

LIVING VARIOUSLY

by

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Abstract

In my dissertation, I focus on theories of personal identity and pluralist views of personal identity in particular. Traditionally, philosophers have argued that a single relation—like psychological continuity (e.g. Locke) or biological continuity (e.g. Olson)—grounds personal identity and persistence. But recent empirical work has shed light on a vast number of identity-related practical concerns, and it is unlikely that a single theory of persistence could address all of these concerns. These include our practices of holding others morally responsible, our practices of compensation and ownership, and our feelings of anticipation and self-concern. We blame others, in part, because we think they are the *same people* that committed wrongs and we compensate others, again in part, because we take them to be the *same people* whom we've wronged. We also anticipate things that will happen to our future selves in a very different way than we anticipate things that will happen to others. These interpersonal practices and concerns, which are essential to our experience of persistence, cannot be explained by traditional monistic theories of personal identity. For example, while feelings of self-concern are often grounded in a biological approach to persistence, ascriptions of blame and responsibility are often grounded in a psychological approach.

My dissertation has three parts. In the first part, I explore the difficult problem of fission: situations in which a single individual branches (or divides or duplicates) into two individuals. Fission cases have been used to illuminate what matters (and what doesn't) when it comes to personal identity and persistence. Derek Parfit (1984), for example, argues that everything that we care about related to persistence seems to stay the same after fission occurs, even though the pre-fission individual cannot be identical to *both* fission products, given that identity is a one-to-one relation. Others, like Marya Schechtman (2014), have defended the claim that uniqueness matters quite a bit for persistence. To support this claim, Schechtman argues that the loss of uniqueness featured in cases of fission makes it impossible to treat the fission products as a single, unified locus of our practical concerns. In this paper, I argue that there is a difference between being a *unified* locus of concern and a *unique* locus of concern—the two can come apart—and while the loss of uniqueness can lead to the loss of unity, it needn't. In this way, I argue that Schechtman's defense is incomplete. Though she sets out to defend the value of uniqueness, she only makes a case for the value of unity.

In the second part of my dissertation I analyze a recent pluralist view of personal identity and persistence—the Person Life View—developed by Marya Schechtman. Philosophers have only just begun to seriously consider pluralist conceptions of personal identity, and no one has presented a more thorough defense of such an account than Schechtman. On the Person Life View, personhood and persistence are characterized by a bundle of psychological, biological, and social features. Although I agree that pluralism is a promising strategy, I argue that Schechtman's particular view suffers from a flaw. To develop her pluralist account of personal identity, Schechtman utilizes an influential model from the philosophy of science, the homeostatic property cluster (HPC) model, according to which no person-relevant property (or set of properties) is necessary or sufficient for the existence or persistence of a person. However, she fails to utilize a key feature of this model: she does not propose a homeostatic causal mechanism, a process by which the person-relevant properties cluster together in the world. The proposal of a homeostatic causal mechanism is what sets an HPC account of personal identity apart from a purely conventionalist account, according to which persistence and persons are simply products of our judgment. Without such a mechanism,

Schechtman's view threatens to collapse into conventionalism. However, given the diverse set of properties relevant to personal identity, and the important role practical judgment plays on Schechtman's account, it's unlikely that such a mechanism exists. Thus, I conclude that we should pursue a more promising pluralist account of personal identity, which I go on to do in part two of my dissertation.

In the third part of my dissertation I present a novel pluralist view of personal identity—the "Subscript View." According to the Subscript View, survival can obtain psychologically (surviving_p) and biologically (surviving_b). Each form of survival has distinct persistence conditions. Furthermore, these distinct survival relations obtain between distinct selves, self_p and self_b. On the Subscript View, just as there is no singular, more basic persistence relation beyond survival_p or survival_b, there is also no singular, more basic self beyond self_p and self_b.

The original motivation for the Subscript View is that pluralism, and pluralism alone, can accommodate *all* of our identity-related practical concerns. But the Subscript View has further advantages over both monistic views and the Person Life View. As compared with its monistic counterparts, the Subscript View better fits our persistence talk and our experience of persistence. And, unlike the Person Life View, it doesn't threaten to collapse into conventionalism and can make sense of cases in which one persistence relation obtains while another does not. On the Person Life View, those suffering from advanced dementia would either persist or fail to persist full stop; there would be no room for the complex set of emotions and concerns that accompanies caring for a person who persists in one way but not another. In contrast, the Subscript View is able to make sense of our complex stance towards those who persist biologically but do not persist psychologically. Finally, I argue that despite its perhaps startling metaphysical implications, i.e. the fact that there are two individuals where we once thought there was one, the Subscript View doesn't require a revisionary theory of reference: the answer to "who am I?" doesn't have to change.

Sometimes, Splitting up Is Hard to Do

1. Introduction

Fission cases have long posed a problem for theories of personal identity. If a single individual A branches (or duplicates or divides) into two individuals B and C, and A bears the exact same persistence relations to B that she bears to C, what are we to think about the relationship between A, B, and C? Can A survive fission as both B and C? Because identity is a one-to-one relation, A cannot be identical to both B and C, if B and C are distinct.¹ But to argue that A is identical to one but not both would be arbitrary, for A bears the same relationship to both B and C. This leaves us with the final possibility that A is not identical to either B or C—A cannot survive fission on traditional accounts of personal identity and persistence. But this puts identity theorists in the awkward position of arguing that A would not survive fission as both B and C but would survive if only B or C came into existence, despite the fact that the only difference between the two cases is how many individuals bear the exact same relation to A. For many, particularly Derek Parfit (1984), this result highlights the irrelevance of uniqueness—when a relation obtains in a one-to-one fashion—for persistence. Because everything we care about remains after fission, Parfit argues that the persistence relations are what grounds the value of personal identity and uniqueness matters not at all. Others, like Marya Schechtman (2014), have defended the claim that uniqueness matters quite a bit for persistence. To support this claim, Schechtman argues that the loss of uniqueness featured in cases of fission makes it impossible to treat the fission products as a single, unified locus of our practical concerns, indicating that uniqueness matters for persistence. In this paper, I will argue that there is a difference between being a *unified* locus of concern and a *unique* locus of concern—the two can come apart—and while the former contributes to the value of personal identity, the latter does not.

¹ For a recent analysis of why this is so, see Demarest (forthcoming).

In this way, I'll argue that both Parfit and Schechtman are partially correct. While Parfit is right that uniqueness may not contribute to the value of personal identity, as Schechtman argues, there is another feature over and above the persistence relations—unity—that does.

2. Fission and Survival

To say that an individual cannot survive fission is to say that fission is just like death. But according to Parfit, fission is nothing like death; if anything, it is closer to double survival. After all, if we were to undergo fission, our fission products would carry on our life goals, value the same things we value, and care for the things for which we care. The only thing missing is uniqueness—there would no longer be only one of us. But, according to Parfit, uniqueness matters very little for survival.

In the case that we are now considering, my relation to each of the resulting people thus contains everything that would be needed for me to survive as that person. It cannot be the nature of my relation to each of the resulting people that, in this case, causes it to fail to be survival. Nothing is missing. What is wrong can only be the duplication. (Parfit 1984, 261)

In this way, though fission surely destroys identity, everything that matters when it comes to persistence remains. To claim that the loss of uniqueness eliminates something of value is simply to be overly wedded to the relationship between uniqueness and persistence. Though we take ourselves to care that there will be one and only one of us in the future, this is because persistence relations traditionally obtain uniquely. But, as Parfit argues, once we examine how uniqueness and persistence relations come apart in fission cases, it becomes clear that those persistence relations are what matters for survival and uniqueness matters not at all.

While Parfit argues that it's counterintuitive to claim that uniqueness matters for survival, many find the disassociation of uniqueness and persistence equally unappealing. To save identity theories from the threat of branching, some philosophers have taken to defending four-dimensionalism (Lewis 1971; Sider 2001), a view on which objects have spatial and temporal parts.

On such views, B and C don't come into existence post fission, but in fact existed long before fission took place, and simply occupied the same space at the same time. So, post fission, it shouldn't be surprising that everything we care about related to persistence is maintained, since uniqueness was never threatened. While a four-dimensionalist view is able to explain how uniqueness can be maintained in fission cases, it's not clear that it proposes an adequate response to Parfit's challenge to identity theorists. Parfit uses fission cases to illustrate that uniqueness doesn't matter for persistence. While four-dimensionalism can explain how uniqueness can be maintained in fission cases, the view doesn't explain why it *matters* for persistence (Shoemaker 2007). It could simply be a coincidence that uniqueness isn't destroyed by fission, and nothing we care about when it comes to persistence actually hangs on whether uniqueness is maintained or not.

One way of defending the importance of uniqueness for persistence is to agree that uniqueness is lost in fission cases and point to the devastating effects that such a loss can cause. Schechtman pursues this strategy in her recent book *Staying Alive: Personal Identity, Practical Concerns, and the Unity of a Life* (2014). If Parfit argues that uniqueness never matters for survival, Schechtman argues that it always does. However, Schechtman's response only applies to a small subset of fission cases. Once one considers the full range of possible fission cases, Schechtman's claim that uniqueness necessarily matters for persistence begins to look suspect. Before turning to these cases, I will first briefly review Schechtman's account of personal identity to see why it serves only as a partial response to Parfit's challenge.

3. The Person Life View and Fission

Schechtman develops a novel view of personal identity—the Person Life View (PLV)—that takes into account a plurality of persistence relations. She argues that: “[t]o be a person is to live a ‘person-life’; persons are individuated by individuating person lives; and the duration of a single person is

determined by the duration of a single person life” (Schechtman 2014, 110). For a person life to continue, a single locus of person-related concerns must also continue (Schechtman 2014, 152). Paradigmatic person lives involve biological, psychological, and social features that are intertwined and interdependent, though each is neither necessary nor sufficient for persistence or personhood. Because PLV defines persons as the target of practical treatment, and accepts a plurality of persistence-relevant properties, it’s considerably more flexible than traditional views of personal identity. One virtue of this theoretical flexibility is that PLV can accommodate a wide array of puzzle cases, including fission.

Contra Parfit, Schechtman argues that everything we care about does not survive fission. One of the key aspects of being a person is being a locus of concern, which becomes impossible once an individual splits into two qualitatively identical beings. She argues:

According to PLV a person life, and so a person, continues as long as a unified locus of our person-related questions and concerns continues. This clearly does not happen in the fission case. After fission there are two easily identifiable loci and it does not seem possible to treat them as a single person in any straightforward way that mirrors the singleness of persons as we know them. (Schechtman 2014, 159-160)

According to Schechtman, occupying a person life requires being a unified locus of concern, which is impossible in cases of fission because uniqueness, or singleness, is destroyed. Thus, uniqueness captures an important aspect of the value of persistence on PLV. Importantly, Schechtman’s argument that uniqueness matters for persistence does not rest on the logical form of uniqueness, but rather the practical impossibility of treating multiple individuals as a unified locus of concern. To illustrate this impossibility, consider the following case.

3.a. Beloved man about town

Imagine that a beloved and important man about town undergoes fission.² The man about town has a rich social life, a loving and devoted family, and a job that carries with it many obligations and duties. Fission would have catastrophic consequences. The friends and family of the original beloved man about town would be at a loss over how to divide their time and attention between the two fission products. The fission products would have to figure out a way to divide the original man's obligations and responsibilities at work and at home, which could prove to be impossible. Even simple matters like ownership and compensation would become quagmires for two individuals who try to share such a rich person life. The man's fission products could not be treated in even approximately the same ways as he was and the lives of the fission products would be radically different from the life of the beloved man about town. Neither fission product would be able to carry on the beloved man's life goals in the way he would have wanted, or value and care for the things he valued and cared for in the same way he valued and cared for them. Unity really would be lost in such a case—it would be impossible to treat the fission products in any way resembling the original man about town or even as persons unto themselves;³ their lives would be hopelessly fractured. Thus, in some fission cases, the destruction of uniqueness has such devastating effects that it would be difficult to conceive of the result as about as good as double survival, as Parfit claims.

Theorists like Schechtman can point to the practical impact of the loss of uniqueness to argue that it's neither ad hoc nor counterintuitive to argue uniqueness matters for persistence.

² Others have discussed the devastating effects of fission, like Peter Unger (1990) and Lynne Rudder Baker (2000). Susan Wolf, in her essay "Self-Interest and Interest in Selves," also considers cases of fission and discusses the impact fission would have on the lives of fission-products at length, though she ultimately argues that such practical consequences should have little bearing on our metaphysical views (1986).

³ Schechtman in fact argues that if fission were to become the norm, fission products would no longer be persons (Schechtman 2014, 164-165).

Because it's impossible to treat fission products as the same unified locus of our practices and concerns, Schechtman argues that singleness—or uniqueness—both matters and is required for persistence. But this is too quick—there are a variety of fission cases, and while some of these cases highlight the importance of uniqueness, like the case of the man about town, others illustrate its insignificance.

4. Uniqueness and Unity

Schechtman can't envision a fission case in which the fission products could be treated as the same unified locus of concerns as the pre-fission individual; thus she is committed to the claim that uniqueness matters for persistence. However, this treatment of fission cases rests on a confusion between uniqueness and unity. *Uniqueness* obtains when there exists one and only one individual at a time. And to persist uniquely is to persist as one and only one individual through time. *Unity*, on the other hand, obtains when we treat an individual as a target of our practical cares and concerns. And we persist as united when we remain the same target of practical concerns through time. Unity uncontroversially matters and is necessary for survival on accounts of persistence like Schechtman's—if we can't treat an individual as a target of our practical questions and concerns, then they are neither a person nor continuous with a past individual. But whether uniqueness matters and is necessary for persistence is an open question, and one that Schechtman disagrees with those like Parfit about. Yet, in her analysis of fission cases, Schechtman seems to assume that uniqueness and unity can be used interchangeably.

To see this, let's revisit Schechtman's response to fission cases. At first, she argues: "According to PLV a person life, and so a person, continues as long as a unified locus of our person-related questions and concerns continues" (Schechtman 2014, 159-160). On the face of it, this claim is perfectly compatible with at least some individuals remaining unified after fission. It

seems possible for a person to branch (or divide or split) into two individuals, each of which is a unified locus of concern, where we treat each fission product just like we treated the original individual. However, in the very next sentence Schechtman argues: “This clearly does not happen in the fission case. After fission there are two easily identifiable loci and it does not seem possible to treat them as a single person in any straightforward way that mirrors the singleness of persons as we know them” (Schechtman 2014, 159-160). In this passage, Schechtman argues that it’s because the fission products cannot be treated as a *single*, or unique, person that makes it impossible for a person to survive fission. In this way, Schechtman shifts from talk of unity to talk of uniqueness.

If Schechtman’s claim is simply that uniqueness matters for persistence because it’s impossible for the fission products to be a single individual or be treated as such, then she hasn’t provided an argument for the value of uniqueness nor has she presented a response to Parfit’s puzzle. But perhaps Schechtman could argue that because uniqueness is necessary for unity to obtain, and unity matters and is necessary for persistence, it follows that uniqueness also matters and is necessary for persistence as well. To support this claim, Schechtman can point to cases like the one featuring the beloved man about town, where it really does seem that uniqueness and unity are intimately related. However, uniqueness and unity can come apart. And while uniqueness cannot logically be maintained after fission, it’s an open question whether unity can. Though uniqueness and unity are lost in some cases of fission, like in the beloved man about town case, there are other cases where it looks like unity is preserved despite the loss of uniqueness. In fact, fission cases are much more variable than most have been assumed.

5. A Variety of Fission Cases

In this section, I’ll explore two cases of fission in which the fission products can be treated as unified targets of concerns despite the loss of uniqueness.

5.a. The apathetic misanthrope

Imagine that the estranged brother of the man about town, the apathetic misanthrope, undergoes fission. In this case, the pre-fission individual has very few practical concerns grounded in uniqueness. He doesn't have a job or friends, and he has very few responsibilities or obligations. The relationships with his family were severed long ago. He isn't registered to vote, doesn't have a social security number, and he lives off the grid. In short, he interacts with society as little as possible. In this case, very little would be lost with the loss of uniqueness. There would be no friends or family pondering how to split their time because the original apathetic misanthrope didn't have any friends or family. The fission products wouldn't struggle with how to share their responsibilities at work because the original misanthrope didn't have a job. And there wouldn't be any difficulties in navigating issues of compensation and ownership because the original curmudgeon wasn't compensated for anything and owned nothing. Yet Schechtman is committed to treating the case of the apathetic misanthrope just like the case of the man about town.

But there is a significant difference between the apathetic misanthrope and the man about town. The misanthrope's person life can fit more than one individual comfortably. What would change about the misanthrope's life if he were to suddenly duplicate? The two together would fit no differently within the social infrastructure than the original misanthrope did. And the lives of the new misanthropes won't be much different from the original misanthrope's life—they will continue to go about their business, undertaking the same projects that the original misanthrope did, not bothering themselves or anyone else. It seems possible for the misanthrope's fission products to each be unified loci of concern and our treatment of each fission product would not be significantly different than our treatment of the original misanthrope. While it wouldn't be accurate to say that

the two new misanthropes are identical to the original curmudgeon, one might argue that unity is preserved.

5.b. One world, two earths

Perhaps Schechtman would stand her ground and argue that even the fission products of the apathetic misanthrope could not be unified targets of concern. After all, even if these post-fission curmudgeons wouldn't be forced to share a social security number, a job, or a bank account, they would have to share things like a toothbrush and underwear. And perhaps this difference between the lives of the post-fission curmudgeons and the original is what generates the intuition that something important is lost in such a case.

Though being forced to buy extra toothbrushes and underwear doesn't strike me as the limiting factor when it comes to persistence, there are cases of fission in which there is no qualitative difference between the lives of the pre-fission individual and the post-fission individuals *at all*. Imagine a world in which an individual, Ted, undergoes fission, and at the exact same time Earth is destroyed and two duplicate Earths are created in two different galaxies.⁴ After fission occurs, each fission product is sent to a different Earth, never having to interact with the other fission product (perhaps never even knowing that the other fission product exists). We can imagine further that these different Earths are qualitatively indistinguishable from our Earth and thus each fission product will have exactly the same practical concerns that Ted had on the original Earth. In this case, nothing is lost with the destruction of uniqueness; the fission products will plausibly be treated as the same unified loci of person-related questions and concerns that Ted was. The possibility of a

⁴ Thanks to Carolina Sartorio for drawing my attention to this case.

world in which both fission and Earth duplication exists poses a threat to those who think uniqueness matters for survival, for it appears as though uniqueness matters *not at all* in such world.⁵

6. What to Do about Fission?

In some of the above fission cases, uniqueness seems to matter quite a bit for persistence, as in the beloved man about town case, while in others it seems to matter very little, as in the apathetic misanthrope case, or not at all, as in the Earth duplication case. What can account for this variance? In all of these cases, uniqueness only seemed to matter when the loss of uniqueness threatened unity. So, rather than argue that uniqueness necessarily matters for persistence or that uniqueness doesn't matter at all for survival, one could argue that the value of uniqueness can be derived from the value of unity for persistence.

On Schechtman's view, what determines whether the loss of a particular feature is enough to render an individual non-existent is whether the loss of that feature undermines the individual's unity—the ability to function as the target of practical concern. Once we make the distinction between uniqueness and unity, it's clear that uniqueness, though it's relevant to unity, is neither necessary nor sufficient for unity to obtain. Just as the loss of biological and psychological features sometimes, but not always, interferes with an individual's ability to be a single target of practical concern, the loss of uniqueness due to fission can, but needn't necessarily, guarantee the end of

⁵ A world in which Earth is able to duplicate may not be very far from our world at all. On a well known, though controversial, interpretation of quantum mechanics, "...we are living in a multi-verse: the world we observe around us is only one of countless quasi-classical universes ("branches") all coexisting...According to our best current physics, branches are real" (Wallace 2010, 54). It could very well be the case that there are in fact many worlds, all real and actual, in which individuals who are psychologically continuous with us exist. Importantly, though all of these worlds would be distinct on the many-worlds interpretation, many of them would be macroscopically indistinguishable, such that many of the worlds would feature constellations of the same practical concerns. This would mean that no individual is unique amongst the many worlds, though individuals could still remain unified loci of person-related questions and concerns over time. Though the many-worlds interpretation is not the definitive view of quantum mechanics, we shouldn't want our theories of persistence to entail that no one has ever or will ever persist if it turns out to be right.

persistence. Though sometimes the loss of uniqueness undermines an individual's ability to remain a single locus of practical questions and concerns, in other cases it's possible to remain unified post fission, even if uniqueness is lost.

In this way, both Schechtman and Parfit are partially right about what matters when it comes to persistence. Parfit is right that uniqueness itself does not contribute any value to persistence. But he's wrong to think that the only feature that can capture what we care about when it comes to persistence are the persistence relations. Rather, as Schechtman argues, there is another feature, unity, that contributes to the value of persistence. But Schechtman is wrong to think that uniqueness is necessary for unity, as the cases above illustrate.

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Personal Identity, Pluralism, and the Person Life View

1. Introduction

Our relationships with others are infused with judgments about personal identity and persistence. Engaging in many of our central practices and concerns—promise keeping, compensation, ownership, praising and blaming, etc.—requires making such judgments, at least implicitly. Given both the ubiquity of our personal identity judgments and the diversity of contexts in which they occur, it's surprising that only recently have philosophers begun to seriously consider the possibility of pluralist conceptions of personal identity, views that indicate that there are a plurality of relations and properties that are relevant to persistence. And no one has presented a more thorough defense of such an account than Marya Schechtman in her recent book *Staying Alive: Personal Identity, Practical Concerns, and the Unity of a Life* (2014).⁶ In this book, Schechtman defends the “Person Life View,” which defines identity “in terms of the unity of a characteristic kind of life” (2014, 6).

According to Schechtman: “To be a person is to live a ‘person life’; persons are individuated by individuating person lives; and the duration of a single person is determined by the duration of a single person life” (Schechtman 2014, 110). Persons, those that live person lives, are the locus of our person-related questions and concerns. And for a person to persist, for their person life to continue, they must continue to be a single locus of our person-related questions and concerns (Schechtman 2014, 152). Biological, psychological, and social features characterize a typical person life, and importantly, each of these features is neither necessary nor sufficient for a typical person life (Schechtman 2014, 147). Views that eschew necessary and sufficient conditions like the Person Life View face a puzzle. These views must explain why in some cases a certain subset of persistence-

⁶ For another recent discussion of pluralism and personal identity, see David Shoemaker’s (2007) “Personal Identity and Practical Concerns.”

relevant relations and properties is enough to secure persistence while in other cases it is not. For example, why is biological continuity enough to secure persistence when an individual enters a persistent vegetative state but not enough when an individual enters a persistent vegetative state because their cerebrum was transplanted? One way to solve the puzzle of asymmetric persistence despite symmetrical persistence-relevant relations is to argue that the difference between these cases is simply a matter of convention: our values, concerns, and judgment dictate when persistence relations are sufficient for survival and when they are not. But Schechtman is not interested in providing a conventional account of personal identity. She argues that our judgments about personal identity are not governed by convention but are rather responses to facts about the world. In order to solve the puzzle and avoid the threat of conventionalism, Schechtman utilizes an influential model from the philosophy of science—the homeostatic property cluster model (HPC)—to develop her account of person lives. However, she fails to utilize a key feature of this model—she does not propose a homeostatic causal mechanism that can explain why the many person-related properties occur together.

In this paper, I argue that without a homeostatic causal mechanism, the Person Life View is not only incomplete, but it also threatens to collapse into a conventional account of personal identity.⁷ The proposal of a causal mechanism is the Person Life View's best chance at avoiding conventionalism. However, given the diverse set of properties relevant to personal identity, and the important role practical judgment plays on Schechtman's account, it's unlikely that such a mechanism exists.

2. Person Lives and Personal Identity

⁷ The Person Life View may be open to other objections, like the 'bad biology' argument Eric Olson outlines in *The Human Animal* (1997). However, in this paper, I'll focus only on the role of HPC in the Person Life View.

Our lives are structured around person-related practices—promise keeping, compensation, ownership, praising and blaming, etc.—many of which at least implicitly rely on judgments about persistence and identity. I met my friend for coffee earlier today because it was her I promised to meet last week, a woman will pay alimony to her ex-husband because she married him a decade ago and it was he who she divorced, I expect my neighbors to refrain from harvesting the oranges from my orange tree, which I planted years ago, and many of us blame Joe Arpaio because we take it that he is the same person who began abusing his power in the nineties.

There are many ways to conceive of the relationship between our practical concerns and personal identity. Schechtman defends the “dependence model” of this relationship. She argues that personal identity is inherently connected to our practical concerns—the relations that make persons the appropriate targets of these practical concerns are the very same relations that ground personal identity.

On this view an account of personal identity is conceptually dependent upon practical considerations because the relation which constitutes identity must by necessity be one which makes a person an intrinsically appropriate unit about which to raise particular practical questions. (Schechtman 2014, 41)

On the dependence model, a theory of personal identity must account for persons as the appropriate targets of these practices and concerns. With this desideratum in mind, Schechtman sets out to develop the “Person Life View” of personal identity.

On the Person Life View, “To be a person is to live a ‘person life’; persons are individuated by individuating person lives; and the duration of a single person is determined by the duration of a single person life” (Schechtman 2014, 110). Those that live person lives—persons—are the locus of our person-related questions and concerns and for a person life to continue—and thus for a person to persist—they must continue to be a single locus of these person-related questions and concerns

(Schechtman 2014, 152). Biological, psychological, and social features characterize a typical person life, and importantly, each of these features is neither necessary nor sufficient for a typical person life (Schechtman 2014, 147).

These biological, psychological, and social properties are both interdependent and causally interactive. For example, our immune systems both affect and are affected by the social practices of vaccination, sterilization, etc., we are fascinated with, and sometimes develop obsessions, compulsions, and neuroses about our biological processes, and our beliefs about these processes often get codified into social practice. While no one working on personal identity denies the interdependence of these properties, Schechtman is unique in that she embraces the multi-faceted nature of our lives as an aspect of her account of personal identity, arguing that “...these connections between the different aspects of our lives as ordinarily lived constitute a defining feature of personhood and personal identity” (Schechtman 2014, 149).

To construct a view of personal identity that can capture these myriad properties—biological, psychological, and social—is no small task, but comes with a considerable payoff. By treating these properties as neither individually necessary nor jointly sufficient for an individual to be treated as the single locus of our person-related concerns across time, the Person Life View can accommodate a wide swath of traditionally problematic cases. Take the case of individuals in persistent vegetative states. These individuals lack awareness, but they can breathe on their own, open and close their eyes, and have sleep/wake cycles. Those who advocate a psychological approach to personal identity typically argue that such individuals fail to survive because they no longer experience meaningful psychological states. But these individuals, as Schechtman notes (2014, 77-78), are still targets of a great many person-related concerns—we visit them and refer to them by their names, we read them their favorite books and play them their favorite music. In many cases, it

seems like an individual in a persistent vegetative state survives, though she does so in a diminished state. Traditionally, only the biological approach to personal identity is able to accommodate this intuition.

But the biological approach has its own problems. For example, the biological approach to personal identity isn't able to explain the intuition that an individual can survive a cerebrum transplant. It seems intuitive that the individual who possesses the cerebrum is identical to the individual whose cerebrum was taken. But on the biological approach to personal identity, the cerebrum's location is irrelevant to persistence and personal identity; the individual whose cerebrum was removed simply persists as an individual without a cerebrum. This is widely held as a counterintuitive claim, and one that Eric Olson (1997) spends a considerable amount of time defending.

In contrast, the Person Life View can explain both why individuals in persistent vegetative states and individuals who have undergone cerebrum transplants persist. Because the Person Life View does not put forth necessary or sufficient conditions for the persistence of person lives, Schechtman can argue, without the threat of contradiction, that in some cases biological continuity in the absence of psychological continuity is enough to sustain persistence and in other cases psychological continuity alone is enough. In the case of persistent vegetative states, an individual can persist—she can remain the same locus of our person-related questions and concerns—even in the absence of important psychological features. In the case of cerebrum transplants, psychological continuity alone is enough to render an individual the same locus of our person-related questions and concerns. The pluralistic component of the Person Life View makes it incredibly flexible, allowing it to accommodate a wide range of cases of intuitive persistence that monistic views cannot.

But the flexibility of pluralism comes at a cost. It's advantageous to be able to accommodate a wide swath of intuitive cases of persistence, but this can make it more difficult to exclude cases of counterintuitive persistence. For example, consider the surviving animal transfer case: the body from which a cerebrum was removed to be transferred is kept alive in a persistent vegetative state (Schechtman 2014, 154-159). Who does the original person survive as, the individual in the persistent vegetative state or the cerebrum transfer? Because the Person Life View allows for both individuals in persistent vegetative states and cerebrum transfers to persist, the view seems committed to the original person being identical to both the body in the persistent vegetative state *and* the cerebrum transfer. This would be problematic, for many of the same reasons that cases of fission pose problems for views of personal identity (Parfit 1984). While it's not coherent for the original person to be identical to both the individual in the persistent vegetative state and the cerebrum transfer, it's difficult to draw a principled distinction between the case in which an individual survives in a persistent vegetative state and a case in which an individual doesn't survive in a persistent vegetative state because their cerebrum was removed and transplanted.⁸ After all, the individual in the persistent vegetative state possesses exactly the same biological properties that render others in persistent vegetative states unified targets of practical concern. Schechtman must explain why certain biological features do not sustain the persistence of an individual in a persistent vegetative state whose cerebrum has been transplanted when those very same features are enough to secure persistence in the case of an individual in a persistent vegetative state whose cerebrum hasn't been transplanted.

⁸ This isn't the only possible outcome for such a case. It could be that the individual in the persistent vegetative state is identical to the original individual and the cerebrum transplant is not, or neither individual is identical to the original individual. But notice that the Person Life View must still explain why in some cases a certain subset of persistence-relevant relations and properties is enough to secure persistence while in other cases it is not.

3. Essentialism, Conventionalism, and HPC

The pluralism of the Person Life View allows it to accommodate a wide range of intuitions about persistence, but it also opens the view up to a puzzle for pluralism: What determines when only a subset of these identity-related properties and relations is enough to secure persistence and when it is not? One ready response is that it's just a matter of convention that we can survive in persistent vegetative states but cannot survive as both individuals in persistent vegetative states and cerebrum transfers. We judge that an individual survives in a persistent vegetative state because it's useful to do so, and if their cerebrum were removed and transplanted, then it would be useful to judge the transplant, and only the transplant, to be continuous with the original individual (or vice versa). Schechtman is resistant to such conventional responses to these puzzle cases. She grants that we may very well make these judgments—we presumably would treat only one of these individuals as continuous with or identical to the past individual. However, she argues that there is a further explanation: such judgments are responsive to certain facts in the world. But what features of the world could our treatment track? In order to address such puzzles without collapsing into conventionalism, Schechtman utilizes an influential model from the philosophy of science—HPC—to develop her account of person lives. Schechtman follows Winston Chiong's characterization of HPC, where a kind "...involves a cluster of characteristics—none of which is in itself necessary and sufficient for an organism to be alive, but all of which contribute to an organism's being alive and tend to reinforce one another in paradigm cases" (Chiong 2005, 25).

Initially, the choice of HPC seems promising. There are typically three approaches to understanding the ontological status of kinds and substances: essentialism, conventionalism, and HPC. By adopting a pluralist view of personal identity that doesn't rely on necessary or sufficient

conditions, Schechtman parts ways with traditional essentialist understandings of our nature.⁹ On the Person Life View, we are neither fundamentally creatures with certain psychological capacities nor biological organisms, since neither psychological nor biological properties are necessary for personhood or persistence. And, because Schechtman views conventionalism as an unacceptable account of our ontology, HPC is a natural alternative to develop her account of person lives.¹⁰ Schechtman argues that a person life involves a cluster of properties—psychological, biological, and social—none of which are necessary or sufficient for the existence or persistence of a person life.

Using HPC, Schechtman can provide a non-conventionalist response to the puzzle case above. Persons and persistence aren't products of our judgment. Rather, there are several properties clustered together in the world that constitute persons and determine their persistence conditions. Our judgments aren't what determine the cluster of properties that surround persons and persistence—that work is done by something else.

Though Schechtman thoroughly details the interconnectedness of the many person-related properties, it's not clear that these properties are best accommodated by HPC. To see this, it will be helpful to review the purpose HPC was originally meant to serve. According to many, HPC was originally intended to chart the course between conventionalism and essentialism about natural kinds (Slater 2015; Craver 2009). Essentialists maintain that there are underlying essences that explain why certain properties cluster together, and conventionalists argue that natural kinds are simply products of our judgment—we cluster certain sets of properties together because it's useful to do so. HPC

⁹ For two famous and thorough defenses of essentialism, see Eric Olson (1997), who argues that we are essentially human animals, and Lynne Rudder Baker (2000), who argues that we are essentially persons, where being a person involves certain psychological capacities.

¹⁰ Schechtman does grant that there are a limited number of cases in which the Person Life View allows for a small amount of conventionalism, but she argues that this doesn't entail that our judgments about paradigmatic cases of personhood and personal identity are conventional (Schechtman 2014, 156-157).

has the flexibility of conventionalism and the explanatory robustness of essentialism. By jettisoning the requirement of necessary and sufficient conditions that plagues essentialist accounts, HPC is as flexible as conventionalism—it can account for both multiply realizable and heterogeneous kinds. HPC is also able to capture the explanatory force of essentialism through the introduction of homeostatic mechanisms, which can explain *why* members of a given kind share certain properties.

Richard Boyd writes:

I argue that there are a number of scientifically important kinds (properties, relations, etc.) whose natural definitions are very much like the property-cluster definitions postulated by ordinary-language philosophers except that the unity of the properties in the defining cluster is mainly causal rather than conceptual. The natural definition of one of these homeostatic property cluster kinds is determined by the members of a cluster of often co-occurring properties and by the ('homeostatic') mechanisms that bring about their co-occurrence. (Boyd 1991, 141)

Take, for example, the view that species taxa are HPC kinds (Boyd 1999, Wilson et al. 2007).¹¹ An essentialist account of species holds that *all* members must share an intrinsic property that serves as that species' essence. But such uniformity can't be found amongst species. Rather, the properties associated with a given species change over time and vary across the species at any given time (Wilson et. al. 2007). HPC can handle this kind of variation—species members typically share several properties, none of which are necessary or sufficient for species membership. For example, the species members of *Phascolarctos cinereus*, koalas, typically have spoon-shaped noses, eat exclusively eucalyptus leaves, and are largely sedentary. A conventionalist would argue that our judgments about koalas and their properties are just a feature of how we think about the world—we think of the spoon-shaped noses as distinctive of koalas because it's useful to do so. Wilson differentiates the HPC account of species from a merely conventional view by arguing that “the

¹¹ This view is controversial. The following discussion is not meant to be a defense of the view that species are HPC kinds, rather it is only meant to serve as an illustration of how HPC can be both theoretically flexible and explanatorily robust.

mechanisms that maintain any given HPC are a part of the natural world, not simply our way of thinking about or intervening in the world” (Wilson 2005, 118). An HPC account would propose a mechanism by which these properties cluster. In this case, perhaps the koalas’ shared ancestry and their ability to interbreed, along with similar ecological niches and developmental constraints, are the causal mechanisms responsible for clustering these properties together.¹²

Each model takes as its explananda sets of property clusters—conventionalists argue that these properties are clustered together because we judge them to be so, essentialists argue they cluster because of a shared essence, and defenders of HPC argue that their clustering is caused by a homeostatic mechanism.¹³ Thus, the proposal of homeostatic mechanisms is what sets HPC apart from both conventionalism and essentialism. Accordingly, when utilizing HPC to describe a given kind, it’s vital to isolate the homeostatic mechanism that underlies the property cluster in question. As Craver argues, HPC kinds wouldn’t be HPC kinds without a homeostatic mechanism (Craver 2009, 578-579).

¹² This isolation of mechanisms that can explain the homeostasis of a set of properties is not unique to natural kind accounts of species. Natural kind accounts of emotions, for example, do so as well. According to Lisa Barrett: “Natural-kind models of emotion not only assume that there are distinct profiles of responses to characterize each kind of emotion, but also assume that these responses are caused by distinct emotion mechanisms” (Barrett 2006, 31). Victor Kumar, in his argument that moral judgment is a natural kind, also considers several possible mechanisms that can account for the typically co-occurring features in moral judgment (Kumar 2015, 2897).

¹³ In this section of the paper, I’m discussing essentialism, conventionalism and homeostatic property cluster theories of *kinds*, not individuals. This could introduce a confusion, since there are those who espouse essentialism in the personal identity literature (e.g. Olson 1997 and Baker 2000) who don’t seem to be concerned with explaining the co-occurrence of certain properties at all, while the theories I’ve discussed above take this to be their main explanandum. But Olson and Baker are essentialists about individuals, and are thus concerned with slightly different questions than those who are essentialists about kinds. Individual essentialists argue that if an individual belongs to a certain kind, then being a member of that kind is an essential property of that individual. Essentialists about kinds are concerned with determining the essential properties of kinds. For more on the distinction between individual and kind essentialism, see Bird & Tobin (2008).

Surprisingly, Schechtman does not discuss a mechanism that could account for the cluster of psychological, biological, and social properties indicative of person lives. It's true that the Person Life View is not an account of a natural kind, but in order to inherit the explanatory robustness of HPC, it must provide an analogous mechanism by which person-related properties cluster. In this way, Schechtman's view is incomplete. Though she articulates the properties that cluster together to inform our concepts of persons and personal identity, she does not provide an account of *why* these properties cluster the way they do (see *figure 1*).

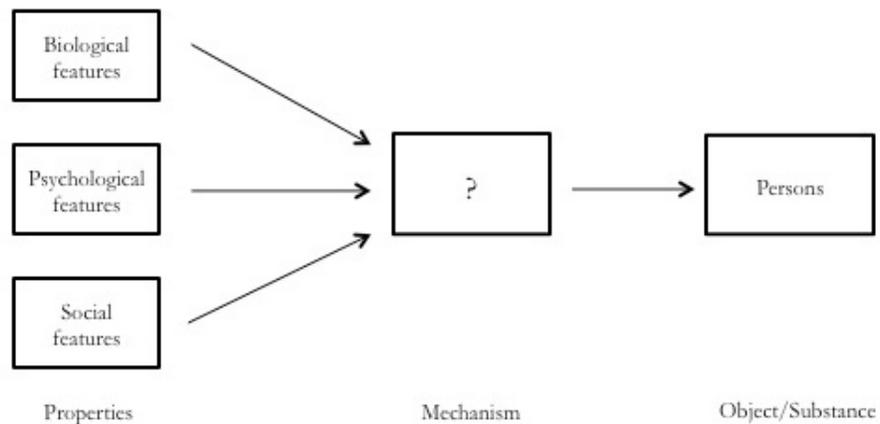


Figure 1. Model of Person Life View

Without articulating a mechanism that can explain the cluster of person related properties, the Person Life View looks dangerously close to a conventionalist account of personhood and personal identity. After all, Schechtman has simply articulated the properties that we typically associate with personhood and personal identity. Perhaps we associate this cluster of properties with personhood simply because it's useful to do so. And maybe the Person Life View can't offer a further explanation as to why we would treat a cerebrum transfer as a person and not the body in a persistent vegetative

state from which it came. It could very well be the case that our judgment is the mechanism by which these identity-related features cluster together (see *figure 2*).

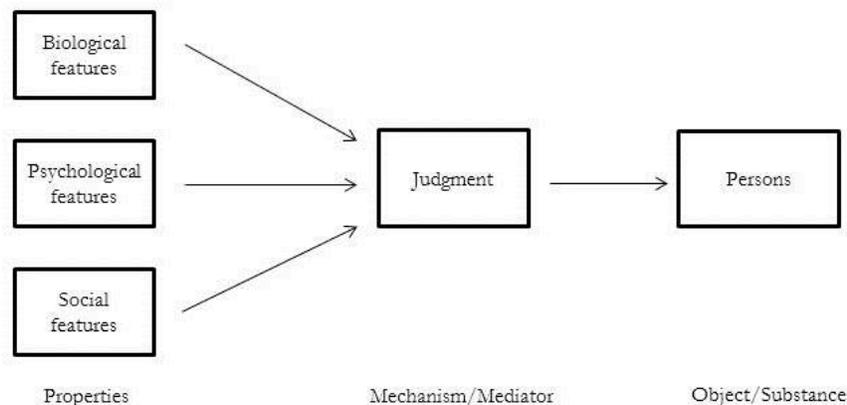


Figure 2. Model of conventionalist Person Life View.

4. Avoiding Conventionalism Without a Mechanism

How can Schechtman resist the conventionalist interpretation of the Person Life View? She provides three reasons to think that her view does not collapse into conventionalism. First, Schechtman argues that our judgments of personhood are automatic and non-arbitrary.

...it is crucial to appreciate the fact that our automatically seeing other humans as persons is not a mere convention or a status we just happen to confer; it is a non-arbitrary designation that carries real significance and is based in facts about our nature. (Schechtman 2014, 121)

First, even if the automaticity of our judgments indicates that they are non-arbitrary, it doesn't follow that these judgments are reliable. A wide range of our judgments, behavior, and even perceptual beliefs (Payne 2001) are colored by implicit bias, for example. Furthermore, automaticity alone doesn't offer evidence against conventionalism. Conventionalist judgments need not be conscious, deliberate decisions. Take two oft-cited conventional artifacts: language and money. David Hume writes:

[L]anguages [are] gradually establish'd by human conventions without any explicit promise. In like manner do gold and silver become the common measures of exchange, and are esteem'd sufficient payment for what is of a hundred times their value. (Hume 1740, 490)

Both words and money inherit their meaning and value, respectively, not from any fact found in the world—these matters are in some sense up to us.¹⁴ Yet this doesn't impinge on our ability to automatically and without reflection judge any given string of letters to be a word or any particular hunk of copper-plated zinc to be a penny. In fact, it seems plausible that the level of deliberation and automaticity with which we make word and money judgments is no different than the level of deliberation and automaticity with which we make judgments of personhood.

Next, Schechtman argues that our judgments about personhood and personal identity are responsive to facts about the world, and in this way they are not conventional: "I have emphasized that whether or not we accord someone a place in person-space is not truly a matter of choice, but a response to how things are in the world as we experience it" (Schechtman 2014, 157). But it is also possible to make judgments about matters of convention that are responsive to facts about the world. The physical matter that constitutes a monetary unit exists in the world, but that doesn't render money non-conventional. Likewise, the social, biological, and psychological properties Schechtman argues are relevant to personal identity are also facts about the world. But the judgments we form about personhood and personal identity in response to these facts can still be conventionalist (see *figure 2*). We judge that particular properties cluster together not because they in fact cluster together in the world but simply because it is useful to do so.

¹⁴ The conventional status of both artifacts, especially language, may be controversial. But note that no argument about whether these objects are products of convention relies on the automaticity of our judgments about these objects. In this way, automaticity seems wholly irrelevant to whether an object is a product of convention.

Finally, Schechtman also links judgments that are matters of choice with judgments about conventional objects (Schechtman 2014, 157). She argues that because we don't make a choice about treating individuals as persons, such judgments cannot be conventional. But even if we grant that we don't make explicit choices about who are persons and who are not, this doesn't mean that personhood isn't up to us in an important sense. The clustering of properties need not be a conscious or deliberate choice, but could rather take place over time with no explicit decision to do so. Hume characterized the process by which money and language gained meaning and value as gradually established without any explicit promise (1740, 490), and the same can be said for the development of our concepts of persons and personhood.¹⁵

Neither the automaticity of our personhood and persistence judgments, nor the fact that these judgments are responsive to facts about the world and aren't a matter of choice is enough to render the Person Life View impervious to the threat of conventionalism. In order to avoid this threat, the Person Life View should utilize the full arsenal HPC has at its disposal—a defender of the Person Life View ought to propose a mechanism by which these person-relevant properties cluster in the world.

5. Three Possible Mechanisms

But what mechanism could plausibly be responsible for the dense cluster of biological, psychological, and social properties unique to person lives? In this section, I'll explore three possible mechanisms that Schechtman could rely on to avoid the threat of conventionalism: evolution itself,

¹⁵ There is an interesting difference between our judgments about money and our judgments about persons. It may be possible to choose to recognize a different currency, but it would be very difficult to purposefully choose to recognize different beings with a different cluster of properties as persons. This is indeed an interesting asymmetry, but it doesn't necessarily speak to an asymmetry in these objects' ontological status. It doesn't follow that the more intractable a judgment the more likely it is to track facts about the world. Conventions, after all, can be more or less intractable.

an evolved psychological mechanism, and the causal interaction of the person-related properties. In each case, I'll argue that it's unlikely that such a mechanism could do the work that Schechtman would need in order to avoid conventionalism about personal identity.

5.a. Did we evolve to be persons?

Evolution is a mechanism often utilized by homeostatic property cluster theorists. For example, Boyd famously argues that species are defined in terms of shared properties and the evolutionary mechanisms that sustain this homeostasis (Boyd 1999). But can an evolutionary mechanism really be responsible for the cluster of psychological, biological, and social features characteristic of person lives? There's good reason to think not. It seems relatively uncontroversial that whatever biological features are indicative of persons are a product of evolution, but it's unclear that an equally plausible account can be made for our psychological and social features that play a role on the Person Life View.

The mechanisms by which society evolves are remarkably different than the mechanisms related to biological evolution. Our person-related psychological and social features change much too quickly to be explained in terms of biological evolution. Biological evolution is a notoriously slow process—much too slow to account for the development of social institutions and the ever-shifting psychological states associated with personhood. Biological evolution cannot explain the development of industrialized and factory farming or the growth of the pharmaceutical industry. And while these social institutions affect the biological evolution of the human organism, as Schechtman notes, these institutions themselves cannot be a product of evolution—they develop much too quickly to be accounted for by such a slow process.

Our biological, psychological, and social properties causally interact, but each set of person-related features is most plausibly the product of distinct mechanisms: Biological evolution generates

our biological properties, our psychological features are a product of the various psychological mechanisms studied by cognitive scientists, and our social features are a product of social evolution, which takes inputs from both biological evolution (and psychological processes as well) but is a distinct mechanism given the faster rate at which it can produce properties.¹⁶ Given the variety of mechanisms involved in the production of our biological, psychological, and social features, biological evolution alone doesn't seem like a plausible candidate for the underlying mechanism that clusters together all of these properties.¹⁷

5.b. Can there be more than one mechanism?

One might think that Schechtman can still utilize an HPC framework to account for person lives even if each set of person-related features is most plausibly the product of distinct mechanisms. But once it's discovered that a cluster of properties is explained by more than one mechanism, those who develop HPC accounts of natural kinds split the cluster into smaller clusters, each constituting its own natural kind.¹⁸ The motivation to break putative kinds down into smaller kinds that are regulated by single causal homeostatic mechanisms isn't an accident—it's a feature of HPC. As

¹⁶ One may argue that biological facts are necessary for these social and psychological processes to arise, and thus all person-relevant features really are the product of a single biological mechanism. Even though biology is certainly necessary, there are several additional features that are required to explain these complex social and psychological features—biological facts alone are not sufficient to account for them. Furthermore, someone like Schechtman would be reluctant to accept such a view, since she focuses on providing a pluralist account of personal identity and one that does not give priority to any single set of properties.

¹⁷ If Schechtman pared down the set of properties relevant to personhood and personal identity, it would be more likely that a single mechanism, like biological evolution, could do the work required of an HPC account. But such a move would necessitate eliminating at least some features that ground our treatment of persons as loci of practical concerns from the theory of personal identity, which would violate the dependence model Schechtman defends.

¹⁸ Craver (2009) gives several examples of this “splitting strategy:” Paul Griffiths (1997) breaks the kind ‘emotion’ down into three kinds: affect programs, higher cognitive emotions, and social emotions; many who argue for the massive modularity thesis are motivated by splitting considerations; memory has been replaced as a natural kind by specific kinds of memory—episodic, procedural, working, etc.—by many psychologists and neuroscientists because these distinct kinds of memory are regulated by distinct mechanisms (Craver 2009, 581).

Craver (2009) notes, mechanisms develop and evolve differently and independently of one another, and if a proposed kind's properties are causally regulated by distinct mechanisms, then breaking down the putative kind into smaller kinds whose properties are regulated by a single mechanism will be more useful when it comes to predication and explanation, which is precisely what sets HPC apart from conventional accounts.

While HPC requires person lives to be split into kinds whose properties are regulated by a single mechanism, Schechtman's account can't survive splitting. For Schechtman, a key component of her view is the interplay of the biological, psychological, and social features that characterize a person life. And while this may very well be a theoretically important aspect of our lives to capture, it can't be done in an HPC framework.

5.c. Did we evolve to detect persons?

While it seems unlikely that biological evolution is responsible for the cluster of properties indicative of person lives, perhaps evolution could play a slightly different role on the Person Life View. Indeed, though Schechtman never explicitly offers an account of a homeostatic mechanism, she briefly discusses the possible evolutionary origins of our ability to detect persons:

When we encounter other humans we automatically see them as persons and interact with them as such. It is not surprising that we treat our conspecifics this way—there are very good reasons that our evolutionary history would have selected us to do so. (Schechtman 2014, 113)

While it may initially seem like this discussion of person-detection is distinct, and perhaps tangential to, the nature of persons, it could still help Schechtman mount a defense against conventionalism.¹⁹

¹⁹ Even if Schechtman can develop an account of a person-detection mechanism, it is controversial whether this will be enough to overcome the threat of conventionalism. In their paper "Personhood and Neuroscience: Naturalizing or Nihilating?" Martha Farah and Andrea Heberlein argue that though there is a person network in the brain, personhood is a kind of illusion—persons don't correspond to any real category of objects in the world (Farah & Heberlein 2007, 45). It should also be noted that the kind of mechanism

After all, if we've evolved a mechanism by which we can easily detect persons, then Schechtman may very well be right that our person judgments really are responsive to facts about the world. There is a large literature on such evolutionarily selected psychological mechanisms. Evolutionary psychologists have offered explanations of several facets of human behavior in terms of psychological mechanisms that are products of natural or sexual selection.

Following these evolutionary psychologists, Schechtman could argue that we've evolved a psychological mechanism to detect persons. After all, it's almost certainly true that we are able to detect other humans easily—this is true for many other species, like the *Heliconius cyndo* butterflies (Sweeny et. al. 2003) and there's evidence that humans possess a psychological mechanism that facilitates facial recognition (Nelson 2001). But being able to recognize *humans* is very different than being able to recognize *persons*. According to Schechtman "...being a person does not simply amount to being a member of the species *Homo sapiens*" (Schechtman 2014, 137). Indeed, she explicitly leaves open the possibility of nonhuman persons (Schechtman 2014, 131-137). And if Schechtman wants to avoid conventionalism about *persons*, then she must propose and defend the existence of a person detection mechanism. But it's unlikely that a person detection mechanism exists, given both the diversity of the contexts in which we make judgments about personal identity and the variety of person-relevant properties on the Person Life View.

According to evolutionary psychologists, the human brain consists of many domain-specific modules. Examples of such mechanisms include the cheater detection module (Cosmides 1989), the snake fear module (Marks 1987), and the facial recognition module (Nelson 2001). These modules

Farah and Heberlein provide evidence for is not the kind of mechanism that Schechtman's account requires. Farah and Heberlein's mechanism is triggered by stimuli like human-like faces and contingent patterns of behavior. Schechtman's account would require a mechanism that is triggered by stimuli related to person lives—psychological, biological, and social features—which are very different than the stimuli at work on Farah and Heberlein's model.

were selected to solve specific problems that humans once faced. The cheater detection module, for example, is supposed to have evolved to detect those individuals who intentionally take the benefit specified in a social exchange without incurring the cost required by the exchange (Cosmides & Tooby 1992). According to Cosmides and Tooby, this module evolved to solve a specific problem and cannot facilitate logical reasoning in general, reasoning about social contracts, or even detecting altruists (Cosmides & Tooby 1992).

While cheaters only arise in the context of social exchange, persons are much more ubiquitous. Our judgments about persons encompass a variety of contexts and serve many purposes. Schechtman recognizes the ubiquity of our personal identity judgments. In fact, it's one of the key motivations for adopting a pluralist perspective.

In everyday life we use the word “person” in many different ways. Sometimes it means “human animal,” sometimes “moral agent,” sometimes “rational, self-conscious subject,” sometimes “possessor of particular rights,” sometimes “being with a defined personality or character,” and there are many other senses as well. Each of these conceptions of *person* has its own corresponding criterion of personal identity, and there is no reason to assume that we can find some single relation which underlies our judgments about the identity of a “person” in every context. (Schechtman 2014, 2)

The modules proposed by evolutionary psychologists are domain-specific—they evolved to serve a very limited number of functions. But our judgments of persons serve many, many functions. Judgments about personal identity are required to issue judgments about moral responsibility, compensation, ownership, and self-concern, to name a few. Not only are these wildly different contexts, but they also require wildly different notions of persons, as Schechtman notes in the passage above. If there were a single mechanism that generated these person-judgments, it would be unlike any other mechanism proposed by evolutionary psychologists—it would fail to be domain-specific.

Precisely because our personal identity judgments serve many functions, Schechtman argues that living a person life (being a person) is characterized by many diverse features, including biological, psychological, and social properties. So, if we were to possess a mechanism by which we could easily detect persons, this mechanism should be able to accept a variety of biological, psychological, and social inputs. But the psychological mechanisms proposed by evolutionary psychologists accept only a small set of inputs. For example, the snake fear module is only triggered by a very narrow range of stimuli, like a long, slithering object within striking distance (Buss, 1995). But there couldn't be a similarly small set of inputs for the person detection mechanism given the Person Life View. Persons, unlike snakes or cheaters (or even humans), don't present in any one particular way. To detect persons, one must have a mechanism that is able to take any exhibition of a wide variety of biological, psychological, and social properties as an input. But such a mechanism would again be wholly unlike anything thus far proposed by evolutionary psychologists.

Schechtman is most likely right that: "When we encounter other *humans* we automatically see them as persons and interact with them as such" (Schechtman 2014, 113 emphasis added). But the existence of a human detection module will not save the Person Life View from conventionalism. Only a person detection module can do that. But given the diversity of contexts in which we make person judgments and the many person-related properties the Person Life View is committed to, it's implausible that such a mechanism exists.

5.d. Could causal interaction generate persons?

It seems unlikely that biological evolution can be responsible for the cluster of biological, psychological, and social features indicative of person lives or a mechanism that produces our person-judgments, but other forces may be available. For example, Boyd and others, though they focus mainly on underlying mechanisms, allow for the possibility that the causal relations between

the properties themselves compose the homeostatic mechanism (Craver, 578). And perhaps this is the kind of mechanism that Schechtman has in mind, after all she details the causal interactions of biological, psychological, and social properties at length.

But in order for person lives to be regulated by this kind of mechanism, the properties in the cluster must “...all cause one another” (see (a) and (d) in *Figure 3*) (Craver, 582).²⁰ Wilson et al. argue that only the clustering of *causally basic* properties are relevant to the determination of a kind, where causally basic properties are those that cause other theoretically interesting properties to obtain (Wilson et al., 2007).

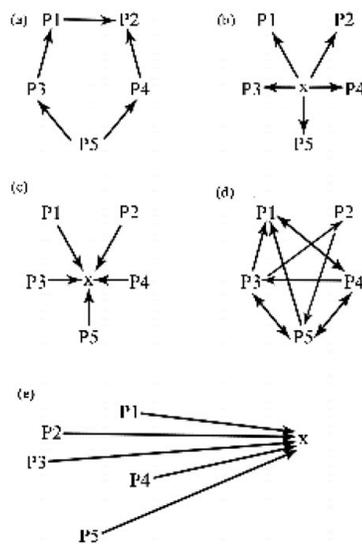


Figure 3. Relations between property cluster and mechanisms (Craver 2009, 583)

The relationships between the properties associated with person lives aren't this robust. Our biological, social, and psychological features causally interact with one another, but properties can causally interact without each property being the cause of the others. Our biological features

²⁰ Craver's example of such a relationship is how the rising phase of an action potential of a neuron causes its future declining phase (Craver 2009, 582).

contribute to, and depend on, our social features, and vice versa, but it's not as if facts about our metabolic system cause facts about the etiquette surrounding mealtimes, and certainly not vice versa.

Perhaps Schechtman could argue that HPC accounts of scientific kinds might require robust causal relationships between clustered properties, but an account of persons needn't be so strict. Schechtman could contend that mere causal interaction is enough to cluster the biological, psychological, and social properties relevant to persons. But if mere causal interaction is able to generate homeostatic mechanisms and sustain the existence of kinds, then the world would be populated with a great deal of objects that come into existence as causal interaction is initiated (and go out of existence as causal interaction ends). Salutatory gestures alone—handshakes, high fives and fist bumps—would constitute their own class of homeostatic kinds. Of course, some may find such an ontological view appealing. But if Schechtman accepts this view, doing so comes at a cost. First, on such a view, persons and fist bumps have the same ontological status, since both are sustained only by the causal interaction of properties. Second, such a view would lack the explanatory force of traditional HPC accounts. If mere causal interaction is all that's required to generate a kind, it would be no better off than conventionalist accounts in terms of generating an explanation for the existence of a given kind. Just as conventionalist approaches cannot explain *why* the clustering of certain properties is useful, an account that relies on the mere causal interaction of properties cannot explain *why* the causal interaction of certain properties is constitutive of a kind. Thus, if Schechtman holds her account of persons to a lower standard than other HPC accounts, she would not only risk reducing the ontological significance of persons, she would lose the main benefit of HPC—the ability to provide a robust explanation for the existence of a kind.²¹

²¹ While proposing a mechanism is the only way to utilize HPC to avoid conventionalism, Schechtman could model her account on other purportedly non-conventional accounts that don't require such mechanisms,

Schechtman's view is different than traditional monistic accounts in that it endorses the plurality of our person-related concerns. But this alone is not enough to set the Person Life View apart from conventionalist approaches. All accounts of kinds can accommodate a plurality of properties²²—it's *how* these properties come together that distinguishes conventionalism, essentialism, and HPC. Until Schechtman is able to articulate either a mechanism that causes these biological, psychological, and social properties to cluster, or a way in which the causal interactions of these properties themselves generate a mechanism, the Person Life View cannot overcome the threat of conventionalism.²³

6. Shedding Mechanisms: An Argument from Parsimony

There may be a deeper reason that underlines the Person Life View's trouble with finding an appropriate homeostatic mechanism. Recall the original motivation for the Person Life View: Schechtman adopts the dependence model of the relationship between personal identity and our practical concerns. On this model, a theory of personal identity must render persons appropriate targets of our practical concerns and practices—our judgment, concerns, and values determine

such as hylomorphism (Hershenov 2008), closest continuer theories (Nozick 1981; Noonan 1985), and theories of natural forms of life (Foot 2001). This is certainly an option open to Schechtman, though it's worth noting that the Person Life View would most likely have to undergo considerable revisions in order to properly follow these views. For example, it's unclear how the importance the Person Life View places on social infrastructure will translate into a hylomorphic account, which traditionally focus only on the soul and body, or how the Person Life View will handle the importance hylomorphic accounts place on the existence of the soul. And, even if Schechtman can successfully model her account on these alternate views, the threat of conventionalism could still be a problem. For example, if Schechtman adopts a closest continuer model, what will determine which continuer is the closest? If this new view bears any similarity to the Person Life View, closeness will presumably be determined by treatment, which again raises the threat of conventionalism.

²² But everyone party to the debate—essentialists, conventionalists, and defenders of HPC—can accept that these features causally interact without any further commitment. Schechtman acknowledges this: “As far as I am aware no one denies that in the ordinary course of events the lives of human persons have biological, psychological, and social components, nor that these components interact in the ways I have described” (Schechtman 2014, 149).

²³ Even if Schechtman is able to propose such a mechanism, mechanisms have become a problematic aspect of HPC. Carl Craver (2009), for example, argues that the threat of conventionalism for HPC cannot be eliminated by the introduction of a mechanism. And Mathew Slater (2015) argues that mechanisms present both necessity and sufficiency worries for HPC.

which relations are relevant to personal identity.²⁴ In this way, the original model of the Person Life View (*figure 1*) is incomplete, for it doesn't illustrate the important relationship between our practical judgment, concerns, etc. and personal identity (see *figure 4* for a model that represents this relationship).

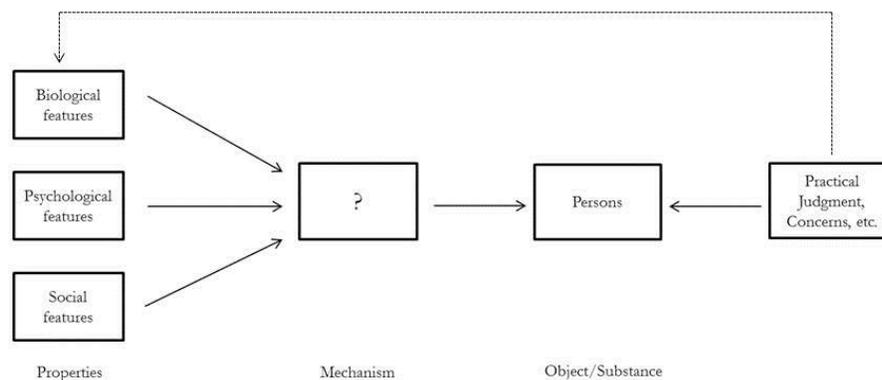


Figure 4. Model of Person Life View with judgment.

On the Person Life View, our practical judgment and concerns determine which properties are relevant to personal identity (this relationship is represented by a dotted left-pointing arrow). And persons possess a cluster of these properties, as determined by a currently unknown mechanism (this relationship is represented by the right-pointing arrows). We then are able to make judgments about persons and personal identity (this relationship is represented by the solid left-pointing arrow), and whether these judgments are appropriate depends on whether they track the product of the unknown mechanism.

²⁴ Schechtman also notes that our practical concerns are dependent on personal identity as well, because “identity must be in place before particular practical judgments can be appropriately made...” (Schechtman 2014, 41). However, this doesn't entail that there must exist a mechanism independent of judgment that determines the appropriateness of judgments about persons and personal identity. Take a conventional practice like dinner etiquette: our cares, concerns, and practical judgment determine that the fork is placed to the left of the plate in a formal place setting in Western social settings. The appropriateness of our practical judgments about place settings depends on the fact that forks are placed to the left of plates in Western social settings, but this is entirely governed by convention.

But what work is this mysterious mechanism actually doing? The job of a homeostatic mechanism is to cluster a set of properties together. But on the dependence model of personal identity, that work has already been done by our practical judgment and concerns. If the role of selecting person-relevant properties is filled by practical judgment, then the role of the homeostatic mechanism begins to look even more dubious. Not only would such a mechanism be tasked with clustering an incredibly diverse set of properties, it's also charged with doing the exact same work that our judgment, cares, and concerns are responsible for. But all things being equal, our theories should be ontologically parsimonious. Surely positing the existence of a homeostatic mechanism that is meant to do the same work that practical judgment can accomplish multiplies these mechanisms beyond necessity. And, because the nature of the homeostatic mechanism is mysterious and we don't have any independent reason to think that such a mechanism exists, considerations of parsimony give us reason to think that the existence of such a mechanism is incredibly unlikely.

7. Pluralism Without Conventionalism?

Schechtman developed the Person Life View in order to accommodate all of our identity-related practical concerns. One might ask whether this desideratum itself is what compels the Person Life View to collapse into conventionalism as opposed to anything internal to the view. If the goal is to explain our practical concerns, doesn't this render the role of practical judgment ineliminable? It may not be possible to be a pluralist about personal identity without collapsing into conventionalism.

But this jump from wanting to accommodate our identity-related practical concerns to rendering our judgment ineliminable is too quick. I think it's possible to develop a pluralist view of personal identity that avoids the threat of conventionalism. In another essay I develop the "Subscript View" of personal identity, according to which there exist multiple types of selves, including one psychological (self_p) and one biological (self_b) (Tierney MS). On this view, there exist (at least) two

individuals where we once thought there was only one, a psychological individual (self_p) and a biological individual (self_b). And distinct survival relations obtain between these distinct individuals: self_p can survive psychologically— surviving_p —and self_b survives biologically— surviving_b . According to the Subscript View, there is no singular, more basic persistence relation beyond survival_p or survival_b , and there is no singular, more basic being beyond self_p and self_b .

The Subscript View can accommodate all of the practical concerns the Person Life View set out to explain and doesn't suffer from the same charge of conventionalism. Whether the very thing that grounds persistence, the continuation of a person life, obtains is a matter of judgment on Schechtman's view (or so I argue). But there is nothing conventional about the subscript relations; biological and psychological continuity are metaphysical relations that uncontroversially obtain independently of our judgment. Of course, the fact that those relations, as opposed to others, are relevant to persistence and personal identity is at least partially in virtue of what we value. But most views of personal identity attempt to explain our identity-related practical concerns (e.g., Parfit, 1984, Baker 2000, but cf. Olson 1997), and that has not been taken to render them conventional accounts. Even Animalism is beholden to certain facts about what we care about when it comes to persistence, if not our practical concerns.²⁵ On the Person Life View, our values partially constitute persistence, while on the Subscript View, our values simply help determine which relations are relevant to persistence.²⁶ In short, if we wish to pursue a pluralist account of personal identity, there are more promising views than the Person Life View.

²⁵ For example, one large source of intuitive support for the Animalist position is the belief that we were once fetuses and can one day enter persistent vegetative states. In this way, the Animalist view can capture at least one thing we care about when it comes to personal identity.

²⁶ To contend that two individuals are co-located arguably requires the defender of the Subscript View to subscribe to the principle of plenitude, which claims that there exist all possible combinations of modal properties (Bennett 2004). This would mean that the kinds of creatures that live person lives exist right

8. Conclusion

I began this paper by introducing a puzzle for views of personal identity that reject necessary and sufficient conditions for persistence. Such views must explain why in some cases a certain subset of persistence-relevant relations is enough to secure persistence yet in other cases it is not. One solution to this puzzle is to argue that the difference between such cases is a matter of convention. Our values and concerns dictate that we can survive in persistent vegetative states and as cerebrum transplants independently, but we cannot survive both in a persistent vegetative state and as a cerebrum transplant. Schechtman resists the conventional approach and attempts to differentiate these cases by providing an HPC account of personal identity. But Schechtman fails to specify a key component of HPC—she does not articulate a homeostatic mechanism that gives rise to both personhood and personal identity. Furthermore, neither biological evolution nor the causal interaction between our biological, psychological, and social features can likely be the homeostatic mechanism that regulates these properties. Indeed, given the important causal role our practical judgment and concerns play on the Person Life View, it's unlikely that any homeostatic mechanism can fulfill a non-redundant causal role in the generation of persons. And without a plausible mechanism, the Person Life View collapses into conventionalism. Thus, given the commitments of the Person Life View, perhaps its best response to the puzzle for pluralism is a conventional one.

alongside $self_p$ and $self_b$. However, we can still pick out $self_p$ and $self_b$ as the targets of our persistence judgments and theorizing given that they are not products of convention while the person life creatures are.

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The Subscript View: A Distinct View of Distinct Selves

“Grace to be born and live as variously as possible.”

Frank O’hara

1. Introduction

The question “What am I?” seems to admit of many answers. Barack Obama, for example, is the 44th President of the United States, a husband, and a Chicago Bulls fan. These answers, however, are of little interest to those who work on personal identity and persistence. When it comes to personal identity, philosophers are not primarily interested in our occupations, familial relations, or team affiliations. Rather, philosophers are interested in, among other things, what kind of beings we are *fundamentally* and what is required for a being like us to persist through time. These are two distinct concerns but they can get run together, often explicitly. When some philosophers entertain the question “What am I?” they find that the relation (or property or essence) that makes creatures like us distinct from all other creatures is also the very same relation that if lost, would render Barack Obama (and any other individual) non-existent. For example, Locke argues that consciousness is what distinguishes persons from other creatures and sameness of consciousness is what makes a person the same person over time:

For, since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes every one to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational being: and as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done.” (Locke 1975, 335).

Locke is not the only philosopher to propose a single relation (or property or essence) that is both distinctive of persons and grounds their diachronic persistence. In his early work, Eric Olson contends that creatures like us are fundamentally biological organisms and biological continuity is the relation that determines persistence (1997). And Lynne Rudder Baker, herself a neo-Lockean,

argues that what it means to be a person is to have first-person perspective and she argues that diachronic persistence requires sameness of first-person perspective (2001). Though these philosophers defend very different views, they all take both synchronic and diachronic features of personal identity and persistence to be grounded in a single relation (or property or essence). The assumption of monism is often an acceptable theoretical desideratum, usually generating the simplest explanations with the most minimal ontology. And when it comes to personal identity and persistence, there is something deeply appealing about the notion that a single feature grounds both our personhood (or humanity) and our ability to survive.

However, I will defend pluralism about personal identity and persistence in this essay. Very roughly, the pluralist about personal identity and persistence is committed to there being more than one relation (or property or essence) that can ground who we are fundamentally and that there is more than one way to survive (and perish). Pluralism about personal identity has been understudied and underdeveloped in the literature. It merits greater attention, especially in light of recent work by philosophers and psychologists, which illuminates the great number of our evaluative practices and experiences that presuppose personal identity. These include our practices of holding others morally responsible, our practices of compensation and ownership, and our feelings of anticipation and self-concern.²⁷ A single relation cannot ground or explain all of these evaluative practices and concerns, which are essential to our experience of personal identity and persistence. If we take our philosophical theories to be telling us something about the commonsense conception of personal identity, then we ought to take this empirical work seriously.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are many ways to be a pluralist about personal identity. In this

²⁷ David Shoemaker examines many of these concerns in his forthcoming essay “The Stony Metaphysical Heart of Animalism.”

essay, I propose my own account—the Subscript View. On this view, there exist (at least) two individuals where we once thought there was only one, a psychological individual (self_p) and a biological individual (self_b). And distinct survival relations obtain between these distinct individuals: self_p can survive psychologically— surviving_p —and self_b survives biologically— surviving_b . According to the Subscript View, there is no singular, more basic persistence relation beyond survival_p or survival_b , and there is no singular, more basic being beyond self_p and self_b . To defend the Subscript View, I first outline its theoretical and ontological commitments and then explore how it handles several objections.

2. The Promise of Pluralism

Though pluralism about personal identity is underrepresented in the literature, the complex nature of our intuitions about personal identity is well charted.²⁸ Bernard Williams famously illustrates how malleable our intuitions can be in a series of thought experiments presented in his essay “The Self and the Future” (1970). In some of Williams’s cases, our self-concern can be understood in biological terms. We fear torture that will be inflicted in the future, even if all of our psychological characteristics will be destroyed prior to the torture (1970).

Someone in whose power I am tells me that I am going to be tortured tomorrow. I am frightened, and look forward to tomorrow in great apprehension... He then adds...when the moment of torture comes, I shall not remember any of the things I am now in a position to remember. This does not cheer me up either...Nor do I see why I should be put into any better frame of mind by the person in charge adding lastly that the impression of my past with which I shall be equipped on the eve of torture will exactly fit the past of another person now living, and that indeed I shall acquire these impressions by (for instance) information now in his brain being copied into mine. Fear, surely, would still be the proper reaction: and not because one did not know what was going to happen, but because in one vital respect at least one

²⁸ David Vellman, in his collection of essays *Self to Self*, argues that the word ‘self’ expresses a reflexive mode of presentation, of which there are many. Vellman focuses on the many ways we reflect on ourselves, only one of which is as an individual that persists through time. In this essay, I’ll be concerned with the self that persists through time and whether there is more than one of such selves.

did know what was going to happen—torture, which one can indeed expect to happen to oneself, and to be preceded by certain mental derangements as well. (Williams 1970, 167-168)

Despite radical psychological discontinuity, it still seems appropriate, and perhaps inevitable, to fear what the future brings.

However, if the case is described differently, it looks as though psychological continuity can ground our intuitions about survival. Williams describes the case by first explaining that two individuals, person A and person B, will switch psychologies, such that person B's psychology will be associated with person A's body and person A's psychology will be associated with person B's body (1970). If the A-body-person were tortured, the B-body-person may feel a sense of relief that the torture wasn't happening to *her*, despite the fact that her psychological features were, until recently, associated with the tortured body. This attitude, which is equally natural and inevitable, indicates that psychological continuity can also ground survival judgments.²⁹

Many have argued that our varying reactions to Williams's cases indicate that we have inconsistent intuitions about personal identity. Williams himself notes that our equally strong commitment to contrary judgments of seemingly identical cases is baffling (1970). And Ted Sider also argues that: "A natural explanation is that ordinary thought contains two concepts of persisting persons, each responsible for a separate set of intuitions, neither of which is *our* canonical conception to the exclusion of the other" (Sider 2001, 197).

²⁹ Williams's prediction has been born out in the research. In a survey study, participants were presented with the statement: "In order for some person in the future to be *you*, that person doesn't need to have any of your memories" (Nichols & Bruno 2010). Over 80% of the participants disagreed with this claim (Nichols & Bruno 2010). These responses are in-line with a psychological approach to survival. However, in another study, when presented with a version of Williams's famous thought experiment, participants overwhelmingly agreed that it would be *them* who would feel the pain of shocks administered even after all of their characteristic psychological traits were destroyed (Nichols & Bruno 2010).

Without committing to any particular interpretation of Williams's cases, the pluralist could argue that there is nothing inherently baffling or contradictory about individuals making survival judgments that track different persistence relations. Of course, the pluralist need not be committed to the intuitions elicited in these cases being *right*. They need only be committed to the claim that there is nothing *prima facie* incoherent about utilizing more than one persistence relation in making judgments about survival. In this way, the pluralist would slightly modify Sider's claim, arguing that ordinary thought contains (at least) two concepts of persisting persons, *both of which* are canonical conceptions and not to the exclusion of the other. The fact that our intuitions track psychological continuity in some contexts and biological continuity in others is not a strike against the pluralist view, nor does the pluralist deem the folk confused or incoherent for having such varying intuitions.

2.a. Our many practical concerns

Williams's reflection on these hypothetical scenarios is paradigmatic of how philosophers tend to theorize about personal identity. Traditionally, philosophers create cases that disentangle the different relations commonly thought to ground persistence. Then, to determine which relation actually grounds persistence, they reflect on the practical implications the loss of a particular relation will have compared to the loss of another relation. For example, Williams notes that in at least one case we will most likely exhibit prudential concern for the individual to be tortured the next day despite the loss of psychological continuity with that individual, indicating that biological continuity may be the relation that actually grounds identity and persistence. While our judgments in some cases will conform to the biological approach, our responses to other cases are more in-line with the psychological approach, as Williams illustrates with his switching case. Why do we make such radically different judgments about identity and persistence across different cases? Many argue it's

because we make different judgments about identity in response to different practical considerations.³⁰

Indeed, philosophers have long noted that when it comes to survival, we care about many things. We care that our future selves are loved by our loved ones, spared suffering, rewarded for our good deeds, and compensated for the wrongs and burdens we've endured. We can't make sense of our desire for survival without reference to these seemingly indirect concerns; the desire to persist is embedded within our concerns about compensation, ownership, moral responsibility, and anticipation. But these concerns cannot be explained in terms of a single persistence relation; they require different approaches.

The biological approach grounds many practical concerns. For example, only the biological approach to personal identity can make sense of the very common notion that we were once fetuses and very young babies (Olson 1997, 73-76). Consider the case of compensation, as Shoemaker does in "Personal Identity and Practical Concerns" (2007). Imagine that a doctor negligently induces labor much too early, causing significant harm to the baby.³¹ The baby suffers for several years, but by the time she begins to develop a personality, form memories, and reason, she's fully recovered from the doctor's negligent actions. Though neither the young girl nor the woman she becomes suffer because of the doctor's actions, and though neither is psychologically continuous with the baby who suffered considerably, it still seems that the doctor should compensate the woman for the harm he caused. As Shoemaker argues "If compensation presupposes personal identity, then the best (perhaps only) way to account for these sorts of cases would be a non-psychological criterion" (Shoemaker 2007, 338).

³⁰ For example Marya Schechtman notes "...we employ different considerations to make our everyday judgments of identity in response to different practical demands" (Schechtman 2014, 2).

³¹ Thanks to Robert Wallace and Jacob Barrett for discussing this case with me.

Furthermore, the love and sense of obligation we feel for our loved ones in persistent vegetative states or suffering from dementia seems to be grounded in a biological, not psychological, approach to survival. As Schechtman argues, "...[the Neo-Lockean view] also fails to capture the sense that what remains in dementia is not simply a human organism, but someone one loves who is now in a sadly incapacitated state" (Schechtman 2010, 276). The practical concern of ownership is also plausibly grounded in a biological approach to personal identity. It seems deeply wrong for a nurse or caregiver to take a dementia patient's possessions; indeed, it seems just as wrong as a caregiver taking a cognitizant but ailing patient's possessions. This intuition is codified in laws like the Elder Justice Act, which protects even those suffering from the late stages of dementia from financial abuse. In a recent case, a woman was found guilty of grand theft of personal property from a man who suffered delusions, had no short-term memory, and did not recognize his family or friends.³² If we want the love we feel for those suffering from dementia and our views and laws on ownership to be reflected in a theory of personal identity as more than mere errors or confusions, then we must take seriously the biological approach to personal identity.

But psychological continuity also grounds many of our practical concerns. The belief that psychological continuity matters for survival is what makes stories like *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Freaky Friday* both comprehensible and captivating. Furthermore, a recent study (Nichols & Bruno 2010) indicates that we place significant value on episodic memory when it comes to persistence. Indeed, in the next section I will review a new line of research reflects exactly what several philosophers have suspected: our judgments of survival track different persistence relations in response to different practical concerns.

³² *DeCesare v. Hornbeak*, 207CV-01016 RSM-JLW, 2010 WL 2219365 at 1; 3 (E.D. Cal. June 2, 2010). Thanks to Ben Schiffman for directing me to this case.

2.b. The empirical data on the folk conception of persistence

While philosophers have long discussed the many practical concerns relevant to personal identity, recently psychologists have begun to delve deeper into the nature of our judgments about personal identity and persistence. Daniel Bartels and Oleg Urminsky developed a manipulation that allows researchers to alter individuals' beliefs about psychological connectedness.

Day-to-day life events change appreciably after college graduation, but what changes the most [least] between graduation and life after college is the person's core identity...The characteristics that make you the person you are...are likely to change radically around the time of graduation [are established early in life and fixed by the end of adolescence]...Several studies conducted with young adults before and after college graduation found large fluctuations in these important characteristics [have shown that the traits that make up your personal identity remain remarkably stable]. (Bartels & Urminsky 2011, 185)

When asked to rate on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 indicates that "I will be completely different in the future" and 100 indicates that "I will be exactly the same in the future," participants in the low-connectedness condition gave significantly lower ratings than the baseline and those in the high-connectedness condition gave significantly higher ratings than the baseline (Bartels & Rips 2010; Bartels & Urminsky 2011; Bartels et al. 2013).

Using this manipulation, a recent study found that participants' judgments about how much blame they deserve for a wrong committed a year ago are largely affected by whether they believed that there was high psychological connectedness (Tierney et al. 2014). Participants in the low-connectedness condition, who were made to believe that they are psychologically very different than their past selves, were more likely to believe that they deserved less blame for cheating on a test a year ago than the participants in the high-connectedness condition, who believed that their past selves and current selves are psychologically similar (Tierney et al. 2014). However, Tierney et al. also found that the participants' anxiety about future pain (a root canal) was not significantly different in

the high and low-connectedness conditions (2014). This finding indicates that our judgments regarding self-concern cannot be explained entirely in terms of the psychological approach to personal identity. Rather, a relation like biological connectedness may best ground such judgments. Interestingly, in some contexts, like those involving issues of punishment and moral responsibility, our survival judgments seem to be grounded in a psychological approach to survival, while in other contexts, our judgments are in-line with a completely different approach.³³

It should be noted that this research, though illuminating, is preliminary. While it's safe to conclude that the folk's judgments about practical concerns are informed by more than one persistence relation, more work needs to be done on the exact nature of these relations and the relationships they bear to our practical concerns. It could be that the psychological relations that actually inform our judgments are very different from the relations that philosophers theorize about. In fact, work by Nina Strohminger and Shaun Nichols seems to indicate exactly this—their studies indicate that when it comes to certain neurodegenerative diseases, the loss of our moral faculties, as opposed to our memories or values, exerts the strongest influence on our perceived identity over time (Strohminger and Nichols 2015). It could also be that there are different fine-grained psychological and biological relations that ground different practical concerns, or that certain

³³ One might distinguish between the features that are deep and important to who we are and the features that we would cease to exist without. One could push further and argue that these studies only get at the features that are deep and important, but not essential for persistence. First, it's important to note that the manipulation developed by Bartles and Urminsky alters participants' beliefs about psychological connectedness, which many, though not all, take to be the relation necessary for persistence. Of course, one might deny the necessity of psychological connectedness and argue that while it is a deep and important feature that governs our practical lives, the loss of psychological connectedness would not cause an individual to cease to exist. This is certainly a position one could defend, but to do so successfully would require (1) an analysis of the relation or relations that *are* essential to persistence and (2) an explanation as to why a relation that is so prominent in our practical identity-related judgments is irrelevant to our metaphysical identity-related judgments.

practical concerns are grounded in both psychological and biological relations.³⁴ These are all interesting and important questions to pursue, and more work needs to be done before conclusions can be drawn about what particular psychological and biological relations ground our judgments about personal identity and persistence and how these relations inform our practical concerns. When constructing a pluralist view of personal identity, it will be important to (1) reflect the value that the folk place on both psychological and biological relations and (2) leave it flexible enough to accommodate these future findings.

2.c. Practical concerns and personal identity

If there is a desideratum for a theory of personal identity to accommodate all (or at least most) of our identity-related practical concerns, then we must take pluralism seriously, for it's the only view that can hope to accomplish this daunting task.

Of course, many may not consider it the goal of philosophers to capture our normative concerns in a metaphysical theory. Eric Olson, for example, explicitly rejects such theorizing (1997).³⁵ He takes questions concerning practical matters to be under the purview of ethicists while questions concerning identity and persistence to be purely metaphysical matters. Such a stance represents a fundamentally different methodology in dealing with issues of personal identity than the one that has been assumed up to this point. Though it's beyond the scope of this paper to offer a full defense of treating our identity-related practical concerns and our theories of identity as in fact related, it's not clear what criteria could be used to generate and evaluate our theories of personal identity if we ignored everything we cared about, identity-wise, while theorizing.

³⁴ See Shoemaker (2007).

³⁵ Others include Susan Wolf (1986) and, as Schechtman (2014) discusses, Christine Korsgaard (1989) as well.

There are a plethora of metaphysical relations that individuals at time t_1 bear to future individuals at time t_2 . These include traditional persistence relations, like psychological continuity, and others, like mere similarity in appearance. And if we can't recruit our identity-related practical concerns, how are we to decide which relation among these is the correct persistence relation? On what grounds would psychological continuity be a more appropriate persistence relation than similarity in appearance? It couldn't be counted as evidence that, for example, we think the individual who is psychologically continuous is morally responsible for the actions of the individual at time t_2 , while we wouldn't hold those who simply look like the individual at time t_1 morally responsible for the same actions. Our identity-related values are the greatest constraint on our theorizing about personal identity, beyond theoretical virtues like simplicity and consistency. And even the theoretical virtue of explanatory power can't be evaluated if we refuse to take our identity-related concerns into consideration. If we eliminate identity-related practical concerns from our theorizing about personal identity, then we've eliminated a significant set of data. Olson and others who wish to keep metaphysics and practical matters separate will surely have much to say in response to such cursory worries. So, the remainder of this essay addresses only those that think our theories of personal identity should be grounded in, or at least informed by, our identity-related practical concerns. If you think that our practical considerations should play a role in our theorizing about personal identity, then you should seriously consider the case for pluralism.

3. The Subscript View

There are many ways to be a pluralist about personal identity and persistence.³⁶ For example, Sider, in "Criteria of Personal Identity and the Limits of Conceptual Analysis," considers a view of personal identity, "according to which persons are identical iff they are *either* psychologically *or*

³⁶ See David Shoemaker (2007) and Marya Schechtman (2014).

biologically continuous” (Sider, 199-200). I’ll call this view the Disjunctive View. In an earlier essay, “How Many of Us are There?” my co-authors and I gestured at another pluralist view, what I call the Subscript View, on which there exist (at least) two selves, one psychological ($self_p$) and another biological ($self_b$).³⁷ On this view, distinct survival relations obtain between these distinct selves: $self_p$ can survive psychologically— $surviving_p$ —while $self_b$ survives biologically— $surviving_b$. This is because each individual has distinct persistence conditions. According to the Subscript View, there is no singular, more basic persistence relation beyond $surviving_p$ or $surviving_b$, and there is no singular, more basic self beyond $self_p$ and $self_b$. In this paper, I will defend the Subscript View and examine some of its metaphysical implications.

3.a. The Prima Facie Case for the Subscript View

The Subscript View can better accommodate the folk conception of personal identity and persistence than its monistic competitors. Like the biological approach, the Subscript View is able to accommodate the intuition that we were once fetuses and can one day survive in the late stages of dementia or Alzheimer’s. Me_b was a fetus even if me_p wasn’t and me_b can one day suffer from dementia or Alzheimer’s even if me_p couldn’t survive such afflictions. And, like the psychological approach, the Subscript View can make sense of the intuition that we can survive cerebrum transplants—we_p can, though we_b cannot. The Subscript View can also accommodate the recent empirical work on how we make judgments about personal identity and persistence. These studies indicate that the folk care about both psychological and biological continuity when it comes to

³⁷ In this essay, because more work needs to be done on the natures of the biological and psychological individuals, I’ll leave open what unique features characterize these individuals, committing only to the claim that they have different essential features. I’ll also leave open whether there could be more than two distinct individuals at any given time or place. If it turns out that the folk’s persistence and personal identity judgments track another kind of creature in addition to the biological and psychological individuals, and the existence of this creature isn’t metaphysically suspect and can exist at the same ontological level as the other individuals, then the Subscript View can easily make room for it.

persistence and personal identity. And the Subscript View can fully accommodate caring about more than one persistence relation, given that the view is committed to there being two distinct kinds of persistence: persistence_b and persistence_p. No monistic view will be able to accommodate our diverse set of intuitions about persistence or the fact that different survival relations inform our judgments about different practical concerns. The fact that the Subscript View can accommodate these features of our commonsense conception of personal identity and persistence provides a prima facie reason to accept the view.

3.b. Why is the Subscript View preferable to the Disjunctive View?

Of course, the Disjunctive View that Sider considers can also accommodate the fact that the folk care about different kinds of persistence relations when it comes to making judgments about different practical concerns. The view can also make sense of the intuition that we were once fetuses, can enter persistent vegetative states, and can survive cerebrum transplants. Both biological and psychological continuity can secure persistence on the Disjunctive View, making it incredibly flexible and able to accommodate a wide range of cases and intuitions. So why not adopt the Disjunctive View instead of the Subscript View? The Disjunctive View has at least one salient benefit: it isn't committed to the existence of two individuals wherever we once thought there was only one. However, as Sider argues, the Disjunctive View is open to several objections. Interestingly, the Subscript View is immune to these very challenges.

In "Criteria of Personal Identity and the Limits of Conceptual Analysis," Sider argues that there is no fact of the matter whether the biological or psychological approach is the correct way to think about personal identity (2001). Sider comes to this conclusion by arguing that neither the biological approach nor the psychological approach (1) fits our use of persistence talk better than the other or (2) is more eligible to "carve nature at the joints," the conjunction of which determines

meaning (2001). Though Sider largely focuses on monistic interpretations of the biological and psychological approach, he briefly considers the Disjunctive View, on which a person can persist either psychologically or biologically (Sider 2001). Sider argues that this candidate isn't as appealing as the monistic views he considers because its disjunctive nature makes it less eligible to "carve nature at the joints" and it fits our use of persistence talk less than the other views.

First, Sider argues that the disjunctiveness of the view renders it unable to carve nature at its joints as successfully as monistic views. The Subscript View is not open to this challenge. The Subscript View is not committed to the existence of a single persistence relation that can be fulfilled either by psychological or biological continuity obtaining. Rather, there are two persistence relations, one psychological and another biological. Persistence isn't more complicated on the Subscript View, it simply admits of multiple forms.

Unlike the Disjunctive View, not only is the Subscript View no more complicated than its monistic competitors, it also better fits our persistence talk and our experience of persistence. Sider argues:

Granted, any 'positive' intuition, to the effect that personal identity *does* hold in a certain case, that is predicted by either the psychological or the bodily continuity theory is predicted by the disjunctive theory. But there are certain negative intuitions we have as well... These negative intuitions clash with the disjunctive candidate. It seems that our intuitions alternate between the psychological and bodily criteria rather than resting in a state in which their disjunction seems correct. (Sider, 200)

Again, while the Disjunctive View cannot make sense of our negative intuitions in these cases, the Subscript View can. On the Disjunctive View, if a single continuity relation obtains, then the individual persists in the very same way she would have if both continuity relations had obtained. On the Subscript View, surviving psychologically and surviving biologically are two very different states of affairs and the loss of one of these relations can ground negative intuitions.

Furthermore, in reaction to cases where biological and psychological continuity come apart, rather than issuing a single positive or negative survival intuition, I think we typically have both reactions. Neither the Disjunctive View nor the psychological and biological approaches can accommodate these kinds of judgments. Take a case in which a loved one enters the late stages of dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Though there is certainly a sense in which the loved one continues to exist, there is another sense in which she very much does not. Because philosophers tend to think that there must be a single answer to the question of whether we persist, such reactions cannot be taken at face value—both monistic theories of personal identity and the Disjunctive View are committed to such reactions being either incoherent or confused. But these reactions make perfect sense once we consider such cases through the prism of the Subscript View—there never was a single loved one, rather there were two, one who survives, and the other who perishes. Indeed, only the Subscript View of survival can make sense of these dual-judgments.

While Sider may be correct that monistic psychological and biological approaches equally fit our persistence talk and are equally natural, and a disjunctive form of pluralism is less fitting than both of its competitors, there is an alternative account that can better fit our intuitions about, and experience of, persistence. The Subscript View not only better fits our persistence talk than both the psychological and biological approaches, it is also no less “natural” than these views. Thus, on Sider's own desiderata, perhaps there is a fact of the matter about personal identity, and only the Subscript View can capture it.

3.c. Co-location and constitution

Even if the Subscript View best captures certain features of our commonsense conception of personal identity and persistence, it faces a hurdle that other views do not: the Subscript View entails that there exists two individuals wherever we once thought there was only one. It's a metaphysical

puzzle as to how self_p and self_b can co-exist and be co-located. One might very well ask how it is that both self_p and self_b can occupy the same spatio-temporal region while remaining distinct objects. Such a view flies in the face of the initially intuitive assumption that only one object can occupy a spatial region at a time. Normally, theorists can get around the problem of co-location by positing a credible relation (like constitution) between the two co-located objects. For example, Lynne Rudder Baker argues that human persons are constituted by (and not identical to) human animals (2000). But the subscript theorist cannot argue that self_p and self_b constitute one another; to do so would place primacy on either the biological or psychological self, making one more basic than the other.

Even though self_p and self_b cannot constitute each other, subscript theorists could argue that something more basic, a hunk of physical matter (Hunk), constitutes both self_p and self_b. Constitution isn't identity; it is a contingent relation, as well as irreflexive, asymmetric, and nontransitive (Baker 2000, 44). First, the existence of whatever does the constituting needn't entail the existence of whatever is constituted. This seems right in the case of Hunk and self_p and self_b. It is only in certain circumstances that a hunk of physical matter can constitute a living thing at all, let alone the complex biological and psychological creatures that we happen to be. Constitution is also irreflexive; nothing can constitute itself, which again rings true of Hunk, self_p, and self_b. Constitution, according to Baker, is asymmetric as well; if x constitutes y, then y cannot constitute x.³⁸ At least pretheoretically, it seems to me that self_p and self_b could not constitute Hunk, just as Baker thinks it's obvious that a statue cannot constitute a lump of clay (2000, 44). Finally, constitution is nontransitive. If Hunk constitutes self_p and self_b, and self_p (or self_b) constitutes some other object, say

³⁸ The nontransitivity and asymmetry of constitution are controversial. Importantly, nothing about Hunk's ability to constitute self_p and self_b hangs on whether or not constitution is nontransitive or symmetrical. If it turns out that constitution really is transitive and symmetrical, then we would simply have to revise our views, and nothing about Hunk, self_p and self_b makes it more difficult to revise our views in the face of transitivity and symmetry than any other paradigmatic case of constitution.

a morally responsible agent, it doesn't follow that Hunk constitutes the morally responsible agent. The conditions under which self_p constitutes a morally responsible agent need not be the same conditions under which Hunk constitutes self_p. A community of individuals driven to praise and blame may be required for morally responsible agents to exist, but not for psychological selves to exist, for example.

We can apply Baker's specific analysis of constitution to self_p, self_b, and Hunk. According to Baker, object x constitutes object y at time t if and only if:

- (a) x and y are spatially coincident at t ; and
- (b) x is in D at t ; and
- (c) It is necessary that: $\forall z[(F^*zt \ \& \ z \text{ is in } D \text{ at } t) \rightarrow \exists u(G^*ut \ \& \ u \text{ is spatially coincident with } z \text{ at } t)]$; and
- (d) It is possible that: $(x \text{ exists at } t \ \& \sim \exists w[G^*wt \ \& \ w \text{ is spatially coincident with } x \text{ at } t])$; and
- (e) If y is immaterial, then x is also immaterial. (Baker 2000, 43).

On Baker's analysis, F^* is the property of *having the property of being an F as one's primary kind property* and G^* is the property of *having the property of being a G as one's primary kind property* (Baker 2000, 42). In our case, F^* is the property of *having the property of being a hunk of matter as one's primary-kind property* and G^* is the property of *having the property of a psychological self as one's primary-kind property*. I'll also introduce another operator, H^* , which is the property of *having the property of being a biological self as one's primary-kind property*. According to Baker, objects have their primary-kind properties essentially; an object cannot cease to have its primary-kind properties without ceasing to exist (2000, 40). So, if an object cannot cease to have its primary-kind property of being a psychological self, for example, then that is what that object is most fundamentally. If the object loses that primary-kind property, then it ceases to exist. Finally, D is the circumstance favorable to G^* and H^* . Using this

understanding of constitution, the subscript theorist can argue that both self_p and self_b are constituted by Hunk.

- (a) Hunk, self_p , and self_b are spatially coincident at t ; and
- (b) Hunk is in the circumstance favorable to being a self_p and self_b at t .
- (c) It is necessary that: if anything that has being a hunk of matter as its primary-kind property is in the circumstance favorable to being a self_p and self_b at t , then there is something that has being a self_p as its primary-kind property and something that has being a self_b as its primary-kind property both of which are spatially coincident with Hunk at t .
- (d) It is possible that: Hunk exists at t and no spatially coincident thing that has being a self_p as its primary-kind property or that has being a self_b as its primary-kind property exists at t .
- (e) If self_p and self_b are immaterial, then the Hunk of matter is also immaterial.

I will simply assume that (a) and (b) are true for a great many individuals at any given time. According to (c), the properties of both self_p and self_b depend on the physical properties of Hunk. Any given psychological feature—a person's beliefs, values, etc.—is determined by the physical matter that the person is constituted by. And all of our biological properties—metabolism, heart rate, etc.—are determined by the very same physical matter. And these psychological and biological properties are different and persist under different conditions. Because self_p and self_b have different modal properties and different persistence conditions, they must be distinct kinds of objects. Importantly, the case of constitution is different than mere property acquisition (Baker 2000, 41). If Hunk constitutes both self_p and self_b , then both self_p and self_b will have sets of properties that are both distinct from each other and from the set of properties Hunk would have if it didn't constitute anything. Self_p is of a different primary-kind than self_b . If an individual ceases to have certain essential psychological properties, then that self_p will cease to exist and there will be one less object in the world. And if an individual ceases to have certain essential properties, then that self_b will cease to exist and there will also be one less object in the world. Self_p and self_b have different persistence conditions—it's possible to survive psychologically without surviving biologically and vice versa.

According to (d), if Hunk weren't in the specific conditions conducive to the existence of psychological or biological selves, then it wouldn't have any properties that characterize psychological and biological selves. We only have to imagine Hunk being sent to Mars or the Mariana Trench to realize how fragile and specific the circumstances that allow Hunk to constitute self_p and self_b truly are. Finally, given (e), if Hunk is immaterial, then both self_p and self_b would be as well. However, it's safe to assume that Hunk is not immaterial, and neither are self_p nor self_b .

Relying on Baker's analysis of constitution allows the subscript theorist to present a coherent picture of how two distinct selves can be spatially coincident. One might worry that constitution has traditionally been thought of as a linear relation, one that exists between only two objects, but the subscript theorist defends a branching view of constitution; one object, a hunk of matter, can constitute two distinct objects, self_p and self_b . Though constitution is traditionally discussed as a one-to-one relation in the literature, there is nothing in the standard notion of constitution that precludes constitution also being a one-to-many relation. Indeed, branching constitution is rather commonplace. Imagine an artwork that is also a piece of fruit. The hunk of matter that constitutes the artwork also constitutes the fruit. The artwork and the fruit seem to be of different primary-kinds since they have different persistence conditions. If the circumstances were such that the piece of fruit was no longer an object in the art world (it didn't have a title, wasn't accompanied by an artist's statement, wasn't on display, etc.), then the object would no longer be an artwork, though it would still be a piece of fruit. And, if the circumstances were such that the hunk of matter was arranged in such a way that it no longer resembled a piece of fruit (a pile of mush, for example), then a piece of fruit would no longer exist, though the hunk of matter could continue to constitute an artwork. I take it that there are many other cases of branching constitution. At the very least, it

certainly doesn't seem to be the case that branching constitution is any more problematic than linear constitution.

3.d. Is branching constitution plausible?

One might argue that the pile of mush may be an artwork, but it isn't the *same* artwork that it was when it was also a piece of fruit, which may render cases of branching constitution disanalogous to non-branching cases of constitution, like those featuring hunks of marble and statues.³⁹ And if the artwork cannot exist without the fruit existing, perhaps the two objects aren't on ontologically equal ground—perhaps the fruit is metaphysically prior to the artwork. If this is the case, then the above example isn't a case of branching constitution and perhaps such cases are harder to find than originally thought.

First, it's not clear to me that it wouldn't be the same artwork once the piece of fruit dissolves into a pile of mush. Many art installations have a temporal element and it's easy to imagine an art installation that features fresh fruit slowly rotting or being smashed as a commentary on our mortality, for example. Once the fruit rots or is smashed to such an extent that it no longer counts as fruit, the rearranged matter will still constitute the art installation, and, importantly, the very same art installation that featured the fresh fruit.

Second, even if there are cases where the loss of the fruit coincides with a change in the artwork, this doesn't entail that the fruit is metaphysically prior to the artwork or that the fruit constitutes the artwork. There are many cases in which an artwork changes without there being a comparable change in the fruit. If the fruit was moved to a new gallery, given a new title, paired with a new artist statement, and sufficiently rearranged, it's safe to say the artwork would be altered—indeed, it may very well count as a new artwork—though the fruit would remain unchanged. This

³⁹ Thanks to Yael Loewenstein for raising this objection.

asymmetry in change can occur because the artwork and the fruit have different persistence conditions—they are distinct objects that are constituted by the same matter.

3.e. Are self_b and self_p really distinct objects?

One might also argue that even if there are two selves that are co-located and constituted by a single hunk of matter, it seems like these objects are members of the same group—they are both selves, after all. So, one could argue, rather than being two distinct kinds, these selves are just sub-types of a deeper, more basic kind—the self, which should be the true target of our study. But we must ask what self_p and self_b have in common that would unite them as sub-types of a single kind. The answer is very little. Self_p and self_b have different persistence and causal conditions. Indeed, they only seem to share their location and the fact that they both persist. But surely the fact that self_p and self_b are co-located is not enough to justify the claim that these objects are of the same *kind*.⁴⁰ No one thinks that the statue and the lump of clay that constitutes the statue are sub-types of the same kind, even though these objects are co-located. And the fact that both self_p and self_b persist also can't ground the claim that these two objects are of the same kind. Many objects persist through time—birds, trees, and chairs for example—yet these objects are surely not of the same kind.⁴¹ Indeed, what makes them different types of objects are their varying persistence conditions and essential properties. These features are exactly what differentiate self_p and self_b. And though self_p and self_b

⁴⁰ I don't wish to take a stand on whether self_p or self_b are natural kinds or if one self is more natural than the other, though I suspect neither are properly natural kinds while both are equally natural. As Sider argues, "...relative naturalness results from one property or relation having a more 'complicated' or 'disjunctive' basis in the perfectly natural physical properties... Given this measure of relative naturalness, surely bodily-continuity and psychological-continuity candidates are on the 'same level' of naturalness. Denying this would be like saying Victorian houses comprise a more natural kind than Tudors" (Sider 2001, 198).

⁴¹ While birds, chairs, rocks, self_p, and self_b are all sub-types of the general kind "objects that persist," my argument is that there is nothing that unites self_p and self_b as sub-types of "the self."

share the term, 'self,' this is just a convenient means of description. By all accounts, self_p and self_b are two different kinds of objects; they do not fall under the purview of a more general category.

4. Objections and Replies

In this final section, I will analyze how a subscript pluralist will address three general objections to pluralism about personal identity, serving to both develop and clarify the view.

4.a. Is pluralism coherent?

Even though pluralism may be the only way to accommodate all of our identity-related practical concerns, it may not be possible to construct a consistent, coherent pluralistic conception of persistence. Indeed, while Shoemaker acknowledges the vast plurality of our practical concerns, he argues that it would be a mistake to infer from this fact that we ought to operate with a pluralistic conception of identity (forthcoming). Shoemaker argues that pluralism about personal identity is incoherent:

On this construal, then...because there are different kinds of compensation, there must be multiple identity-relations grounding ownership for each kind. This response will not work, however, for we cannot be pluralists about numerical identity...If the numerical identity we are talking about is identity of individuals like us, then the proposal just given could require that I am both identical with, and not identical with, some past or future individual. (Shoemaker forthcoming, 31)

According to Shoemaker, because pluralists argue that multiple relations ground identity, they are committed to the view that individuals can be both identical and not identical to past and future individuals.

While Shoemaker's criticism may initially seem troubling, the subscript pluralist will argue that it rests on a confusion. Consider a case in which an individual is biologically, but not psychologically, continuous with a past individual. It would be misleading to say that the individual both is and is not identical with this past individual. The subscript theorist would insist on the more

precise claim that self_p survives_p while self_b does not survive_b. Survival_p and survival_b can come apart—they have different persistence conditions. For a subscript pluralist about the self, there is no singular, more basic, ‘I’ that can be identical to future or past individuals. Rather, there are a plurality of selves each of which relates in its own way to past and future individuals.

4.b. Are we unified?

Though there is nothing inherently incoherent about the Subscript View, and it may have more theoretical virtues than its monistic competitors, the view can still fail for a number of reasons. The original motivation for the Subscript View was that pluralism, and pluralism alone, can accommodate *all* of our identity-related practical concerns. In order to accommodate these concerns, the subscript pluralist argues that where we thought there was one, there are in fact many—there is no singular, basic ‘self.’ Rather there are several selves, all with different causal properties and persistence conditions. This fracturing of the individual, though it allows the subscript theorist to ground all of our identity-related concerns in a single theory of personal identity, may render the view unable to accommodate a significant feature of our experience. Schechtman claims: “Our practical concerns are directed at *someone*, and in the end we want an answer to the question of what constitutes the integrity of that someone” (Schechtman 2014, 84). The fact that we experience those around us as unified agents, not distinct biological and psychological beings, counts against the Subscript View. Schechtman argues that “The claim that we do not need to conceive of an ultimate locus to which the full range of our questions and concerns about a person are addressed, however, does not ring true to the experience of how we relate to the people who make up our social world” (Schechtman 2014, 83). If we adopted the Subscript View, we would be forced to engage with those around us in a radically different way—at times addressing

individuals_p, and at other times addressing individuals_b. But this, according to Schechtman, would be absurd (2014, 83).

First, it's not clear that we always experience others as unified individuals. Schechtman herself reflects on the fractured experience of our many selves to motivate her pluralist view:

In everyday life we use the word "person" in many different ways. Sometimes it means "human animal," sometimes "moral agent," sometimes "rational, self-conscious subject," sometimes "possessor of particular rights," sometimes "being with a defined personality or character," and there are many other senses as well. Each of these conceptions of *person* has its own corresponding criterion of personal identity, and there is no reason to assume that we can find some single relation which underlies our judgments about the identity of a "person" in every context. (Schechtman 2014, 2)

In cases where a single persistence relation fails to obtain while another is maintained, something deeply important is lost, for each relation grounds several practical concerns. This is often reflected in our behavior and experience. Nowhere is this clearer than our treatment of those who suffer diseases that leave their psychologies ravaged. Take again the case of those who suffer from late-stage dementia. While we don't explicitly address those who suffer from dementia as individuals_b, and bemoan their deaths_p, these beliefs are nevertheless reflected in our behavior and treatment of these individuals. We treat those with dementia as the appropriate target of a certain set of identity-related practical concerns and the inappropriate target for other identity-related concerns. Laws like the Elder Abuse Act explicitly protect the ownership rights of those suffering even the most severe forms of dementia. While we think it is inappropriate to steal from those suffering from dementia, we often don't hold such agents responsible for their own thefts or other transgressions. This is a complex stance, but it can be perfectly accommodated by the subscript theorist. Ownership is grounded in biological continuity, while moral responsibility is grounded in psychological continuity.

There would be less room for the complex set of emotions and cares that accompanies caring for a person who persists in one way but not another on the unification view. Those suffering from dementia would either persist or fail to persist full stop. The defender of unification could attempt to make sense of a daughter's grief by referencing her demented mother's suffering, or her mother's loss of certain cognitive functions and character traits, but I think we grieve more than that when our loved ones suffer diseases like dementia. For what dementia brings is not just a decrease in quality of life or a change in personality, it's a loss of an individual—there is a sense in which those that suffer from dementia don't exist anymore. Thus, even if a unification theorist were to argue that it's the loss of a capacity or faculty that explains our grief and altered stance towards those with dementia, such an explanation doesn't go far enough. It's not just a rational faculty that is lost with the onset of dementia, it's the loss of an individual.

Two recent studies support this claim. Jesse Prinz and Shaun Nichols found that participants were willing to explicitly judge that individuals cannot survive radical changes to their values (in press). Participants were presented with the vignette:

Bad Values: Imagine that John accidentally falls while walking in the mountains. The accident causes a head injury that has a profound effect on John's values. His memory and general intelligence remain the same as before the accident, but the injury causes John to stop behaving morally. For example, before the accident he used to do helpful things for people in his community, and, after the accident, he stops caring about any of that and only acts to fulfill his own happiness even at the expense of others. (Prinz & Nichols in press)

Participants tended to think that John *wasn't* the same person ($M=2.56$; one sample $t(17)=2.9$, $p=.01$) (Prinz & Nichols in press).

In their recent paper "Neurodegeneration and Identity," Nina Strohminger and Shaun Nichols present their study in which they survey the family members of people suffering from Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal dementia, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (the control). The

participants were asked questions about the identity persistence of their family members, like “Regardless of the severity of the illness, how much do you sense the patient is still the same person underneath?” and “Does the patient ever seem like a stranger to you?” Participants reported significantly greater identity disruption in family members with Alzheimer’s disease and frontotemporal dementia than family members with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, $t(112) = 6.50, p < .0001, d = 1.05$ and $t(115) = 8.75, p < .0001, d = 1.54$, respectively. Both of these studies illustrate that people view dementia and other neurodegenerative disorders as threats to persistence. Only the Subscript View can make sense of this aspect of our experience.

In contrast, it’s difficult to see how defenders of unification can make sense of the all too common experience of viewing an individual as your loved one, while at the same time grieving the loss of that loved one. Perhaps the unification theorist can offer explanations in-line with how we explain our attachment to corpses, arguing that we care for those who suffer from dementia because they used to house our loved ones. This strikes me as the wrong kind of explanation. Take a woman who cares for her mother with dementia. The unification theorist can argue that the woman is committed to providing care for that particular human organism because it’s the same organism that was associated with her mother long ago. But this just doesn’t seem to get at how we actually feel in such situations. If the woman with dementia was hurt or suffered in some way, the daughter’s distress couldn’t be explained in terms of feeling bad because the organism that used to house her mother was hurt. She would presumably be upset because her mother was suffering.

Of course, biological and psychological continuity obtain together and $self_p$ and $self_b$ are co-located most of the time. When we refer to an individual, we need not distinguish between $self_p$ and $self_b$, for, with the exception of a few claims, whatever we say of the one will be true of the other. There’s no need to specify which individual, either $self_p$ or $self_b$ went to the store, won an award, or

swam in a lake, for they both did. The claim that we experience others as unified is too strong, but we do experience others as co-located.

4.c. Who is I?

Schechtman's concerns about unification raise another problem for the subscript theorist. What, if anything, is the referent of 'I,' 'you,' and 'the self' on the Subscript View? If the subscript theorist radically revises our ontology to include two distinct selves, must she also radically revise how we think our language pertaining to the self refers?

On the subscript theorist's view, terms like 'I,' 'you,' and 'the self' refer to two distinct objects: $self_p$ and $self_b$, just as the term 'jade' refers to two objects with chemically distinct structures: jadeite and nephrite. Given these analogous patterns of reference, one may wish argue that 'the self' is a kind, which can be reduced to $self_p$ and $self_b$, just as 'jade' is a kind, which can be reduced to nephrite and jadeite. But jade is a kind that can be reduced to nephrite and jadeite because the chemical structures of nephrite and jadeite are such that they ground a set of very similar qualitative properties, e.g. color and hardness. But as was noted earlier, $self_p$ and $self_b$ only share their location, which cannot be enough to classify these objects as members of the same kind, lest lumps of clay and statues are of the same kind as well.

Though words like 'I,' 'you' and 'the self' function as singular nouns in English and may seem to refer to one object in the word, the subscript theorist will argue this is due to the contingent fact that $self_p$ and $self_b$ are often co-located. Because $self_p$ and $self_b$ are often (though not always) co-located, there is no need to specify what kind of self one refers to when one utters the term 'I' or 'you.' When referring to my brother, I need not specify which brother I'm referring to, for it's true of both $brother_p$ and $brother_b$ that he is taller than me, works in finance, and doesn't understand the value of philosophy for a life well-lived.

But in many cases, we use ‘I’ or ‘you’ to refer to either $self_p$ or $self_b$ exclusively. For example, when visiting an individual in a persistent vegetative state, one can ask ‘how are her vitals?’ and it is clear that ‘her’ refers to $self_b$ and only $self_b$ (since $self_p$ no longer exists and doesn’t have any vitals). And, if we imagine a case in which an individual’s body is completely replaced with inorganic material such that biological continuity is destroyed while psychological continuity is maintained, that individual can wonder ‘Where am I?’ where the referent of ‘I’ is clearly $self_p$.

Furthermore, terms like ‘I,’ ‘you,’ and ‘the self’ are already used to refer specifically to either $self_p$ or $self_b$. The fact that biological continuity theorists and psychological continuity theorists both use the exact same reference terms illustrates this fact. If Olson claims: “I can survive in a persistent vegetative state,” he is presumably intending only to refer to $self_b$, while a neo-Lockean intends to refer to $self_p$ when she argues “I cannot survive in a persistent vegetative state.” On the traditional picture, ‘I,’ ‘you,’ and ‘the self’ refer to an exclusively disjunctive set, they refer either to $self_p$ or $self_b$ but not both, and the philosophical dispute is merely about which of those monistic theories is right. On the Subscript View, these terms refer to an inclusively disjunctive set or a metaphysical sum—they can refer to $self_p$, $self_b$, or both, given the context. In short, though the Subscript View may be radical on many counts, there is nothing radical about its theory of reference. The term ‘I’ refers in much the same way we typically think of it referring. The only difference is that in fringe cases (ones where $self_p$ and $self_b$ are not co-located), terms like ‘I’ can still refer successfully.

5. Conclusion: A Distinct View

The Subscript View is distinct from other views. The subscript theorist argues that both $self_p$ and $self_b$ are relevant to personal identity. Though many are happy to accept co-location of objects like human animals and persons, no one is willing to accept the view that both objects are relevant to

personal identity and persistence. Eric Olson, for example, grants that humans can also be persons, but he argues that being a person is irrelevant to persistence (1997).

Perhaps we cannot properly call that vegetating animal a *person* since it has none of those psychological features that distinguish people from non-people (rationality, the capacity for self-consciousness, or what have you). If so, that simply shows that you can continue to exist without being a person, just as you could continue to exist without being a philosopher, or a student, or a fancier of fast cars (Olson 1997, 17).

Though Olson grants that we can both be human animals ($self_b$) and persons ($self_p$) at the same time, he argues that we are essentially animals and only accidentally persons. Baker also accepts the co-location of human animals and persons, though she argues that we are essentially persons, not animals. “On the Constitution View, I am an animal (in that I am wholly constituted by an animal), but I am not essentially an animal (in that I could be constituted by an inorganic body)” (Baker, 226).

In contrast, both $self_p$ and $self_b$ are able to persist on the Subscript View. Both selves ground different identity-related practical concerns and both selves count as appropriate subjects in the study of personal identity. On the Subscript View, both Olson and Baker are partially correct—something essential is lost when either biological continuity or psychological continuity is lost. But to argue that either of these conditions is essential to the *self* isn't quite right; psychological continuity is essential for the survival of $self_p$ and biological continuity is essential for the survival of $self_b$. Neither relation is essential to the *self* for there is no deeper self for the subscript theorist other than $self_p$ and $self_b$.

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Conclusion: The Problem of the Beginning and the End

1. Introduction

In my dissertation, I first analyzed the most recently developed pluralist view of personal identity—the Person Life View—and argued that, though promising, the view suffered from serious flaws and should be jettisoned in favor of an alternative view. In the second part of my dissertation, I presented just such an alternative: the Subscript View. In this paper, I argued that the Subscript View is preferable to the Person Life View and responded to objections to the view’s ontology and theory of reference. In this part of the dissertation, I want to address the possibility of a view that is very similar to the Subscript View but doesn’t commit itself to the existence of distinct psychological and biological individuals co-existing—the Parts View. After analyzing this view, I will argue that the Subscript View, and only the Subscript View, can make sense of certain judgments and patterns of behavior that surround the beginning and ends of persons’ lives. No other view can accommodate the sadly common phenomena of both grieving and caring for a loved one suffering from the late stages of Alzheimer’s disease. I take this to be a very compelling feature of the Subscript View and one that places it far ahead of its competitors.

2. Are We Made Up of Parts?

Despite my attempts to massage the metaphysical implications of the Subscript View, many may still balk at the idea that there exist two distinct individuals wherever we once thought there was one. Instead of arguing that there exists a biological individual and a psychological individual, one may prefer to argue that there exists a single individual who is made up of a biological part and a psychological part.⁴² The Parts View can make sense of our pluralist intuitions about personal identity. We care about both psychological and biological continuity because there is part of us that

⁴² Thanks to Terry Horgan for calling my attention to this view and its appeal.

persists when psychological continuity obtains and another part of us that persists when biological continuity obtains. The Parts View also isn't susceptible to the worries about unity or reference that the Subscript View is vulnerable to. On the Parts View, individuals really are united and our singular nouns really do refer to single individuals. Indeed, one might argue that the Parts View can capture everything the Subscript View can when it comes to our pluralist intuitions about personal identity but isn't susceptible to worries that stem from the fracturing of the individual.

While the Parts View may initially seem preferable to the Subscript View's cluttered ontology, the Parts View will have its own metaphysical hoops to jump through. First, by arguing that an individual is made up of two parts, the defender of the Parts View will have to account for the relationship between these parts and the person. While the Subscript View relies on a (hopefully) compelling account of branching constitution to explain the coexistence of biological and psychological individuals, the Parts View will require a different kind of explanation to make sense of the relationship between an individual and her biological and psychological parts. Constitution can't make sense of the relationship between biological and psychological parts and a person. After all, the relationship between the parts and the person doesn't appear to be contingent on the Parts View—it's hard to envision a scenario in which the parts would exist and the person would not—but contingency is an essential feature of the constitution relationship, at least on Baker's analysis. Of course, a great deal of work has been done on how parts relate to their wholes, and it's certainly possible that there exists a mereological account that can make sense of the relationship between the biological and psychological parts and the person on the Parts View. But if the original motivation

to adopt the Parts View resulted from a wariness of the ontological commitments of the Subscript View, it's not clear the Parts View will have a less controversial metaphysics.⁴³

It's also unclear how the Parts View can make sense of persistence. On the Subscript View, the biological individual persists when biological continuity obtains and the psychological individual persists when psychological continuity obtains. Presumably the biological and psychological parts of persons on the Parts View, if they are anything like the biological and psychological individuals on the Subscript View, will persist under the same conditions. But what relation must obtain in order for a person on the Parts View to persist? Is it the conjunction of both biological and psychological continuity? If so, then the Parts View won't be able to explain the class of cases that sets pluralist views of personal identity apart from monistic views—cases where only a single persistence relation obtains. Perhaps a person can persist on the Parts View so long as biological or psychological continuity obtains. But Sider has already addressed the problems that come with defending a disjunctive account of persistence:

One possibility would be a candidate according to which persons are identical iff they are *either* psychologically *or* bodily continuous. But this candidate is slightly less eligible than either pure criterion, given its disjunctive nature. Moreover, it seems to fit use less well than the pure criteria. Granted, any “positive” intuition, to the effect that personal identity *does* hold in a certain case, that is predicted by either the psychological or the bodily continuity theory is predicted by the disjunctive theory. But there are certain “negative” intuitions we have as well... These negative intuitions clash with the disjunctive candidate. It seems that our intuitions alternate between the psychological and bodily criteria rather than resting in a state in which their disjunction seems correct. (Sider 2001, 14-15)

⁴³ What, for example, are we to think about the relationship between the properties of persons and the properties of its parts? Does the person that is made up of a biological and psychological part have properties independent of its parts? If so, what is the nature of these properties? And if the person made up of a biological and psychological part doesn't have any properties that are independent of its parts, then why posit the existence of a person that exists above and beyond the biological and psychological self in the first place?

While the Subscript View can largely account for the cases that produce these negative intuitions, a disjunctive interpretation of the Parts View wouldn't be able to.

One could argue that though the disjunctive interpretation of the Parts View is committed to a person persisting when either psychological or biological continuity obtains, it could still account for the negative intuitions that arise in cases where only one of these relations obtains. After all, in such cases, even if the person persists, a part of them will stop persisting. Perhaps our intuition that an individual can't survive the failure of certain continuity relations can be explained in terms of *parts* of ourselves failing to survive. This might be a tenable response to such cases, though it should be noted that the Subscript View requires less revision of our intuitions than the Parts View does in order to accommodate these cases. The Subscript View can fully accommodate the intuition that an individual, not simply a part of an individual, will fail to survive if either psychological or biological continuity doesn't obtain. So when it comes to meeting the desiderata of accommodating our commonsense intuitions about persistence, it looks like, at least when it comes to our intuitions about when we *don't* persist, the Subscript View outperforms the disjunctive interpretation of the Parts View.

The defender of the Parts View could argue that persistence can't be reduced to either the conjunction or disjunction of psychological or biological continuity. Perhaps the persistence of a person is determined by factors over and above whether their biological or psychological parts persist. On such an approach to the Parts View, the persistence relation is either dependent on something other than psychological and biological continuity or, like the Person Life View, doesn't

provide necessary or sufficient conditions.⁴⁴ However, neither of these possibilities bodes well for the Parts View.

If persistence on the Parts View depends on something other than psychological and/or biological continuity, this raises two questions. First, what exactly would persistence consist of on such a view if not psychological or biological continuity? Second, if persistence has nothing to do with psychological or biological continuity, why does the view posit the existence of biological and psychological parts in the first place—what work are they doing on the view? Without answers to these questions, it's unclear how this interpretation of the Parts View could compare to the Subscript View. Even if the defenders of the Parts View are able to produce answers to these questions, it seems unlikely that the view will be able to accommodate the folk conception of persistence and personal identity. Studies indicate both that we care about psychological and biological continuity and that our judgments about persistence are affected by our beliefs about psychological and biological continuity. It's hard to see how the interpretation of the Parts View, on which persistence has nothing to do with biological and psychological continuity, can make sense of these findings or accommodate them better than the Subscript View. Thus, if the motivation to adopt the Parts View was because it best fits with the folk conception of persistence and our commonsense intuitions about personal identity, it looks like the Subscript View actually outperforms the Parts View on this task.

Rather than argue that biological and psychological continuity are irrelevant to persistence on the Parts View, one could argue that they are simply neither necessary nor sufficient for

⁴⁴ There is also the possibility that the Parts View's persistence relation is unanalyzable. But if the relation is unanalyzable, it's unclear why we would prefer the Parts View to the Subscript View. Even if the metaphysics of the Subscript View is undesirable, it's surely preferable to a metaphysical account that is inherently inaccessible.

persistence. This kind of analysis of persistence is similar to Schechtman's Person Life View. Indeed, it may be indistinguishable. Recall that Schechtman argues that a person persists so long as their person life persists, and while person lives are characterized by psychological, biological, and social features, no feature is either necessary or sufficient for a person life to continue. Likewise, the defender of the Parts View could argue that though a person typically has a biological part and a psychological part, the persistence of these parts is neither necessary nor sufficient for the persistence of a person. This interpretation of the Parts View, though it may be stronger than other interpretations of the Parts View, is difficult to distinguish from the Person Life View. Of course there is the obvious difference that the Parts View conceives of persons as composed of biological and psychological parts, while the Person Life View indicates that persons are characterized by biological and psychological (and social) properties, but it's hard to see what this difference amounts to. Both views will provide the same responses to cases of persistence and failures of persistence along with similar justifications. For example, I take it that both views are committed to the view that a person can fully persist in a persistent vegetative state despite losing their psychological part or set of psychological properties because their biological part, or set of biological properties, is enough to sustain persistence. Given this similarity between the two views, one might worry whether the Parts View will inherit the problem with conventionalism that the Person Life View faces. I'd like to set that issue aside and focus on a different dimension along which we can compare the Person Life View, the Parts View, and the Subscript View.⁴⁵

3. The Problem of the Beginning and the End

⁴⁵ In what follows, I'll only consider the version of the Parts View that treats the biological and psychological parts of persons as neither necessary nor sufficient for the persistence of a person.

Throughout my dissertation, I've stated, at times rather flat-footedly, that the motivation to develop the Subscript View was to account for the complicated set of beliefs and practices that surround the beginnings and ends of our lives. In this section, I'd like to explore what I call the problem of the beginning and end and in the next section I'll discuss how each of the views I've discussed up until this point address the problem.

There is a sense in which we believe that we were once fetuses and young infants. We naturally respond to pictures of our mothers when they were pregnant and think: "That's my mother when she was pregnant with *me*" and we indulge our parents' stories of us as infants at least in part because we take these stories to be about *us*. But there is also a sense in which we don't identify with these fetuses and young infants. Many of us think abortion is morally permissible, and it is in fact legally permissible, whereas killing a person in most cases is neither morally or legally permissible. Fetuses and young infants aren't afforded the same rights and privileges as adult humans, largely because they lack the psychological capacities that would make them *persons*.

Another intuitive, though perhaps more painful, belief is that we, and our loved ones, can one day fall into a persistent vegetative state or suffer from advanced Alzheimer's. When we visit our grandparents and parents with Alzheimer's, we do so, at least in part, because we believe them to still be our grandparents and parents, though they are ailing. But again there is also a sense in which we don't think we, or those we love, will survive such radical psychological discontinuity. We often mourn the loss of our loved ones in these states long before they die. Grief and loss are ubiquitous in the narratives of caregivers for those with Alzheimer's and dementia and a huge part of providing support for these caregivers involves helping them cope with these emotions. Here is just one reflection on the grief experienced by a caregiver:

When Ed, my soul mate of 30 years, developed Alzheimer's, I sank deeper into despair each day. I thought a lot about grief related to loved ones with dementia. How you lose them little by little, but they are still there. I was thinking about how many years the grief may last before they finally die, and then another kind of grieving begins. Death is typically a clear starting point for grief, and it's clear that eventually there will be more or less an end to it. But with dementia, loss comes in bits and pieces and drags on and on for many years before the loved one even dies.⁴⁶

How are we to make sense of grieving the loss of someone you are simultaneously caring for? Most theories, even the pluralistic ones, aren't able to do justice to the complicated set of beliefs we have about the beginnings and ends of our lives. Because these theories, again even the pluralistic views, provide a single answer, either a yes or a no, to the question of whether we exist or persist, these views render the commonsense experience of both grieving the loss of a loved one and simultaneously caring for that loved one incoherent.

4. How to Handle the Beginning and the End

In this section, I'll review how each approach addresses the complicated beliefs and patterns of behavior that surround the beginnings and ends of our lives.

4.a. The Psychological Approach

Because neither fetuses nor infants have the robust psychological capacities that the psychological approach to personal identity requires for persistence, those who defend such views are committed to it being impossible for us to be psychologically connected and continuous with these creatures. And because individuals who have fallen into persistent vegetative states or who suffer in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's or dementia have lost those relevant psychological capacities, these views are also committed to it being the case that such individuals cannot be psychologically connected and continuous with past individuals. On the psychological approach, we were never fetuses or young infants and we will never be in persistent vegetative states or in the advanced stages

⁴⁶ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marie-marley/alzheimers_b_1394558.html

of Alzheimer's. Thus, the psychological approach can make sense of the grief we experience when a loved one enters the advanced stages of Alzheimer's, but it can't make sense of the belief that we are still caring for our loved one.

In an attempt to ameliorate these surprising conclusions about when our lives actually begin and end, those that defend the psychological approach can argue that the care we have for fetuses, young infants, and those in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's is not entirely misplaced. These creatures are the vessels that either used to or will one day carry persons, so it makes sense that we care about them even if they are not currently occupied by persons and thus, strictly speaking, are not the actual objects of our familial love and concern. This kind of response has prompted many to question the relationship between the vessel—the human organism—and the person—the psychological being—that this commits the defender of the psychological approach to, but it's also an entirely implausible picture of how, and why, we care about infants and those in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's. Parents don't think of their young infants as simply vessels for their future children and adults don't think of those with Alzheimer's as merely creatures that used to house their parents. Thus, views that attempt to explain the love we have for young infants or the grief we experience for those in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's as misguided though understandable are unable to fully accommodate our beliefs and patterns of behavior that surround the beginnings and ends of our lives.

4.b. The Biological Approach

In contrast to the psychological approach to personal identity, the biological approach can easily ground the judgment that we were fetuses and young infants and can one day persist in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's and in persistent vegetative states. Of course, we think we were or can be in such circumstances—these are precisely the kinds of circumstances in which human

organisms can find themselves. According to the biological approach, we fully existed as fetuses and young infants and can fully persist in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's and in persistent vegetative states—nothing that affects persistence is lost in such cases.

But the biological approach is unable to make sense of the patterns of behavior and beliefs surrounding these kinds of creatures that indicate they *aren't* the kinds of individuals that we ordinarily make persistence judgments about. For the biological approach, there is nothing that makes cases featuring young infants and those suffering from Alzheimer's outliers, there is no relevant difference between these kinds of cases and paradigm cases of persistence. In this way, the biological approach is fundamentally unable to explain the ways in which we think fetuses *aren't* fully the kinds of creatures that we think can persist through time. Of course, the defender of the biological approach can point to many other factors that have nothing to do with persistence that can explain why we treat fetuses differently from adults, and in this way, the biological approach might be more successful at debunking our intuitions about cases featuring fetuses and young infants than the psychological approach. However, the biological approach is at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to explaining the grief people experience when their loved ones enter the advanced stages of Alzheimer's. According to the biological approach, *nothing* that matters for persistence is lost in such cases, so there is no loss to grieve. While the defenders of the biological approach can make sense of our feelings of sadness and fear that caretakers experience when their loved ones suffer from Alzheimer's, they will be fundamentally unable to make sense of the feeling of loss and the sense of grief that are common features of such cases.

4.c. The Person Life View and the Parts View

Like the biological approach, The Person Life View and the Parts View have an easier time accommodating the intuition that we were once fetuses and young infants and can one day enter

persistent vegetative states or the advanced stages of Alzheimer's than the psychological approach. Because having certain psychological features or parts isn't necessary for persistence on either view, the Person Life View and the Parts View aren't committed to fetuses and those suffering from Alzheimer's not being persons or relevantly continuous with persons. Thus both views can fully accommodate the intuition that we were once fetuses and young infants and can one day enter persistent vegetative states and persist in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's.

However, these views can't as easily accommodate the grief that we experience when our loved ones enter persistent vegetative states or the advanced stages of Alzheimer's. While the Person Life View and the Parts View can point to identity and persistence-relevant features that don't exist or are lost in these situations, they are still committed to providing an exclusively affirmative answer to the question of whether we exist as fetuses and persist in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's. Ultimately, like the biological approach, the Person Life View and the Parts View are unable to do justice to the intuition that there is a sense in which we don't survive in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's or in persistent vegetative states.

On these views, though it would be fitting to feel sadness or anguish if a loved one suffers in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's, it wouldn't be appropriate to experience grief. Because these theories are committed to individuals persisting in such states, there is no loss to grieve in these cases. But this flies in the face of how most people report on their experiences of being a loved one or caretaker of an individual suffering from Alzheimer's—grief and a sense of loss are defining characteristics of these experiences. A defender of one of these views could attempt to accommodate these experiences of grief by arguing that what people are actually experiencing is anticipatory grief—a reaction to the impending loss of a loved one who is about to die. Though anticipatory grief is undoubtedly experienced by the caretakers and loved ones of those suffering

from Alzheimer's, it would be difficult to argue that it's the *only* kind of grief that characterizes their experience. It seems uncontroversial that when a loved one loses their memories and ability to communicate and undergoes drastic changes in their personality, these events directly trigger feelings of loss and grief. But, if one wants to argue that anticipatory grief is the only kind of grief that is experienced in these situations, then one is committed to arguing that a loved one's grief is triggered not directly by the development of these symptoms but by the sense that your loved one will soon die, which can be generated by the progression of the disease. This strikes me as an unlikely picture and one that doesn't take seriously the toll the symptoms of these progressive diseases have on the loved ones and caretakers of those suffering from them.

There is another way to attempt to accommodate the grief experienced by the loved ones and caretakers of those who suffer from Alzheimer's, but it is only open to defenders of the Person Life View and Parts View. These views can point to certain psychological features that are relevant to persistence that are lost in the late stages of Alzheimer's, and attempt to explain caretakers' and loved ones' grief as responses to those losses. The defender of the Person Life View could argue that our feelings of grief relate to the loss of the psychological properties that characterize a person life and the defender of the Parts View could argue that our feelings of grief relate to the loss of the psychological part of a person. The Person Life View's account of grief strikes me as less compelling than the Parts View's explanation. Our feelings of grief correspond to more than just the loss of a person's properties or features. People lose and gain properties all the time and such changes typically never warrant the kind of grief that results from Alzheimer's and dementia. While parents may mourn the loss of their children's sweet natures as they go through adolescence, this is a qualitatively very different experience from the mourning that results when a loved one loses their memories, ability to communicate, and personality. But the only difference, if any, the Person Life

View predicts between the two cases is one of degree. While the Person Life View can explain why the loved one of someone suffering from Alzheimer's would be sad or distraught, the view is incapable of explaining why that individual experiences the sense that the person they love is no longer there.

The plausibility of the Parts View's claim that our grief results from the loss of a person's psychological part will depend on what parts of persons amount to on the view. If the psychological part of a person on the Parts View is equivalent to a facet or feature of the person, then the Parts View's explanation of the grief experienced by the loved ones and caretakers of those suffering from Alzheimer's will be largely identical to the Person Life View's explanation. The view won't be able to accommodate the sense that your loved one no longer exists. But if the psychological part of a person on the Parts View is the kind of object that you can love and care for and whose absence you can grieve, then the view will be able to accommodate the experiences of grief and loss that surround cases of Alzheimer's. But this interpretation of the Parts View is almost identical to the Subscript View, the only difference being what we call the object that is lost in Alzheimer's, either a part or person. The only version of the Parts View that can accommodate the experience of grief and loss in cases of advanced Alzheimer's does so only in so far as it approximates the Subscript View's ontology. The primary motivation to develop the Parts View was to avoid worries about the metaphysical status of the psychological and biological individuals on the Subscript View. But on this interpretation of the Parts View, the parts of persons will have to have just as robust an ontology as persons do on the Subscript View in order to accommodate the experiences of grief and loss in cases of advanced Alzheimer's. Thus, this version of the Parts View largely collapses into the Subscript View, distinguishing itself only semantically.

4.d. The Subscript View

The Subscript View, and only the Subscript View, can fully accommodate the complicated pattern of behavior and set of beliefs that surround the beginnings and ends of persons' lives. On the Subscript View, there is a sense in which we both were and were not fetuses and young infants. Biological individuals certainly did exist as fetuses and young infants, while psychological individuals enter the world a little later. The Subscript View can also account for the heart wrenching and sorrowful experiences that surround caring for loved ones in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's and in persistent vegetative states. Biological individuals can persist in such situations while psychological individuals perish. This explains why we can both grieve the loss of a loved one while simultaneously caring for that very loved one. The Subscript View can clarify our beliefs about these cases: we're grieving the loss of loved one_p and caring for the loved one_p. The Subscript View's competitors are unable to offer as natural explanations and elucidations of these phenomena.

5. Conclusion

All the monistic and pluralistic views of personal identity discussed above are committed to some judgments and intuitions about the beginnings and ends of our lives being mistaken or confused, except for the Subscript View. I take this to be a huge advantage of the Subscript View. For most of our lives and in our dealings with most individuals, we take it for granted that those surrounding us are persons and are capable of persisting through time. Our judgments in these cases tell us nothing about whether we value biological continuity, psychological continuity, or some other relation entirely, since all of these features obtain in ordinary cases. Only when faced with difficult cases, where not all of these relations are present, do our judgments indicate anything about what we value when it comes to persistence. And only the Subscript View is able to fully accommodate the value we place on both biological and psychological continuity. We take both of these relations to be relevant to persistence and personal identity, and our judgments about persistence and personal

identity are informed by whether these relations obtain.

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