

A Critique of the Theory of Quasi-Memory

1 Introduction

The question of *Personal Identity* has proved a vexed topic for Philosophy in the last couple of decades or so, in no small measure due to the continual emergence of ever new and bizarre attempts to resolve its traditional difficulties. Accounts of bodiless brains, bits of brains, and even no brains at all, have been variously summoned to the cause of untangling the web of seemingly insoluble puzzles which surround the question of 'What makes you and me the same persons at one time as we supposedly are at another?' The labyrinth of perplexities in which one finds oneself is seemingly endless, as no sooner is one solution mounted than someone else wields the scalpel and produces another.

However, I would like to propose a halt to such gratuitous vivisection, and suggest instead that we remind ourselves precisely what the concepts are involved in this question. If we talk of personal identity, we need to be aware of the concepts of both person and identity. Whilst the term 'person' invites a plethora of interpretations, too many to canvass here, what they do have in common is the notion of an individual in the world, one which is generally understood to be human, embodied, and rational.

The identity of that rational individual is seen to be a problem due to the fact that on the one hand, we have the notion of that individual as being the same individual at different times, and on the other, we have a notion of that individual as being one that changes over time. Thus, the perennial problem of the one and the many manifests itself in its most bewildering form.

Many of the recent attempts to solve the personal identity issue are clouded by a sly cartesian inheritance, which although not always overtly manifested, nevertheless maintains a silent, malignant presence. The realisation that minds are, in some form or another, manifested in brains, did not for all, close this earlier provoked lesion between mind and body. For now, rather than having separate minds and bodies, we have disconnected brains, along with a plethora of brainless bodies, as the vie for credibility is fought out in the arena of the various versions of psychological and physical continuity theories.

It is to one such theory that I address the contents of this paper, but in so doing, also to the very idea of the caesura which permits such theories to propagate. For the question at issue is not only 'Is this theory viable, does it work,' but it is also 'are the presuppositions which allow this theory to be mounted in the first place, valid? - do they receive the attestation of accounts of actual persons in an experiencing world?'

In other words, the question is, not only, 'can we prove the viability of, for example, a purely psychological account of personal identity, as opposed to a physical account?', but also, 'can we justify the categorisation of psychological and physical states as if they were states separate and disconnected from each other?' Another way of putting this second question here is, 'Because we can conceptually separate, does this justify any form of presumed ontological separation?' Clearly, if this latter question does not get off the ground, the former cannot even be asked.

The main thrust of this paper then, will be a challenge to the validity of the embedded assumptions of those theorists who attempt to address the question of personal identity by means of theories which imply that, not only are we justified in accepting that the solution lies with whichever of the psychological or physical continuity accounts are deemed the most plausible, but also that we are justified in accepting the legitimacy of the division between psychological and physical states on which those accounts rely and on which they are based. As a means of addressing the latter issue I shall deal with a particular problem confronting the first.

Specifically, I shall address some attempts made in recent times by some theorists to overcome a particular problem confronting versions of the psychological continuity accounts, namely the effort to overcome the circularity objection mounted against this particular theory. In showing that these attempts fail, I aim also to show that the theories themselves fail, and, by corollary, also, the presuppositions on which they are based. A brief excursion into the inherent and inherited complexities of the issues involved follows, subsequent to which, I present a more detailed account of the claims to be made during the progress of the present paper.

2 Locke

Locke is understood as being the first to address the issue of Personal Identity in the currently designated form. It became a problem for him when he formulated the study of *Ideas*, published as part of his *Essay* in 1670. His cartesian inheritance entailed his acceptance of the propositions both that the body is mutable, and that substance is unknowable.

The formulation of credible identity criteria for persons then, provided somewhat of a dilemma. Locke's solution was to propose that the identity of persons lies in consciousness of the past and of the present, now understood in terms of memory, and as such, locates itself in the debate on personal identity, as part of the concept of what is taken to be a person's psychological states.

Whilst, given the philosophical climate of Locke's day, we may not deny the ingenuity of his solution, we are now in a better position to reflect on its implications, from the point of view of both immediate and later emergent problems. The progress of this paper will address some of these problems, with a view to finding their solutions, and to also determining the most plausible direction for the personal identity debate as a whole.

3 The Psychological Continuity Criterion

Several versions of psychological continuity theories, inherited from that of Locke, have appeared in the contemporary literature. An important factor in the viability of these theories is their ability to overcome the circularity objection mounted in 1867 by Joseph Butler against Locke's original version of the theory. Locke's claim that personal identity resides in consciousness invited Butler's criticism that '*consciousness of personal identity presupposes and therefore cannot constitute personal identity*' (Butler 1867), p 194.

The criticism poses in contemporary terms the problem of how to account for personal identity without the presupposition that what makes me the same person at t2 as I was at t1 is the fact that the psychological states that I had at t1 are continuously connected to the psychological states I had at t2. When put this way, the account of personal identity fails to provide any significant information and amounts to little more than a tautology. To fully account for personal identity requires, according to Noonan, the elucidation of:

'... the logically necessary and sufficient conditions for a person identified at one time being the same person as a person identified at another. Otherwise put, it is the problem of giving an account of what personal identity over time necessarily consists in ...' (Noonan 1989), p 2.

Noonan also makes the point that the problem which concerns philosophers is that of the constitution of personal identity, rather than the problem of the what evidence we have for knowing what that is, as he puts it: the 'metaphysical-cum-semantic' rather than the 'evidential criterion' (Noonan 1989), p 2. Clearly though, these two problems are intricately related, as the metaphysical question inevitably involves the epistemological one, that is to say, if we are to make sensible claims about what the facts are, we must assume that we have been able to discover them.

With regards to the case in point, statements about psychological criteria need to accurately represent, at least to the best of the available information, the way the particular psychological states referred to actually are, and how they are seen to operate. These kind of questions are particularly relevant to Butler's circularity problem as outlined above. For if the effort to solve this issue involves presuppositions regarding the nature and content of psychological states, then the burden is on the theorists making such pronouncements to justify those presuppositions.

In recent years, an effort to overcome the circularity problem has been made by Sydney Shoemaker, who, in his work *Persons and Their Pasts*, introduces the notion of *quasi-memory*. His theory is taken up by Derek Parfit, in his radical version of the psychological continuity theory. For the theory of quasi-memory to work requires the acceptance of certain suppositions about the operation of normal memory, namely that it operates like quasi-memory.

In this paper I will argue that, quasi-memory fails to accurately represent either the nature of genuine memory experience, or the nature of genuine memory knowledge. From this it follows that genuine memory is therefore not replaceable by quasi-memory, and hence, failing the appearance of a viable alternative strategy, that the psychological continuity theory is thereby not rescued from circularity. It therefore follows that the theory fails in its task of adequately accounting for the identity of persons over time.

What I shall also argue in this paper, is that the data which supports the above case, simultaneously supports the conclusion that our conceptual separation of psychological and physical states which permit the canvas of the divisive theories, such as the one above, does not permit us to conclude that such separation is actually reflected in reality. The following exploration in fact supports the contrary view, that is, that psychological states necessarily entail physical states, and that an adequate account of one, ultimately entails an account of the other.

The remainder of this paper will proceed as follows: I will present, firstly a summary of Shoemaker's quasi-memory; secondly, an account of Parfit's use of the theory; thirdly I will offer some criticism of quasi-memory and its application to hypothetical memory situations, drawing in part, on work by Marya Schechtman, and finally I will draw my points together in a final conclusion.

4 Shoemaker's Quasi-memory

Shoemaker's exposition of his topic is somewhat complex and intricate, so, whilst remaining true to the general thrust of the theory, I will for the sake of simplicity avoid discussing every step of his argument, attempting rather, to summarise what I understand to be the main intent of his ideas. Shoemaker suggests that memory can be understood in two ways.

Firstly, as the memories of a particular person, for example, the memories that are mine. I can remember events from the past, both about myself, and about other people. For these memories to be accurate amounts to my having a cognitive state which corresponds to the cognitive state I had in the past when the particular events occurred, a condition referred to by Shoemaker as the previous awareness condition.

In addition, Shoemaker claims that in the case of memories about myself I cannot be mistaken. For example, on a recent day, when I visited my room at the university and checked my email, and then returned home to begin re-reading Shoemaker's work on quasi-memory, I can be sure that I am not mistaking myself for someone else. By contrast, if I remember my son Mark telling me he had read a certain book, I could be mistaking him for a different person, perhaps his friend Ivy, who is usually with him. The mistake could be made either by misidentifying Mark in the first place, or by misremembering him. Shoemaker claims we just do not make this type of error about ourselves, thus first-person memories are immune to error through misidentification.

The second way that memories could be considered is in an impersonal way. Such 'quasi-memories' would not necessarily involve a previous awareness condition in the rememberer, only that it existed in someone. For example, my having a quasi-memory that I attended a lecture by Frank on Plato would mean that I have the present cognitive state with this content, but that it may not have been me with the cognitive state at the time of the lecture, it could have been someone else who was there and who had this state. In a case such as this I would not have the previous awareness condition, and although my memories of myself, seem to be of me, there is no certainty that they are.

Shoemaker points out that in this world we do not have quasi-memories, but that their postulation allows for a way of distinguishing certain features of memories which permit the circularity objection to be surmounted. He suggests that we consider a situation in which quasi-memories are possible.

Schoemaker adds to the account of memory the requirement that memories are correctly causally connected to the events they represent; this amounts to the present cognitive state occurring only because it is correctly causally linked to the previous cognitive state. In this universe, this would mean that ordinary memories would be taken as being correctly annexed to the events they represent in virtue of the fact that the person to whom the memories belong has the previous awareness condition. But, in a quasi-universe, a correct causal connection could be of another kind.

Shoemaker gives an example of just such another kind, by presenting a thought experiment. If Brown's memories were transferred to Robinson by means of a brain-transplant operation, then, according to psychological continuity, the former person Brown would become the former person Robinson, to then be referred to as 'Brownson.' But if we assume this fact merely because Brownson has Robinson's memories, Shoemaker claims we would be engaging in the same sort of circular argument which troubled Butler, that is, we know that Brownson is Robinson because he has the same memories as Robinson, and what identifies those memories as Robinson's is the fact that they are his.

To overcome this circularity, we could look to the causal connection, and say that we know that Brownson is the former Robinson, not just because he has qualitatively similar memories as him, but because they are correctly causally connected to Robinson, in this case, by means of the transfer of the particular brain in which they are encoded.

According to the thesis, the causal connection is correct because, as explained earlier, the previous awareness condition exists in someone, although it is not necessary that this someone is the same person as the one who recalls the memories. Thus, in the case cited above, the causal connection is not dependent on the identity of the rememberer, and therefore, Shoemaker claims, the circularity problem is overcome.

To see more closely how the scenario of quasi-memory is reflected in the debate about personal identity, we need to consider its impact on first-person memories by imagining that we inhabit a quasi-memory possible universe. Here, I could not take for granted that any first-person memories which I have are mine, merely by the fact that I have them. I may remember the details of my going shopping last week, but, whereas in the present universe, these first-person facts would by virtue of the previous awareness condition, be immune to error through misidentification, in a universe with quasi-memory this would not be so.

In such a quasi-universe, instead of the previous awareness condition which guarantees my memories in this universe, Shoemaker cites the following criteria: I must possess the right memories, that is, they would cohere with my life history, they must be correctly causally linked with the events which they represent, such as by my having had a brain transplant, and finally, to eliminate the possibility of branching, there must be no other person with qualitatively similar first-person memories.

In the case of the imagined Brownson story, Shoemaker claims that, although Brownson does not inherit his traits in the normal way, we can say that the former Brown's having had the traits is an 'important part of a causally sufficient condition of the latter,' that is, of Brownson now having them, and that further:

'It is only where we suppose that the traits of things at different times are causally related in this way that we are entitled to take the similarity of something at one time and something at another time as evidence of identity ...' (Shoemaker 1984), pp 44-45.

Thus, part of what it is for me to know that I am the same person at t2 as I was at t1 involves my having a memory which is correctly linked, that is by a non-branching chain, to the former event. On this new interpretation, a correct link is deemed to be one which is causally connected in some 'acceptable' way, rather than being one whose cause is confined to the recall of the awareness condition of the original event. By imagining a universe in which memories can be transferred from one person to another, Shoemaker suggests that, although we are technically unable to perform the required operations for this to actually happen, the fact that we can imagine it happening entitles us to take credence of the projected consequences for any personal identity argument.

The key point he wants to draw out is that, according to him, we can consider a person's memories in isolation from that person. We need to do this in order for the quasi-memory argument to work. Rather than considering that my memories are genuine because they have the requisite previous awareness conditions, I need to consider them as being genuine because they have the correct causal links.

Referring to these different interpretations respectively as 'strong' and 'weak' remembering, designated as 'rememberS' and 'rememberW,' Shoemaker claims that in actual remembering it is difficult to know which of these senses of remember coheres with our common understanding. Further, it is only because we do not really have branching causal chains that we have no need to make this distinction. It would seem that in order for the defence of the memory criteria for personal identity to work, an understanding of memory in the 'weak' sense is essential, although Shoemaker is a little ambiguous on this point:

'But I do not think that this question is especially important. We can defend the spirit of the claim that memory is a criterion of personal identity without settling this question, although in order to defend the letter of the claim we must maintain that in its ordinary use "remember" means "rememberW ...' (Shoemaker 1984), p 43.

If my understanding of Shoemaker is correct, I think how we understand remembering is important, and I take his latter point above as the crucial one. We need to bear in mind that the difference between the two kinds of remembering referred to, is the difference between personally owned and un-owned memories. Thus, if Shoemaker is wrong, and my memories are mine in virtue of being causally connected specifically to me, by means of the previous awareness condition, rather than because they have some other 'right kind' of causal connection, whatever that might be, then the original circularity objection is maintained.

More clearly, if the ownership of the memory is part of what we understand a memory to be, then its place in a psychological criterion of personal identity cannot be impersonal. Consequently, such criterion is necessarily circular. A brief look at Parfit's quasi-memory helps to resolve these issues.

5 Parfit's Quasi-memory

In his work *Reasons and Persons*, Parfit presents his version of what he calls a *reductionist* account of personal identity (Parfit 1984), pp 216-217. This account entails Parfit's own version of psychological continuity, to which I will refer only briefly, as the full details cannot be spelt out here.

Due to the fact of its intransitivity, mere psychological connectedness is inadequate as a basis for the attribution of personal identity, thus to overcome this problem, Parfit modifies the psychological continuity account so that it refers to 'overlapping chains':

'Psychological connectedness is the holding of particular direct psychological connections. Psychological continuity is the holding of overlapping chains of strong connectedness ..' (Parfit 1984), p 206.

The cause of these connections could vary, from the normal cause, such as the experience of first-person memories as one usually has, to any cause whatsoever, such as by memories being reproduced by some type of brain scanner and replicator. Provided there is no duplicate person in existence with the same memories, Parfit argues that the widest view allows that in the above case, the newly replicated person would actually be the original person. Parfit draws the conclusion that the crucial factor in personal identity is *Relation R*, that is, psychological connectedness and/or continuity with the right kind of cause, which could, according to his thesis, be any cause whatsoever (Parfit 1984), p 215.

His view means that the connectedness between a person's psychological states could hold, without reference to the type, or particular body, or body part in which that connectedness is present. Implied is that the normal connectedness which prevails between psychological states is not dependent on its being encoded in one and only one particular brain, or indeed in any brain whatsoever. The justification which Parfit offers for this view, is that if a person's vision were to be dependent on an artificial device, we would consider the identity of the person to be maintained (Parfit 1984), pp 208-209.

Parfit's reasoning seems to be that because, if a person's body were modified in some way, such as in order to assist one of its sensory functions, we would not regard this bodily change as effecting a change in the person's identity, and that it therefore follows that identity is determinable without recourse to the body. Parfit goes so far as to claim that in cases of replication of the contents of a person's entire psychological states, the person should regard this as being *'about as good as ordinary survival'* (Parfit 1984), p 215. Parfit notes that his modification of Locke's theory to mean that 'Relation R' does not overcome the traditional circularity objection; he thus offers his simplified version of quasi-memory:

(1) *I seem to remember having an experience,*
 (2) *someone did have this experience,* and
 (3) *my apparent memory is causally dependent, in the right kind of way, on that past experience*
 (Parfit 1984), p 220.

In other words, as per Shoemaker, my memories are not mine in virtue of my having had the previous awareness condition, but by having the 'right kind of causal connection,' which according to Parfit, could be any kind of cause at all. To demonstrate the operation of quasi-memory, Parfit gives some hypothetical examples of how it might work, as, according to his view, the consideration of 'certain imaginary cases' assists the understanding of 'actual people in ordinary lives' (Parfit 1984), p 219. We need to keep this point in mind, as a crucial question will be, whether in fact we can legitimately apply the conclusions of 'imaginary cases' to the way real life is experienced. The imaginary case which Parfit uses is a thought-experiment in which it is possible to transfer memories from one person to another (Parfit 1984), pp 220-221.

Parfit suggests that if neurosurgeons developed the requisite technology, partial memory transplants might be possible, allowing us to quasi-remember other persons' past experiences. Parfit then imagines a situation in which, by means of a brain-operation, one person is given the memories of experiences had by another, specifically Jane being given memories of events experienced by Paul during a trip to Venice. Jane is able to quasi-remember some of these events.

The memories consist of incidents such as walking on marble paving, hearing the flapping of pigeons' wings and the cries of gulls, seeing lightening, and even shaving. In accordance with quasi-memory, Jane remembers these events in the first-person mode, but in the same way in which they would be remembered by Paul.

Jane's awareness that her memories are memories of Paul's experiences is based only her being informed of this by him, otherwise, unless anomalous, such as the shaving incident, they might appear to be her own, and would thus be indistinguishable from her own memories, or even delusions.

In other words, although these memories are claimed to be in the first-person mode, apart from those which by their nature could not be part of Jane's life-history, Jane would only be able to distinguish them from either her own, or from delusional memories by having information in addition to the memories themselves.

The conclusions Parfit draws from his thought-experiment provide an ideal ground for the evaluation of quasi-memory and its subsequent implications. Based on his Jane/Paul scenario, Parfit concludes that Jane could have memories which she could accept at one and the same time as both seeming to be her own, and not being her own. He follows this with statements which concern not just quasi memories, but also real memories. We need to consider these carefully in light of his earlier claim that imaginary scenarios can help in the understanding of actual circumstances:

'In our statement of our revised Psychological Criterion, we should not claim that, if I have an accurate quasi-memory of some past experience, this makes me the person who had this experience. One person's mental life may include a few quasi-memories of experiences in some other person's life, as in the imagined case of Jane and Paul. Our criterion ignores a few such quasi-memory connections.

We appeal instead to overlapping chains of many such connections. My mental life consists of a series of very varied experiences. These include countless quasi-memories of earlier experiences. The connections between these quasi-memories and these earlier experiences overlap like the strands in a rope.

There is strong connectedness of quasi-memory if, over each day, the number of direct quasi-memory connections is at least half the number in most actual lives. Overlapping strands of strong connectedness provide continuity of quasi-memory. Revising Locke, we claim that the unity of each person's life is in part created by this continuity.

We are not now appealing to a concept that presupposes personal identity. Since the continuity of quasi-memory does not presuppose personal identity, it may be part of what constitutes personal identity. It may be part of what makes me now and myself at other times one and the same person (I say 'part' because our criterion also appeals to the other kinds of psychological continuity.)' (Parfit 1984), p 222.

There are four major conclusions relating to memory which I take to follow from this passage:

- 1) Consequent to his conclusion that in the imaginary Jane/Paul situation, Jane can make a distinction in her memories between those that are her own, and those that are someone else's, Parfit claims that we can do the same. In other words, we are entitled to draw conclusions about real memory from the findings on quasi-memory.
- 2) By categorising memory in terms of those that one just has, and those which are part of overlapping chains, we remove the subject of experience from the description of memory, thus producing an impersonal account of memory.
- 3) Because memories can be characterised impersonally, the application of memories to personal identity judgments does not entail the identity of the rememberer, and therefore such memory ascription is no longer a circular process.

4) The conclusions regarding memory could be equally applied to other kinds of psychological continuity, providing a non-circular interpretation of the psychological continuity theory of personal identity as a whole.

Summarised, I take Parfit to be saying that, due to the invocation of quasi-memory we can characterise memories impersonally, and that, by following the chain of reasoning which operates between points 1 and 4 above, we can give a non-circular psychologically based account of personal identity.

Conclusion 1 states that we can learn facts about the operation of real memory based on what we have learned about quasi-memory. By doing just this, Parfit takes the first step towards solving the circularity problem. But his move raises the question of whether or not it is legitimate to apply conclusions about quasi-memory to facts about real memory, because by doing this, we are making certain assumptions about the operation of memory, namely, that it operates like quasi-memory.

Conclusion 2 states that we can give an adequate account of memory, without the inclusion of the subject of experience, and can thereby characterise memories impersonally. Such an impersonal characterisation permits the second step towards overcoming circularity. But, parallel to conclusion 1, we need to consider, whether real memories can be so characterised, specifically whether such characterisation would accurately represent their most crucial features.

By parity of reasoning, it is on the legitimacy or otherwise of these first two conclusions that the validity of the relevance of quasi-memory to the psychological-continuity theories of personal identity, as advanced by Shoemaker and Parfit, either stands or falls. It is only if those conclusions can be accepted, that the reasoning which follows in conclusions 3 and 4 can work. In light of Parfit's earlier assertion about imaginary scenarios helping to understand actual ones, we might ask here then, does the imaginary accurately represent the actual? The following commentary is aimed at evaluating these assumptions, and the further conclusions contingent on them.

6 Assessment of Parfit's Quasi-memory

In assessing the implications of Parfit's ideas, I will address issues relating firstly, to the matter of memory experience, and secondly, to the matter of memory knowledge. In relation to memory experience I will look at the significance of the body to memory, and, by reference to a paper by Marya Schechtman, at the significance of complexity to memory. In relation to memory knowledge, I will look at some issues which concern the relevance to memory of the rememberer's first-personal knowledge. Whilst the critique is speculative, it is aimed at testing our intuitions about possible genuine memory experiences, against the background of Parfit's highly unlikely and seemingly impossible scenarios.

The Body in Memory

I refer to the issue of memory experience, firstly by considering Parfit's supposition that one person could have the memories of another person's experiences. Certain assumptions are made about how this would operate, such as the way Jane recalls some memories which have been transferred to her. But whilst at first glance the description given to this remembering by Parfit might sound plausible, I believe that closer scrutiny indicates otherwise. If, as Parfit claims, Jane did remember events which had been experienced by Paul, rather than being able to make sense of them in the way Parfit describes, something very odd might happen.

Firstly, Jane is supposed to remember walking across marble paving. We might wonder exactly how she could do this if she did not have the legs which did the walking. What if her legs were shorter than Paul's, or if Paul had a knee-injury at the time, how could the quality of Jane's memory reflect that of the original experience? Even more dramatically, what if Jane had only one leg, or no legs at all? How could there be the familiarity necessary for her recognition of the memory?

Similarly, let us imagine a situation involving ordinarily experienced memories, in which we consider what it would mean for a familiar activity to be experienced in one body, and be recalled in another. Let us say that Andrew is a fitness fanatic and attends the gym regularly to lift weights. His body is muscular and fit. Can we imagine that Norm, who is unfit and obese, could experience Andrew's memory of lifting weights, if he has never done it himself? Could such a memory be the same if recalled in a body which was unfit and flabby? Could Norm even identify the memory of the intense stretching feeling in his muscles? How could such a memory be either similar to one recalled in his own body, or to true to the original experience?

Secondly, Jane is supposed to have remembered the experience of hearing the flapping of pigeons' wings, and the cries of gulls. Suppose her hearing is more acute than Paul's, would the memory be like his?, or even worse, what if she were deaf, how could such a memory be possible? If she had never heard sound, how could we make sense of her 'remembering' it? If she could not identify the memory, could we really call it a memory?

To further consider what this might be like, do you think you could have a first-person memory of being Pavarotti singing 'Nessun Dorma?' I do not mean could you imagine singing it, but have an actual memory of it? Assuming your vocal cords are different to his, how could you remember what the feel of his was like as he reached certain notes?

Thirdly, Jane is said to remember shaving, how on earth could she remember shaving when she does not have the face which was shaved? If she is remembering Paul's chin, how can the memory be first-personal?, and if she is remembering her own, how can she remember moving the razor over the contours of Paul's? If she has never had facial hair, precisely what is she remembering?

Similarly, if you have always had short hair, or perhaps you are bald, how could you remember plating your hair, or going to the hairdressers and having very long hair cut off, or the feel of the hairdryer if you have never experienced it? Without the history of other life experiences within which such an experience would be naturally situated, how could the memories of these incidents have the background necessary to their interpretation or understanding?

The instances of quasi-memories outlined by Parfit, concern Jane's recall of the experiences of walking, hearing, and attending to her face, all of which involve parts of the body. Similarly, the above imagined possible genuine memory experiences referred also to events involving bodily sensations and experiences. Because the particular quality of the experiences is affected by the structure and composition of the body in which they occur, I think it may be the case that the body of the rememberer is a factor also in the recall situation.

If we consider the fact that particular bodily experiences, such as the fitness training referred to, condition the body such that it is modified and changed by progressive instances of the event concerned, then it seems evident that the recognition of the memory of those events is dependent, in some part at least, on the familiarity of the rememberer with the memories of previous such events, and by imputation with the states the body as it was at the events which gave rise to just such memories. It would seem to follow then that in a different body, those memories could be unfamiliar, strange, or even unrecognisable, throwing doubt on Parfit's suggested outcome.

Consideration of ordinary memory situations, suggests the body is inevitably involved in memory experience, especially when sensations of the body feature strongly in the incident being remembered. Perhaps memories carry a unique bodily imprint, one which, somewhat like a fingerprint, cannot be duplicated in a different body or format, and which therefore belongs solely, and only to the particular body in which it was originally uniquely, and distinctly encoded.

The Richness of Genuine Memory

I deal with the matter of memory experience secondly, by consideration of Marya Schechtman's paper, *Personhood and Personal Identity*. In this paper Schechtman considers some problems that might arise from Parfit's application of quasi-memory to ordinary, or 'apparent' memory. She claims Parfit presents a '*highly implausible view of human experience*' (Schechtman 1990), p 72. She helps to bring this out by drawing attention to the difference between delusional, quasi and 'apparent' memories (Schechtman 1990), p 78. Whereas delusional memories are hallucinations which we mistakenly think are memories, we have no opinion about the ownership of quasi memories; 'apparent' memories are those which we correctly take to be our own (referred to in this paper variously as 'genuine', 'real', or 'normal'). This distinction is helpful when assessing Parfit's claims.

Referring to Parfit's account of Jane's memories, Schechtman notes that Jane might initially make the false assumption that her memory of having seen lightening was of an experience of her own, rather than of one of Paul's. But if she came instead to regard it as a quasi-memory, then according to the theory, although she would know the memory was not of her own experience, she would not consider it as being a delusion, but would regard it in an impersonal way, as not belonging to anyone in particular (Schechtman 1990), p 78. Schechtman claims this move does not succeed, as memory is more complex than quasi-memory allows.

Schechtman brings out this complexity by introducing an account of a real (apparent) memory situation. Taken from a study on memory, *Remembering*, by Edward Casey, the account describes an incident in which a person recalls the details of a family visit to the cinema (Schechtman 1990), p 81-82. The incident recounts a memory of a particular situation, but the memory does not present itself (as in Parfit's memory description) as a discrete item of experience, but rather as an element in an intricate network, and as having complex and dynamic connections to other mental states.

When details of the outing are recalled, they are in company with a myriad of other little details and anecdotes, such as the demeanour of the children, their responses, and also other memories which the memory evokes. What is also evident in the account, is the fact that some memories are clear and definite, while others are indistinct and uncertain. Schechtman imagines what might happen if Jane were given the memories described in Casey's account. If the memories were transferred without any of the accompanying background details, they might be too unfamiliar to be recognisable as visual images, and if presented non-visually, they could seem disconnected and alien, even incoherent, just '*a blur of unidentifiable sights and sounds*' (Schechtman 1990), pp 82-83.

But even if, like those in Casey's account, the memories did include their connections with other mental states, confusion would still arise. These connections would fail to synchronise with those of Jane's own mental states, making integration between these alien memories and Jane's own life history problematic. A complete memory transfer would not solve the issue, as this would necessarily include Casey's identity and therefore, because Jane is not Casey, the memories would be delusional. The situation would be somewhat paradoxical:

'What this discussion has shown is that, on either of the two possible pictures of what it is to have a quasi-state, quasi-states fail to do the work they are supposed to because they include either too little or too much of the state they reproduce. 'If they include too little, they do not capture what is relevant to personal identity, and if they include too much, then, unless sameness of person is assumed, they are delusional' (Schechtman 1990), p 86.

Simply put, if the detail went with the memory, then so would the person, if the detail was omitted, then the value of the memory to the quasi-theorist would be lost. I think Schechtman is perceptive in bringing out these differences between supposed quasi and real memory experiences, and correct in her claims that the former would be ineffective as a means by which personal identity judgements could be made.

Conclusion to the above criticisms

The above comparisons between quasi-memories and possible genuine, or 'apparent' memories suggest two important facts regarding genuine memory experiences. Firstly, that the role of the body appears to be an affective component in a memory experience, and secondly, that genuine memory experience possesses a richness and complexity which is lacking in Parfit's shadowy counterpart. Both possibilities throw considerable doubt on the presumption that memory experiences could operate in the discrete and simplified way that quasi-memory demands.

Memory Knowledge

The issue of memory knowledge is examined by considering the issue of first-personal knowledge of memory. According to quasi-memory, memories are not identifiable solely on the basis of belonging to a particular person, but by means of causal connections specifiable on terms other than those of ownership. This approach affects the issue of first-personal memory knowledge. The problem here is brought out by consideration of Jane's memories.

According to Parfit, she must accept that some first-personal memories may not be her own. He suggests that, in accordance with the principles of quasi-memory, Jane's belief that her first-personal memories were hers could be overridden by information from outside of the memory experience. She does not appropriate her memories based on a previous awareness condition, but on the basis of either, whether or not the memories seem to be anomalous, (such as those of the shaving incident), or whether or not she has been informed about them by Paul (such as those of the lightening incident). This might seem reasonable enough, but the situation may not be that simple.

If we consider Jane remembering the lightening, Parfit notes that Paul would need to inform Jane for her to know whether the memory was of one his experiences, rather than of one of hers:

'For Jane's quasi-memories to give her knowledge about Paul's experiences, she must know roughly how they have been caused. This is not required in the case of ordinary memories. Apart from this difference, quasi-memories would provide a similar kind of knowledge about other people's past lives. They would provide knowledge of what these lives were like, from the inside ...' (Parfit 1984), p 221.

But because Jane could easily have had such a memory herself, (it would be neither anomalous, nor necessarily counter her own life-history), she is reliant on information from Paul before she knows whether or not it is her own. However, this seems rather peculiar. If, as Parfit suggests, Jane experienced this memory in the first-person mode, even given that she knows all the relevant facts of the situation, it is difficult to imagine, on the strength of information disconnected from the memory-experience itself, that she could accept that the memory was not of her own experience. Shoemaker's earlier point about immunity to error through misidentification is a strong one, and relevant here. Jane would have to deny this immunity for Parfit's claim to work.

Moreover, expanding a little on Parfit's example, if Jane was not informed correctly about the memory transplant, she could not herself know the difference between when she was having some kind of hallucination and when she was experiencing a transferred memory, and could end up being in a state of utter confusion. The situation could be made even worse if she were misinformed about which memories were transferred, and which were not. If knowing whether memories were her own depended on being correctly informed by someone else, the fact that it was she who remembered them would be irrelevant.

I believe that in an incident of genuine memory experience, we would have difficulty accepting the proposition that our endorsement of our own memories depended primarily on verification from outside of the memory experience. We would be required to somehow ignore the fact that the memory was experienced from a first-person point of view. Such a move does not seem in keeping with the character of normal memory as we know it.

Once this principle was accepted, it means we would know, that although our memories all seemed equally genuine, some may not be. But we would not know which ones they were, and could therefore not know which ones formed a genuine part of our life-history. In short, we would not know who or what we were.

On this view, the whole concept of being able to identify our own memories is thrown into doubt, even chaos. This projected outcome suggests that if the requirements of quasi-memory were to be applied to an incident of genuine memory, the self we are trying to identify could disappear under the impact of impersonal characterisation.

7 Final Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to examine and judge the efficacy of claims made by some proponents of the psychological continuity theory of personal identity, namely, that the hypothesis of quasi-memory is capable of overcoming the circularity objection implicit in versions of that theory, and also, by means of this examination, to determine whether the presuppositions which sanction the solicitation of this and similar theories, can be sustained. This present examination concerned both the nature and the knowledge of genuine memory experiences.

I believe that the findings from this examination indicate that neither our experience nor our knowledge of genuine memory incidents is either adequately or accurately represented by quasi-memory. If this conclusion is correct, then, as shown earlier, it follows (failing a viable alternative strategy), that, due to its inherent circularity, the psychological continuity theory of personal identity also fails.

What has also become apparent in this study, is the fact that there appears to be a physical component in memory experience, which is intrinsically implicated in the psychological component. The account of the body's place in a memory experience suggests that memories may carry a unique bodily imprint, such that their hypothetical relocation becomes not only a metaphysical impossibility, but also a logical one.

Marya Schechtman holds that the inability to surmount the circularity objection does not spell the demise of psychological accounts of personal identity (Schechtman 1990), pp 88-92. She suggests that their problems can be addressed by further inquiry into the process of self-constitution, and that the results of such inquiries may produce an account which, although circular, is not viciously so.

Whilst I have no quarrel with most aspects of this view, my intuition is that a complete account of personal identity will not be restricted to another version of psychological continuity *per se*. It is my view that the conclusions drawn in the progress of this paper, indicate a comprehensive account of persons may need more than this allows. For if the suggestions in the above study are correct, then the wound first produced by Descartes' scalpel is still healing.

In Locke's case, the identification of persons on the basis of consciousness alone, reflects the caesura between mind and body by producing a bodiless person. But in Parfit's case, the removal of the subject of experience has turned the caesura into a chasm, as the burden of progressive dissection has ensured that the person we started out with, has now disappeared altogether.

I believe that the work needed to produce a complete account of a person's self-constitution, and hence of that person's identity, will reveal the necessity to reunite bodies and minds, and that therefore ultimately, a complete account of a person's psychological states will inevitably, necessarily entail, at one and the same time, an account of that person's bodily states.

8 Bibliography

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As first published in 1670 in Locke's work: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, (see Vol 1 1959, ed. Alexander Fraser, Dover Publications Inc, New York, NY). In his study of Ideas, Locke addressed the question of Personal Identity; he was concerned by the fact that material bodies change over time, and that substance was unknowable. He differentiated between the notions of person, man, and substance (11.27.8) and famously concluded that:

'Thus it is always as to our present self that which he calls self:- it not being considered, in this case, whether the same self be continued in the same of divers substances. 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 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' (11.27.11).

For example, Sydney Shoemaker 1984, 'Persons and their Pasts' in *Identity, Cause, and Mind*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge); Derek Parfit 1984, *Reasons and Persons*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford); Harold Noonan 1989, *Personal Identity*, (Routledge, London). Contemporary versions are mainly adaptations of that first suggested by Locke - see footnote 2.

(Butler 1867), p194.

(Noonan 1989)

(Shoemaker 1984)

(Parfit 1984) See especially chapter 10, What we believe Ourselves to be, pp 199-217.

(Schechtman 1990)

(Shoemaker 1984) The account of the concept of quasi-memory from which I draw this summary is presented mainly on pp 19-46.

Outlined by Parfit in his chapter entitled 'How we are Not what we Believe' (Parfit 1984), p 220.

I am going along with Parfit here, and not at this point taking up the issue of whether or not such a memory would be noticeably different to Jane. Parfit implies it is possible to conceive of having memories, which could be experienced first-personally, whilst simultaneously believing that they are not of our own experiences: *'Because we do not have quasi-memories of other people's past experiences, our apparent memories do not merely come to us in the first-person mode. They come with a belief that, unless they are delusions, they are about our own experiences. But, if in the case of experience memories, this is a separable belief. If like Jane we had quasi-memories of other people's experiences, these apparent memories would cease to be automatically combined with this belief'* (Parfit 1984), p 222.

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