

# PERSONAL IDENTITY

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## INTRODUCTION

The term 'personal identity' means different things to different people. Psychologists use it to refer to a person's self-image--to one's beliefs about the sort of person one is and how one differs from others. In philosophy the term normally refers to philosophical questions about ourselves that arise by virtue of our being people, questions that may otherwise have little in common. Some philosophers use the term more loosely and include such topics as the nature of self-knowledge, self-deception, rationality, and the will. This entry covers personal identity in the stricter sense.

## GENERAL OVERVIEWS

Penelhum 1967 and Perry 2008 are good but a bit dated. The others are reliable guides to current debates. The encyclopedia articles by Garrett 1998 and \*\*Olson 2008\*\* survey the field; DeGrazia 2005 approaches the subject from an ethicist's perspective.

DeGrazia, D. 2005. *Human Identity and Bioethics*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2 (11-76) is a lengthy but highly readable survey with lots of examples, focusing mainly on identity over time and its practical importance. Sympathetic towards animalism.

Garrett, B. 1998. Personal Identity. In E. Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. 7, 305-314. London: Routledge. A brief but useful introduction and an excellent place to start. The online version (2004, subscription required) is more up to date.

Olson, E. 2008. \*Personal Identity [<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2008/entries/identity-personal/>]\*. In E. Zalta (ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Usefully distinguishes eight separate problems of personal identity, then focuses on identity over time, with particular attention to different versions of the question.

Penelhum, T. 1967. Personal Identity. In P. Edwards (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 6, 95-107. New York: Macmillan. A sophisticated discussion of Locke, Hume, and the debates of its day about evidential criteria of personal identity over time.

Perry, J. 2008. 'The Problem of Personal Identity', introduction to Perry (ed.). *Personal Identity*, 2e, Berkeley: University of California Press. A lively and accessible introduction to traditional debates on personal identity over time. Originally published in 1975.

## TEXTBOOKS

Shoemaker and Swinburne 1984 is a classic. Perry's 1978's dialogue covers the same themes in a witty and entertaining way. Noonan 2003 is a systematic treatise in the traditional style and has near-definitive status. Shoemaker 2009 is a good guide to the intersection of metaphysics and ethics. Garrett 1998, though not strictly a textbook, is accessible enough to be used as one.

Garrett, B. (1998). *Personal Identity and Self-Consciousness*, London: Routledge. A partisan but highly readable discussion of identity over time, what matters practically, and first-person reference.

Noonan, H. (2003). *Personal Identity*, 2e, London and New York: Routledge. A comprehensive and masterly work, with important original contributions. Most undergraduates will find it hard going, but for the adept it is indispensable. The new

edition (the first appeared in 1989) includes a chapter on animalism.

Perry, J. (1978). *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*, Indianapolis: Hackett.

An ideal source for beginners, discussing all the main views about our identity over time.

Shoemaker, D. (2009). *Personal Identity and Ethics*, Peterborough, Canada: Broadview.

A good textbook, accessible to undergraduates. Short on metaphysics, but very useful on what matters in identity and on narrative conceptions of personal identity.

Shoemaker, S. and R. Swinburne (1984). *Personal Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Shoemaker advocates a psychological-continuity view, Swinburne anticriterialism and substance dualism. The book is accessible yet sophisticated, and readers of all levels of expertise will learn from it.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIES

\*\*PhilPapers\*\* is the best place to look for recent items; Kolak and Martin 1991 is a valuable source of material up to about 1990.

Kolak, D. and R. Martin (eds.). (1991). *Self and Identity*, New York: Macmillan.

This collection includes an enormous bibliography, sadly now rather out of date. It construes personal identity very broadly.

\*PhilPapers: Personal Identity [<http://philpapers.org/browse/personal-identity>]\*.

Maintained by David Bourget and David Chalmers.

Not strictly a bibliography but a compendium of online sources. Coverage is patchy and some information is inaccurate, but very useful nonetheless. Items of all ages are constantly being added.

## ANTHOLOGIES

Martin and Barresi 2002 is the only up-to-date collection of previously published work by more than one author. Perry 2008, the most widely used anthology, is useful mainly for its historical sources. Perry 2002 is a valuable collection of his own papers. Of the collections of new work, Rorty 1976 is indispensable, with important contributions by all the big names of its day. Dancy 1997 is also first rate, though devoted only partly to personal identity. Paul, *et al.* 2005, Petrus 2003, and

Zimmerman and Gendler 2004 are useful collections of contemporary work.

Dancy, J. (ed.). 1997. *Reading Parfit*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Contains papers on personal identity by Shoemaker, Johnston, Blackburn, Thomson, and McDowell, all of which are worthwhile. Not only of interest to Parfit fans.

Martin, R and M. Barresi (eds.). (2002). *Personal Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell.

The best greatest-hits collection on the market, with a good balance of both classic and recent articles across all the main areas of the subject.

Paul, E. F., et al. (eds.) 2005. *Personal Identity*. Cambridge University Press.

A useful collection emphasizing ethical aspects of personal identity.

Perry, J. (2002). *Identity, Personal Identity, and the Self*, Indianapolis: Hackett.

Contains Perry's well-known papers on personal identity and a few new ones, all written in his inimitable fine style.

Perry, J. (ed.). (2008). *Personal Identity*, 2e, Berkeley: University of California Press.

A good, inexpensive collection of the early-modern sources most influential in current debates, along with some important mid-20th-century papers. It is little altered from the first edition of 1975.

Petrus, K. (ed.). (2003). *On Human Persons*, Frankfurt and London: Ontos Verlag.

Contemporary articles on several themes, most notably animalism and its critics, with a number of contributions (mostly in English) by German-speaking philosophers.

Rorty, A. (ed.). (1976). *The Identities of Persons*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

An important collection of contemporary articles of its time, including a famous exchange between Lewis and Parfit as well as articles by Dennett, Perry, Shoemaker, Williams, and other stars.

Zimmerman, D. and T. Gendler (eds.). 2004. *Personal Identity*. *The Monist* 87, number 4.

This journal issue is another good contemporary collection, including several papers on realism and anti-realism in personal identity and an exchange between Shoemaker and Wiggins.

## HISTORICAL SOURCES

Most of the big names of Western philosophy had something to say about some aspect of personal identity. This list is restricted to the items that most influence current debates, many of which are conveniently collected in Perry's anthology *Personal Identity* (see \*Anthologies\*). Throughout much of history debates focused on whether we are material or immaterial, mortal or immortal, Plato 1997 being the most famous example. Personal identity over time in general became a major theme only with Locke 1975; Butler 2008 and Reid 1941 criticize his view. Hume 1978 and Kant 1997, in different ways, are skeptical about the metaphysics of personal identity.

Butler, J. (2008). *The Analogy of Religion*, Appendix.

Argues that memory cannot constitute personal identity because it presupposes identity, and contrasts the strict philosophical identity of people with the loose and popular identity of other things. Original work 1736. Also in Perry 2008.

Hume, D. (1978). *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Book 1, Part 4, Section 2, pp. 199-210 argues that nothing can survive any change whatever, and section 6, pp. 251-263, makes the famous claim that each of us is nothing but a bundle of perceptions. The Appendix has a section on personal identity at pp. 633-636. A difficult but enormously influential source. Original work 1739. Partly reprinted in Perry 2008.

Kant, I. (1997). *Critique of Pure Reason*, P. Guyer, A. Wood (trs.), Cambridge University Press.

The Paralogisms (A341-405 and B436-432) argue that we cannot know, either a priori or on the basis of introspection, that we are substances, that we are mereologically simple, or that we persist through time. Very difficult. Original work 1781 and 1787.

Locke, J. (1975). *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, P. Nidditch (ed.), Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Book 2, chapter 28, 'Of Identity and Diversity' (added in the second edition), is the point of departure for modern discussions of personal identity, and the source of psychological-continuity accounts. The text is notoriously baffling, and scholars debate what view Locke meant to endorse. Original work 1694. Partly reprinted in Perry 2008.

Plato. (1997). *Phaedo*, G. M. A. Grube (tr.), in *Complete Works*, J. Cooper (ed.), Indianapolis: Hackett.

Socrates' discussion of death on the night of his execution. The arguments for the

immortality of the soul begin at around 70a.

Reid, T. (1941). Essay 3, 'Of Memory', in *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, A. D. Woozley (ed.), London: Macmillan.

Chapter 6 contains the brave officer objection to memory theories; chapter 4 is also worthwhile. Numerous publishers have reprinted the Woozley edition; others are also acceptable. Original work 1785. Partly reprinted in Perry 2008.

## EVIDENCE AND MEANING

From the 1950s to the early 1970s, discussions of personal identity were dominated by questions about the evidence bearing on questions of identity over time. Different sources of evidence or criteria--first-person memory and physical continuity, for example--can support opposing verdicts about who is who. There were debates about which sources are more fundamental, and whether some depend epistemically on others. Most of these debates assumed a verificationist position that the meaning of a claim is determined by what evidence would support or undermine it. Shoemaker 1963 and Penelhum 1970 are sophisticated examples of this approach. Grice 1941 argues in this style for a Lockean view and Quinton 1962 a Humean one; Williams 1956-7 argues for a bodily criterion. Shoemaker 1970 concerns the importance of memory to a number of questions about personal identity.

Grice, H. P. (1941). Personal Identity, *Mind* 50, 330-350.

Difficult but influential paper that is hard to classify. Attempts to give a logical analysis of statements about personal identity over time. Reprinted in Perry 2008.

Penelhum, T. (1970). *Survival and Disembodied Existence*, London: Routledge.

Asks whether survival after death in a disembodied state is coherent, focusing largely, though not entirely, on whether there could be evidence to support the claim that such a thing had occurred.

Quinton, A. (1962). The Soul, *Journal of Philosophy* 59: 393-403.

Argues that each of us is a bundle of mental states, based mainly on epistemic objections to substance dualism. Reprinted in Perry 2008.

Shoemaker, S. (1963). *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

A rich discussion of the interaction between brute-physical and psychological evidence bearing on claims of personal identity, among other topics.

Shoemaker, S. (1970). Persons and Their Pasts, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7: 269-285.

Discusses the importance of memory in giving us knowledge of our past existence, actions, and experiences, and connections between memory and our identity through time. Reprinted in his *Identity, Cause, and Mind*, expanded ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003, and in Perry 2008.

Williams, B. (1956-7). Personal Identity and Individuation, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 57, 229-252.

Argues that bodily identity is necessary for personal identity, on the grounds that without it there could be no conclusive evidence that it was the same person. Source of the famous Guy Fawkes example. Reprinted in his *Problems of the Self*, Cambridge University Press, 1973.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL-CONTINUITY ACCOUNTS

The view that we persist by virtue of some sort of psychological continuity has dominated debates on personal identity since Locke. The unifying idea is that a being existing at another time is you if and only its mental states or capacities then depend causally in some way on your current states or capacities, or vice versa. There is debate over the details: for instance about whether our mental states have to be continuously physically realized for us to persist, as Johnston 1987, Shoemaker 1997, and Unger 1990 argue, or whether other sorts of causal dependence suffice, as Shoemaker 1984 claims. Van Inwagen 1997 attacks Shoemaker 1984's view, while Olson 1997 objects to psychological-continuity views of all sorts. Noonan 1998 and Shoemaker 2008 defend psychological-continuity views against these objections. Williams 1970 is a classic critical discussion influencing all later authors.

Johnston, M. (1987). Human Beings. *Journal of Philosophy* 84, 59-83.

Criticizes the method of cases commonly used in arguing about personal identity and advocates a physically qualified psychological-continuity view. Reprinted in J. Kim and E. Sosa, eds., *Metaphysics: An Anthology*, Oxford: Blackwell 1999.

Olson, E. (1997). *The Human Animal: Personal Identity Without Psychology*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Objects that any account of our identity over time with a psychological component is incompatible with our being animals, raising metaphysical and epistemological problems.

Noonan, H. (1998). Animalism Versus Lockeanism: A Current Controversy,

*Philosophical Quarterly* 48, 302-318.

The first of a series of papers defending the psychological-continuity view against animalist objections by offering an unorthodox account of first-person reference.

Shoemaker, S. (1984). Personal Identity: A Materialist's Account, in S. Shoemaker and S. Swinburne, *Personal Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Classic defense of a generous psychological-continuity account. The characterization of psychological continuity is particularly good. An indispensable source.

Shoemaker, S. 1997. Self and Substance, *Philosophical Perspectives 11: Mind, Causation, and World*: 283-319.

A rich discussion that could have been included under a number of categories. Shoemaker retracts his earlier generous account. Reprinted in Shoemaker, *Identity, Cause, and Mind*, expanded edition. Oxford University Press 2003.

Shoemaker, S. 2008. Persons, Animals, and Identity. *Synthese* 163: 313-324.

One of a series of papers arguing that a functionalist theory of mind entails a psychological-continuity account of personal identity, and that biological organisms cannot have mental properties.

Unger, P. (1990). *Identity, Consciousness, and Value*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Ingenious and detailed discussion of a wide range of psychologically based accounts. Argues for a physically qualified view.

van Inwagen, P. (1997). Materialism and the Psychological-Continuity Account of Personal Identity, *Philosophical Perspectives 11: Mind, Causation, and World*, 305-319.

Argues that a Shoemaker-style generous psychological-continuity view is incompatible with our being material things. Reprinted in his *Ontology, Identity, and Modality*, Cambridge University Press 2001.

Williams, B. (1970) The Self and the Future, *Philosophical Review* 79, 161-180.

Brilliantly argues that the very brain-state transfer story that appears to support a psychological-continuity view turns out, when described differently, to undermine it. Reprinted in his *Problems of the Self* and in Perry 2008.

## EXTRINSICNESS AND BEST-CANDIDATE THEORIES

It seems that there could be two beings at some future time, each of which relates to

you in a way that would suffice for him or her to be you, were it not for the existence of the other. What would happen to you then? Many respond that neither being would be you, precisely because there are two of them. Others deny that identity can be determined by such extrinsic factors. Parfit's *Personal Identity* uses discontent with the first response to argue for the practical unimportance of identity; but that is another topic (see *\*What Matters in Identity\**). Heller 1987, Lewis 1976, Noonan 2003, and Perry 1972 argue against extrinsicness, based on the view that we are composed of temporal parts. Nozick 1981 argues in support of it, without giving any metaphysical basis. Thomson 1987 uses fission cases to cast doubt on psychological-continuity accounts.

Heller, M. (1987). The Best Candidate Approach to Diachronic Identity, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 65, 434-451.

Though not about personal identity per se, the paper articulates well the thought that whether a being existing at another time is identical to one existing now should not depend on whether there is competition.

Lewis, D. (1976). Survival and Identity, in *The Identities of Persons*, (ed.) A. Rorty, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ingenious and influential defense of the claim that one can survive division as both resulting beings because in that case there were two of you all along. Reprinted with postscripts in his *Philosophical Papers* vol. I, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, and in Martin and Barresi 2002.

Noonan, H. (2003). *Personal Identity*, 2e, London and New York: Routledge.

Ch. 7 is clear and insightful discussion of the extrinsicness debate. (This chapter is unchanged from the first edition of 1989.)

Nozick, R. (1981). Personal Identity Through Time, in his *Philosophical Explanations*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 27-70.

The most famous defense of a best-candidate or closest-continuer theory. Reprinted in Martin and Barresi 2002.

Perry, J. (1972). Can the Self Divide?, *Journal of Philosophy* 69, 463-488.

An important discussion of fission cases, advocating an interesting variant on the usual temporal-parts account. Reprinted in Perry 2002.

Thomson, J. J. (1987). Ruminations on an Account of Personal Identity, in Thomson (ed.), *On Being and Saying: Essays for Richard Cartwright*, 215-240. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

A good critical discussion of psychological-continuity accounts and their

implications in fission cases.

## THE BODILY CRITERION

The bodily criterion of personal identity is the view that we persist by virtue of the persistence of our bodies: personal identity is bodily identity. An allied view is that we *are* our bodies: a human person and her body are one and the same. Though the bodily criterion has few advocates, it is historically an important alternative to psychological-continuity views. It has now largely been superseded by \*Animalism\*. Thomson 1997, Williams 1956-7, and Williams 1970 argue in favor of a bodily criterion. Wiggins 1976 offers subtle criticisms, while van Inwagen 1980 argues that the entire debate is founded on linguistic muddle. Standard objections to the bodily criterion (e.g. on the basis of brain-transplant stories) can be found in almost any general discussion of personal identity over time, and are not included here.

Thomson, J. J. (1997). People and Their Bodies, in J. Dancy (ed.), *Reading Parfit*, Oxford: Blackwell.

[A rare argument for the claim that we are our bodies, in Thomson's characteristic no-nonsense style.](#)

van Inwagen, P. (1980). Philosophers and the Words Human Body. in van Inwagen (ed.), *Time and Cause*, Dordrecht: Reidel.

[Argues that philosophical talk of people's bodies is meaningless, or at least that philosophers who speak of people's bodies as such need to explain what they mean by the term.](#)

Wiggins, D. (1976). Locke, Butler and the Stream of Consciousness: And Men as a Natural Kind, in A. Rorty (ed.), *The Identities of Persons*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

[One of the more interesting assaults on the bodily criterion, taking care to distinguish it from animalism. Fairly difficult.](#)

Williams, B. (1956-7). Personal Identity and Individuation, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 57, 229-252.

[Argues that bodily identity is necessary for personal identity, on the grounds that without it there could be no conclusive evidence that it was the same person.](#)

Williams, B. (1970). Are Persons Bodies?, in S. Spicker (ed.), *The Philosophy of the Body*, Chicago: Quadrant.

[Though the article is mainly about whether we are material things, it also defends](#)

the bodily criterion against objections. Reprinted in his *Problems of the Self*.

## ANTICRITERIALISM

While some argue about whether the conditions of our persistence through time are psychological or brute physical, others doubt whether there are any such conditions to be known. Personal identity, they say, is simple and unanalyzable. A related question is whether our identity over time can be indeterminate (though it is not very clear what the relation is). Chisholm 1976, Lowe 1998, Merricks 1998, and Swinburne 1997 all argue in support of some simple view or other; Unger 1990 and Zimmerman 1998 argue against. Yet another vaguely related topic that has to be mentioned somewhere is reductionism, the view that our identity over time consists in something that can be described without mentioning people. Parfit 1984 endorses it; Shoemaker 1985 finds it obscure. The entire constellation of issues is poorly understood.

Chisholm, R. (1976). *Person and Object*, La Salle, IL: Open Court.

Ch. 3, especially pp. 108-113, argues that our persistence does not consist in any conditions that we could use as evidence for it; criteria of personal identity over time can only be epistemic. Partly reprinted in M. Rea (ed.), *Material Constitution*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield 1997, 209-235.

Lowe, E. J. (1998). Persistence and Substance, in his *The Possibility of Metaphysics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Argues that there must be things whose persistence is primitive and does not consist in facts about anything else.

Merricks, T. (1998). There Are no Criteria of Identity over Time, *Noûs* 32, 106-124.

Important argument for the claim that there is no nontrivial set of necessary and sufficient conditions for anything, including a person, to persist.

Parfit, D. (1984). *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford University Press.

Chs. 10 and 11 are the most influential source of reductionism.

Shoemaker, S. (1985). Critical Notice of D. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, *Mind* 94, 443-453.

Asks what Parfitian reductionism could amount to. Reprinted in slightly abridged form in Dancy 1997.

Swinburne, R. (1984). Personal Identity: the Dualist Theory, in Shoemaker and Swinburne, *Personal Identity*.

Argues against empiricist theories according to which our persistence consists in the psychological or physical continuity we use as evidence for it, and defends his simple view against objections.

Unger, P. (1990). *Identity, Consciousness, and Value*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Ch. 6 argues that personal identity over time can be indeterminate.

Zimmerman, D. (1998). Criteria of Identity and the Identity Mystics', *Erkenntnis* 48, 281-301.

Argues that there have to be nontrivial conditions necessary and sufficient for material things, including ourselves if we are material, to persist. Fairly technical.

### WHAT MATTERS IN IDENTITY

Our continuing or ceasing to exist is one thing; the practical importance of these facts is another. Why do they matter to us? Should they matter? Although Locke and Leibniz discussed this question in the 17th century, it gained huge popularity in the early 1970s when Parfit and others argued that identity over time has no practical importance in itself. What matters, they claimed, is a relation normally correlated with identity, but separable from it. Parfit 1970 launched the modern debate; Parfit 1984 gives more detail. Martin 1998, Velleman 1996, and Whiting 1986 defend Parfitian views, while Korsgaard 1989's view is closer to Parfit than she suggests. Lewis 1976, Perry 1976, and Unger 1990 argue for the importance of identity, though on different grounds.

Korsgaard, C. (1989), Personal Identity and the Unity of Agency: A Kantian Response to Parfit, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 18, 103-131.

Argues that whether an earlier or later action or experience is yours in the practical sense is independent of metaphysical facts about identity through time. Difficult. Reprinted in Kolak and Martin 1991.

Lewis, D. (1976). Survival and Identity, in A. Rorty (ed.), *The Identities of Persons*, (ed.) A. Rorty, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Famous paper arguing that fission cases fail to show the unimportance of identity if we are composed of temporal parts.

Martin, R. (1998). *Self-Concern: An Experiential Approach to What Matters in Identity*, Cambridge University Press.

Connects what matters practically to the possibility of rationally anticipating later experiences, and argues that this does not require identity.

- Parfit, D. (1970). Personal Identity, *Philosophical Review* 80, 3-27.  
 Enormously influential paper, arguing for the unimportance of identity based on fission cases. Reprinted in Perry 2008.
- Parfit, D. (1984). *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford University Press.  
 Part 3, especially chapters 12 and 13, develops Parfit's 1970 account in more detail and is probably the most important source for this debate.
- Perry, J. (1976). The Importance of Being Identical, in A. Rorty (ed.), *The Identities of Persons*, (ed.) A. Rorty, Berkeley: University of California Press.  
 A temporal-parts-based view importantly different from Lewis's. Reprinted in Perry 2002.
- Unger, P. (1990). *Identity, Consciousness, and Value*, New York: Oxford University Press.  
 Ch. 7, 'What Matters in our Survival', usefully distinguishes different senses of mattering.
- Velleman, D. (1996). Self to Self, *Philosophical Review* 105, 39-76.  
 Identifies a form of engagement with future selves that does not require identity, yet cannot hold in fission cases. Rather difficult. Reprinted in his *Self to Self*, Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Whiting, J. (1986). Friends and Future Selves, *Philosophical Review* 95, 547-580.  
 An important and highly readable defense of a Parfitian view.

## **NARRATIVE CONCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY**

Lockean accounts say that we persist by virtue of psychological continuity: relations of causal dependence among our mental states. Parfit argues that these relations are what matter, even when they fail to secure our persistence (see \*What Matters in Identity\*). But we also want our lives to have a sort of narrative unity or overall shape. And we want control over that shape, rather than having it fixed by factors not up to us. Whether this is a normative thesis about value, a psychological thesis about human beings, or a metaphysical thesis about persistence is not always clear; but this literature captures something missing in the Lockean tradition. Wollheim 1984, Schechtman 1996 and Schechtman 2001 argue for a narrative conception; Strawson 2004 argues against. Glover 1988 is a popular discussion of something like a narrative conception. DeGrazia 2005 attempts to sort out what's going on in this literature.

DeGrazia, D. 2005. *Human Identity and Bioethics*. Cambridge University Press.  
Ch. 3 is a clear-headed introduction to narrative approaches to personal identity.

Glover, J. (1988). *I: The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity*, London: Penguin.  
Part 2 is an accessible and sympathetic introduction to the topic of self-creation. Unfortunately now out of print.

Schechtman, M. (1996). *The Constitution of Selves*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.  
Difficult but influential book, arguing that an essential element of personal identity is which of the mental properties one exemplifies make one the person one really is. Part 1 makes some good objections to Lockean approaches.

Schechtman, M. (2001). Empathic Access: The Missing Ingredient in Personal Identity, *Philosophical Explorations* 2, 94-110.  
Argues that narrative coherence and empathic access can replace traditional psychological continuity to yield a new account of personal identity over time. Reprinted in Martin and Barresi 2002.

Strawson, G. (2004). Against Narrativity, *Ratio* 17, 428-452.  
An iconoclastic paper, arguing that the narrative structure of one's life is neither an important feature of how we in fact experience our lives, nor an essential feature of a good life. Reprinted in his *The Self?*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.

Wollheim, R. (1984). *The Thread of Life*, Cambridge University Press.  
Argues that we must understand what it is to be a person in terms of the process of leading one's life. And a life cannot be understood as built up out of individual actions and mental states; rather, actions and mental states are abstractions from the life in which they occur. Rather difficult.

## PERSONAL ONTOLOGY

Personal ontology refers to the basic metaphysical nature of human people: whether we are material or immaterial, momentary or persisting, abstract or concrete, and so on. This has been an important recent area of research. Olson 2007 and van Inwagen 2002 survey a range of possible answers to the question, while Baker 2000 and Hudson 2001 are book-length defenses of particular answers. Chisholm 1989, Lowe 2001, Unger 1979, and Zimmerman 2003 argue for very different but equally surprising views.

Baker, L. R. 2000. *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View*, Cambridge University Press.

A detailed statement and defense of the view that we are constituted by human organisms numerically different from us.

Chisholm, R. (1989.) Is There a Mind-Body Problem?, in his *On Metaphysics*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Notorious argument for Lilliputian materialism, the view that each of us is a tiny particle within the brain. Original work 1979; partly reprinted in P. van Inwagen and D. Zimmerman (eds.), *Metaphysics: The Big Questions*, 2e, Malden, MA: Blackwell 2008.

Hudson, H. 2001. *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

A sophisticated and very clear argument for the view that each of us is a temporal part of a brain, based on general principles about the nature of vagueness.

Lowe, E. J. (2001.) Identity, Composition, and the Simplicity of the Self, in K. Corcoran (ed.), *Soul, Body and Survival*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 139-158.

Argues that we are human-being-sized mereological atoms.

Olson, E. (2007). *What Are We? A Study in Personal Ontology*, New York: Oxford University Press.

An explanation of what the problem of personal ontology amounts to, followed by a critical and rather pessimistic discussion of what he takes to be the main solutions.

Unger, P. (1979). I do not exist. In G. F. MacDonald (ed.), *Perception and Identity*, London: Macmillan.

Argues from sorites-type problems to the conclusion that there are no human people. Reprinted in M. Rea (ed.), *Material Constitution*, 175-190.

van Inwagen, P. (2002). What Do We Refer to When We Say I?, in R. Gale (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Metaphysics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 175-189.

A very clear discussion of the question of personal ontology and a range of possible views.

Zimmerman, D. (2003). Material people, in Zimmerman (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, 491-526.

An argument in the style of Chisholm against our being material things of any kind, based on the metaphysicals of material objects in general.

## ANIMALISM

Animalism is the view that human people are biological organisms. It is generally taken to imply that our identity over time consists in some brute physical condition to do with biology, contrary to all psychological-continuity views. Ayers 1990, Olson 2003, and Snowdon 1990 argue in support of animalism, while van Inwagen 1990 defends it against objections. Johnston 2007 and Unger 2000 object to its implications about our identity over time; Hudson 2007 and Olson 2007 attack it on other metaphysical grounds.

Ayers, M. (1990). *Locke*, vol. 2, London: Routledge.

Ch. 19 is a fascinating discussion of animal identity; ch. 25 argues for animalism and against Lockean views.

Hudson, H. (2007.) I Am Not an Animal!, in P. van Inwagen and D. Zimmerman (eds.), *Persons: Human and Divine*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 216-236.

A very clear critical discussion. Hudson has a good nose for metaphysical problems and is one of animalism's ablest critics.

Johnston, M. (2007). Human Beings Revisited: My Body is not an Animal, in D. Zimmerman (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics*, vol. 3, Oxford University Press.

A perceptive critical discussion of animalism with an important new objection.

Olson, E. (2003). An Argument for Animalism, in Martin, R and M. Barresi (eds.). (2002). *Personal Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Clear statement of the too-many-thinkers argument: because human animals have all the psychological and behavioral features that we have, they are what we are. Reprinted in van Inwagen and Zimmerman 2008.

Olson, E. (2007). *What Are We? A Study in Personal Ontology*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 9 discusses a variety of metaphysical objections to animalism, concluding that it may require a sparse ontology of material objects.

Snowdon, P. (1990). Persons, Animals, and Ourselves, in C. Gill (ed.), *The Person and the Human Mind*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

A perceptive argument for animalism in the Oxford style.

Unger, P. (2000). The Survival of the Sentient, in *Philosophical Perspectives 14: Action and Freedom*, 325-348.

Forcefully argues against animalism on the basis of its implications about our identity over time.

van Inwagen, P. (1990). *Material Beings*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Sections 9 and 13 offer a clear and detailed account of animalism's implications for our identity over time, and section 15 defends them against standard objections.

## SYNCHRONIC IDENTITY

Whereas personal identity over time is about what determines whether a person existing at one time also exists at other times, synchronic identity is about what determines how many of us there are at any one time. This question has received less attention than its importance might merit, and is often confused with others. (For better or worse, the vast literature on commissurotomy and multiple personality seldom addresses it.) Liberals, represented by Campbell and McMahan 2010, Puccetti 1973, Rovane 1998, Wilkes 1988, and, more tentatively, Nagel 1971, say that the number of human people can vary independently of the number of human organisms. Conservatives deny this: Brown 2001 and van Inwagen 1990 criticize arguments for liberal views, while Olson 2003 attacks the views themselves.

Brown, M. (2001). Multiple Personality and Personal Identity, *Philosophical Psychology* 14, 435-47.

Argues that multiple personality can be explained in terms of failure of autobiographical memory and is of no metaphysical import, and attempts to diagnose the attraction of liberal views.

Campbell, T. and J. McMahan. (2010). Animalism and the Varieties of Conjoined Twinning, *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 31: 285-301.

Argues that the number of people in cases of conjoined twins is inconsistent with any familiar account of what we are, and in particular with our being organisms.

Nagel, T. (1971). Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness. *Synthèse* 22, 396-413.

Influential but inconclusive paper about whether commissurotomy creates two conscious beings within a single organism. Reprinted in his *Mortal Questions*, Cambridge University Press 1979, and in Perry 2008 (see \*Anthologies\*).

Olson, E. (2003). Was Jekyll Hyde? *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*

66: 328-348.

Argues that it is metaphysically impossible for two or more people to share a single human being owing to multiple personality.

Puccetti, R. 1973. Brain Bisection and Personal Identity, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 24, 339-355.

Argues that lack of coordination between cerebral hemispheres implies that there are two people within every normal human being.

Rovane, C. 1998. *The Bounds of Agency*, Princeton University Press.

Argues that the number of people at a given time is determined by facts about the unity of agency. Human beings who cooperate can make up a group person (and fail to be people themselves), while a disunified human being can be the home of several people.

van Inwagen, P. (1990). *Material Beings*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Section 12 argues that no amount of psychological disunity, even the possession of two separate organs of thought, implies the existence of two thinking beings.

Wilkes, K. (1988). *Real People: Personal Identity Without Thought Experiments*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Chapters 4 and 5 are careful discussions of the scientific literature on multiple personality and commissurotomy, respectively.

## PERSONHOOD

What is it to be a person? What is necessary, and what suffices, for something to count as a person, as opposed to a nonperson? What have we people (or persons) got that nonpeople haven't got? The question acquires much of its interest from the consideration of difficult cases. Could a rational parrot be a person, as Locke thought? An intelligent computer (if there could be such a thing)? At what point in our development do we ourselves become people? Baker 2000, Dennett 1976, and Frankfurt 1971 argue that to be a person is (roughly) to have certain psychological capacities. Wiggins 1980 objects to this, and Snowdon 1996 criticizes his proposal. Wilkes 1988 discusses the personhood of infants and fetuses. Strawson 1959 and Ayer 1964 are mainly concerned with what sort of thing could be a subject of thought and consciousness.

Ayer, A. J. (1964). The Concept of a Person, in his *The Concept of a Person and Other Essays*, London: Macmillan.

A wide-ranging critical discussion of Strawson.

Baker, L. R. 2000. *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View*, Cambridge University Press.

Ch. 3 and the first part of ch. 4 develop an account of a first-person perspective and argue that to be a person is to have the capacity for such a perspective. This appears to be separable from the book's claims about personal ontology.

Dennett, D. (1976). Conditions of Personhood, in Rorty, A. (ed). (1976). *The Identities of Persons*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Argues among other things that whether something is a person depends on what attitude we take towards it.

Frankfurt, H. (1971). Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person, *Journal of Philosophy* 58, 5-20.

Famous paper arguing that to be a person, as opposed to just any psychological being, is to have second-order desires. Reprinted in G. Watson (ed.), *Free Will*, Oxford University Press 1982.

Snowdon, P. (1996). Persons and Personal Identity, in S. Lovibond and S. G. Williams (eds.), *Essays for David Wiggins: Identity, Truth and Value*, Oxford: Blackwell.

A perceptive critical discussion of Wiggins' animal-attribute account of personhood, among other things. Wiggins responds in the same volume.

Strawson, P. F. (1959). *Individuals*, London: Routledge.

Ch. 3 is the source of the view that a person is by definition a subject of both M-predicates and P-predicates. Enormously influential despite its difficulty.

Wiggins, D. (1980). *Sameness and Substance*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Ch. 6 discusses Strawson and argues that a person is by definition a kind of organism. A rich, though difficult source that could have been included under a number of categories.

Wilkes, K. (1988). *Real People: Personal Identity Without Thought Experiments*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Ch. 2, 'Infants and Foetuses', is a perceptive discussion of real cases.