroll) and the resulting person (the Replica of Linda) are indeed two distinct persons with entirely different attributes. The idea that Carroll and the Replica of Linda are the same person is as absurd as the idea that a cow and a horse are the same thing. However, from the inside perspective, from my own first-person perspective, the situation and question would be completely different. Option (3) simply describes my first-person experience in each case of this spectrum. And this experience is just that: **In each case, I shall wake up.** Only, as we gradually shift to the right in the spectrum, when I wake up, I'm less and less sure that I'm Carroll. Somewhere in the intervening cases, I am barely able to answer the question of whether I am Carroll or Linda when I wake up—those mixed memories leave me perplexed. In those cases near the right end of this spectrum, I wake up thinking I am Linda, though I still have some memories of Carroll in my trance. Until in the case of the rightmost end, I am sure that I am Linda when I wake up. As for who Carroll is, I don't even know. It's easy to understand that every rightward shift is just a tiny physical and psychological change. These changes in content (changes in attribute) are important—they would affect my life and what I could do. But more importantly, these changes could not prevent my waking up, nor could they cause me to cease to exist.

The core assertion of this section is that from my first-person perspective, regardless of the physical and psychological transformations, 'I shall wake up in every case of the spectrum.'

6.The combination of the Spectrum and Fission—Duplication, the Branch-Line Case, the Mind-Transformation and the Real World.

Now, let's analyze the experiences in various cases from Carroll's first-person perspective—the protagonist of the cases. Based on the previous discourse, we focus on the following questions: 'Shall I wake up in the resulting person's body after the surgery?' 'The next day?' 'After the green button is pressed?' 'On which side will I wake up?' 'From which person's perspective will I perceive things?'

6.1 Duplication—the combination of the Physical Spectrum and Fission

Logically, Duplication is the result of combining Fission with the Physical Spectrum. Imagine 1,000 parallel universes. In Universe No. 0, my brain is split into two and transplanted into the bodies of my second and third brothers, creating two people, Lefty and Righty; This is exactly the Wiggins's Fission Case. We have previously concluded that after the surgery, the two events 'I wake up in Lefty's body' and 'I wake up in Righty's body' would occur independently and in parallel with each other, as described by Sperry. In Universe No.1, one-thousandth of the cells in Lefty's and Righty's brains are replaced with exact replicas; in Universe No.2, two-thousandths are replaced, and so on, following the Physical Spectrum's progression, until in the final universe, my brain is destroyed and the surgeons create exact replicas of my left and right hemispheres, transplanting them into my brothers' bodies. The question arises: at which point in the sequence of universes would I cease to wake up?

According to the reductionist analysis of the Physical Spectrum, we can deduce that even in the last universe, despite the lack of ph

ysical continuity between Lefty, Righty, and the original me, Sperry's description still holds true. The situation in this last universe is fundamentally no different from that of Duplication. Thus, we can conclude that if the surgeons destroy my brain and body after I fall asleep and create two exact Replicas, named A and B, then the next day, both 'I wake up in A's body and perceive things from A's first-person perspective' and 'I wake up in B's body and perceive things from B's first-person perspective' will occur independently and in parallel.

6.2 Parfit's Branch-Line Case—the Asymmetric Fission

Parfit described the Branch-Line Case in his book 'Reasons and Persons,' which can be summarized as follows:

The Branch-Line Case: *Previously, I have gone to Mars by Teletransport—I merely had to step into the Scanning Cubicle and press the green button. The Scanner here on Earth destroyed my body while recording its exact state and then transmitted this information to the Replicator on Mars, which created a body exactly like mine. It is in this body that I shall wake up. However, this time, the Scanner doesn't destroy my body; it merely damages my heart, causing me to die of cardiac failure within the next few days.*

Parfit calls this last scenario the Branch-Line Case. In this case, my life and that of my Replica overlap. According to Parfit's description, it seems I cannot hope to travel on the Main Line, waking up on Mars with forty years of life ahead; instead, I shall stay on the Branch-Line, here on Earth, which ends a few days later.²⁴ If this is the case, how can Parfit explain what happened before? Before th

e branching appeared, I could wake up on Mars, but after, I can only stay on Earth. It is illogical that my existence on Mars could be directly affected by what happens millions of miles away on Earth, as Williams argues: if I do wake up on Mars, whether I continue to exist there cannot depend on what happens to someone else millions of miles away on Earth.

In fact, the Branch-Line Case is an asymmetric combination of the Fission Case and the Physical Spectrum. Imagine 1,000 parallel universes. In Universe No.0, my brain is divided and transplanted into the bodies of my second and third brothers, creating Lefty and Righty—this is the Fission Case. After the surgery, the two events 'I wake up in Lefty's body' and 'I wake up in Righty's body' will both occur. In Universe No.1, one-thousandth of the cells in Righty's brain are replaced with exact replicas while Lefty's remains unchanged; ... until in the final universe, only my left hemisphere is transplanted into my second brother's body to create Lefty, and Righty's right hemisphere is an exact replica. The question is, at which point in the sequence of universes would I cease to wake up in Righty's body?

Following the logic of the Physical Spectrum, we conclude that even in the last universe, despite the lack of physical continuity between Righty and I, both events 'I wake up in Lefty's body' and 'I wake up in Righty's body' will occur. This situation in the last universe is essentially no different from the Branch-Line Case, except that in the Branch-Line Case, the left side is here on Earth, the right side is on Mars, and Lefty has my complete brain and body. But these differences are irrelevant.

From this analysis, we conclude that in the Branch-Line Case, after pressing the green button, both events '(a) I wake up in my original body (Earth-Carroll's body) and perceive things from Earth-Carroll's first-person perspective' and '(b) I wake up in my Replica's body (Mars-Carroll's body) and perceive things from Mars-Carroll's first-person perspective' will occur.

However, the occurrence of (a) could easily lead to the mistaken belief that (b) did not occur. This is a preconceived error.

PS: Parfit, due to his certainty of waking up on Earth, might overlook his awakening on Mars, which is a typical example of how 'the occurrence of (a) could lead people to mistakenly believe that (b) did not happen.'

6.3 Williams's Mind-Switching Case—the combination of the Psychological Spectrum and the Branch-Line Case

Williams's Mind-Switching Case is a combination of the Branch-Line Case and the Psychological Spectrum (the General-Features Spectrum, to be precise). Imagine 1,000 parallel universes. In Universe No. 0, after I lose consciousness in the left room of the hospital, the surgeons create an exact Replica of me in the right room without destroying my body. This mirrors the Branch-Line Case, and as discussed in Section 6.2, we know that the next day, 'I wake up in the left room' and 'I wake up in the right room' will both occur. In Universe No.1, the surgeons give the person on the left one-thousandth of Linda's psychological features and the person on the right one-thousandth of Linda's physiological features. This pattern continues like the Psychological Spectrum, increasing the exchange of features until, in the last universe, the person on the left has Carroll's physiological features with Linda's psychological features, and the person on the right has Linda's physiological features with Carroll's psychological features. The question is, at which point in the sequence of universes does Sperry's description no longer apply?

As with the Psychological Spectrum argument, we can conclude that Sperry's description applies to all of these universes; the situatio

n in the last universe mirrors Williams's Mind-Switching Case. From this, we can deduce that in the Mind-Switching Case, after surgery, (a) I wake up in the left room, perceiving things from Carroll's body with Linda's mind, and (b) I wake up in the right room, perceiving things from Linda's body with Carroll's mind. Both (a) and (b) occur independently and in parallel.

6.4 The Real World—the combination of the General-Features Spectrum and Duplication

In his book *Problems of the Self*, Williams considers a case in which a person would have many co-existing Replicas.²⁵ For ease of understanding, we summarize the case as follows:

I (Carroll) am in Durham and want to get to New York quickly. Normally, I merely have to step into the Scanning Cubicle in Durham and press the green button. The machine destroys my body and creates a Replica of me in the Replica Cubicle in New York. I will wake up in this Replica and quickly reach New York. But this time, the machine malfunctions. After pressing the button, my body is destroyed, and the machine creates four exact Replicas of me in Replica Cubicles in New York, Detroit, Boston, and Memphis. Where would I go? In which body would I wake up?

If we accept the explanation of Duplication—Sperry's description—these questions are not difficult to answer. After pressing the green button, the four events—'I wake up in New York, perceiving things from New York-Carroll's perspective,' 'I wake up in Detroit, perceiving things from Detroit-Carroll's perspective,' 'I wake up in Boston, perceiving things from Boston-Carroll's perspective,' and 'I wake up in

Memphis, perceiving things from Memphis-Carroll's perspective'—would all occur. They would occur independently and in parallel.

The situation in the real world is a combination of the aforementioned case and the General-Features Spectrum. Imagine there are 1,000 parallel universes. In Universe 0, after pressing the button and destroying my body, the machine creates four exact Replicas of me in New York, Detroit, Boston, and Memphis—this is exactly the aforementioned case. In Universe 1, after destroying my body, the machine creates four approximate Replicas in New York, Detroit, Boston, and Memphis. In each of these Replicas, the one in New York has one-thousandth of Linda's features, the one in Detroit has one-thousandth of James's features, the one in Boston has one-thousandth of Paul's features, and the one in Memphis has one-thousandth of Anna's features. This pattern continues like the General-Features Spectrum, increasing the proportion of features from other persons, until in the last universe, the machine creates persons with the complete sets of Linda's, James's, Paul's, and Anna's features while destroying my body. The question is, at which point in this sequence of universes would Sperry's description no longer apply?

Following the General-Features Spectrum argument, we can conclude that even in the last universe, I would still wake up. After pressing the button, the four events—'I perceive things from Linda's perspective,' 'I perceive things from James's perspective,' 'I perceive things from Paul's perspective,' and 'I perceive things from Anna's perspective'—would occur independently and in parallel. And the situation in this last universe is essentially no different from this real world in which each of us is different from each other. We can understand that events such as 'I perceive things from my own first-person perspective as the author,' 'I perceive things from your first-person perspective as a reader,' 'I perceive things from the first-person perspec

tive of Jeam, the passerby on the street,' and 'I perceive things from the first-person perspective of Johnson, the worker upstairs doing renovations,' all occur independently and in parallel.

This is one of the arguments reached in this paper, which explains the existence of the 'I' in the real world. It can be expressed as follows:

'(a). I am perceiving things from A's first-person perspective'; '(b). I am perceiving things from B's first-person perspective'; '(c). I am perceiving things from C's first-person perspective'; '(d). I am perceiving things from D's first-person perspective'; ... these events are all occurring.

A, B, C, D, ... refer to the conscious subjects that exist at this time.

PS: The occurrence of any of the preceding events would naturally lead to the mistaken belief that the other events have not occurred (for example, the occurrence of (a) would lead me to believe that (b), (c), (d), ... have not occurred). This is why I have the question of *'why am I this particular and specific person rather than someone else?'*²⁶

7. Death

Next we turn to death. The irreversible destruction of the brain is usually considered to be death. What does the destruction of my brain mean for me? To understand this from my first-person perspective, let's consider the following two cases.

Case 1: I enter the Scanning Cubicle in Durham and fall asleep. After I lose consciousness, the Scanner destroys my body, recording its exact state. My blueprint is then transmitted to New York, Detroit, and Boston, where th

e Replicators create three exact Replicas of me. The question is, where will I wake up?

Drawing from the Duplication argument, we already know that on the following day, all three events—‘I wake up in New York-Carroll's body’, ‘I wake up in Detroit-Carroll's body’, and ‘I wake up in Boston-Carroll's body’—will occur.

Case 2: It is exactly like Case 1 but with this modification: in this case, the Scanner does not destroy my original body. It does nothing except scan and send my holographic blueprint. Afterwards, my blueprint is transmitted to New York, Detroit, and Boston, and the Replicators in each of those three places then create three exact Replicas of me. Where will I wake up?

Based on our analysis of the ‘I’ experience in Parfit's Branch-Line Case and the conclusion of the Physical Spectrum—that physical continuity is not essential for the continued existence of ‘I’—this modified case is akin to adding a fourth Replication Cubicle in Durham. It is thus understandable that the following would occur independently and in parallel on the next day: ‘I wake up in Durham-Carroll's body (my original body)’; ‘I wake up in New York-Carroll's body’; ‘I wake up in Detroit-Carroll's body’; and ‘I wake up in Boston-Carroll's body’.

What distinguishes the two cases is the fate of my body: in Case 1, it is destroyed, signifying death; in Case 2, it continues to function as in normal life, signifying only a temporary loss of consciousness. From my first-person perspective, in Case 1, the event of waking up in Durham-Carroll's body and perceiving the world from that perspective ceases, while the replication events in other cities persist.

As we return to the real world and consider the General-Features Spectrum, we replace the hypothetical entities of New York-Carroll, Detroit-Carroll, and Boston-Carroll with specific individuals who possess a variety of physical and psychological traits. In doing so, we can discern the significance of my death—the irreversible destruction of my body—in the real world:

Before my death—the destruction of Carroll's body—these events are occurring: 'Event A: I am perceiving things from Carroll's perspective.' 'Event B: I am perceiving things from Linda's perspective.' 'Event C: I am perceiving things from Paul's perspective.' ... After my death, Event A will cease, but the other events will continue.

This view seems psychologically impossible to believe, as my lived experience consistently reaffirms that I have always been Carroll. I have always woken up in Carroll's body and always perceived things from Carroll's first-person perspective. Other people seem unrelated to my experience—I cannot perceive things from Linda's perspective, or Paul's, or anyone else's. Yet, this belief is an easy fallacy to make, arising from the most direct and genuine experience. As with the Branch-Line Case, as long as Carroll exists as a conscious subject, the event 'I am perceiving things from Carroll's perspective' is inevitable. This naturally leads to the belief that events like 'I am perceiving things from Linda's perspective' or 'I am perceiving things from Paul's perspective' do not occur. However, after reviewing Wiggins's Fission Case and the arguments presented in this paper, at the reflective or intellectual level, we can believe that these other events are indeed occurring.

This is the truth about death. The destruction of my body does not mean the end to my continued existence, nor does it mean that I shall be unconscious forever.

8. Conclusion

First, on the question of personal ontology, we have adopted the Simple View's claim that a person is an original and simple concept,²⁷ as well as the Reductionist interpretation that a person is not, but its existence must consist in the existence of a brain and body, and the occurrence of a series of interrelated physical and mental events.²⁸ This approach avoids the reliance on Dualism inherent in the Simple View and the counterintuitive depersonalization of experience present in Reductionism.

Next, concerning the diachronic concept of personal identity, we have refined the question, 'Will someone (P) in the future be me?'—a question with multiple ambiguous meanings—into 'Will I perceive things from P's first-person perspective in the future?' This clarification sharpens the focus of the issue we intend to investigate.

Subsequently, using Reductionist methods, we have analyzed the Physical Spectrum, the Psychological Spectrum, and the Combined Spectrum, and concluded that my existence does not depend on what specific brain or psychological features I have, but rather that I exist as long as I am conscious—I am perceiving things. We conceived the Fission Case (offered by Wiggins) based on actual 'split-brain' operations. Considering the first-person experience of 'me' in it, and supported by the fact that a person with half a brain can still persist, we logically clarify that the presence or absence of the Branch should not make a difference between life and death to my continued existence. This has compelled us to embrace Sperry's description to explain my existence in the Fission Case.

Given that neither physical nor psychological continuity could determine which side I would wake up on, we have combined the Fission Case with the Spectrum to evolve into scenarios such as the Duplication Case, Parfit's Branch-Line Case, and Williams's Mind-Switching Case. We have further extrapolated these to the real world, where every person possesses unique physiological and psychological traits. Just like in the Fission Case, we contend

that Sperry's description provides the only logical and comprehensive explanation for the continued existence of the 'I' in these instances.

Finally, with this understanding, we have compared 'the Divergent Teleportation in which my body was destroyed' with 'the Divergent Teleportation in which my body was not destroyed', thereby elucidating the significance of death — the destruction of my body — for myself. These descriptions and explanations can be summarized into three conclusions about the continued existence of the 'I':

1. On 'Who I am'

I am the person from whose first-person perspective I am perceiving things. Whether someone is me depends on whether I am perceiving things from that person's first-person perspective. If I am A, it means I am perceiving things from A's first-person perspective. This extends naturally over time: whether someone P0 at a past time t0 was me depends on whether I was perceiving things from P0's perspective at t0; similarly, whether someone P2 at a future time t2 will be me depends on whether I will be perceiving things from P2's perspective at t2. The trajectory of this first-person perspective through space and time is the essence of my continued existence throughout the diachronic process.

2. On 'Why I am this particular and specific person', 'why I am perceiving things from this person's perspective rather than someone else'

Sperry's Explanation: 'I am perceiving things from A's perspective,' 'I am perceiving things from B's perspective,' 'I am perceiving things from C's perspective,' 'I am perceiving things from D's perspective'... All of these events are occurring, and they are happening independently and in parallel with each other.

PS: (1) The occurrence of any one of these events naturally leads me to mistakenly believe that the others are not happening.

(2) A, B, C, D... refer to the conscious subjects that currently exist.

3.On 'Death'

My death as A — the destruction of A's brain — means that the event "I am perceiving things from A's perspective" will no longer occur, while other events continue.

It is not difficult to comprehend that 'I am to be tortured tomorrow' is almost as bad for me as 'another person (for example, Linda) is to be tortured tomorrow'. From a rational standpoint, there is no distinction between the two; I will experience this suffering from my own first-person perspective in either case. Everyone is me, and I should treat everyone as I treat myself. These conclusions support the controversial presuppositions in the defenses of utilitarianism by Harsanyi, Hare, and others, such as 'impartiality' and 'the transitive principle of turning interpersonal comparisons into internal comparisons.' They can serve as a rational foundation for constructing the 'non-religious ethics' that Parfit anticipated.

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