ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis entitled “Subjectivity and Moral Responsibility: Contemporary Debates on the Concept of Persons” is to look at the relationship shared by personal identity and moral responsibility. This is needed because there has not been much discussion on this relationship in the philosophical circle. The role of first-person perspective, that is, how and to what extent, one can understand one’s identity from the first-person point of view, cannot be over emphasized in this debate. Our aim is to bring out the subtle differences between; “bodily continuity and psychological continuity of personal identity”, “ir-realistic and dualist account of person”, “reductionist and non-reductionist accounts of personhood”, “the conditions of moral responsibility”, “differences of self, person, agent”, and the relationship shared by these concepts in the development of a person’s identity over a period of time. Another important aim is to look at the role of the “other” in the formation of personal identity. This is important because we are social beings; we need other human beings as much as they need us. Without the other, it is doubtful that our civilization would have advanced to this stage. So, we cannot ignore the role of the other in our development as a person, as subjectivity and moral responsibility go hand in hand in understanding a person. Thus, the aim of this work is to broaden the debate on persons by juxtaposing the metaphysical debates on personal identity with the ethical aspects of personhood.

In the first chapter, we give an overview on the debates on “what personal identity consists in the main metaphysical debates centering around the concept of person.” Here we choose to discuss the views given by thinkers that had everlasting contribution in providing different approach to the personal identity debate. The different accounts we discussed are – the psychological/memory continuity of personal identity, the physical/bodily continuity of personal identity, neutral account of personal identity, ir-realistic account of personal identity, and the dualist account of personal identity. The reason we concentrate on these broad distinctions is because they provide the basic differences between theories put forth by thinkers on the metaphysical debate on personal identity. The main point in the first chapter is to show how the debate on personal identity has developed over the centuries and to
point out the main thinkers who propel this discussion thus far. And the reason we start with John Locke and David Hume’s account is because modern debates on metaphysical questions like criterion of personal identity are mainly derived from their work.

The influence of Locke can be seen in the psychological/memory continuity accounts of personal identity. For Locke, continuity in memory constitutes personhood; as far as one can remember, so far the person’s identity goes. However, his account faces circularity objections from Thomas Reid and Joseph Butler; as memory presupposes identity, identity cannot be constituted by memory. In order to answer such objections, the notion of “quasi-memory” was developed by thinkers, which, however, has its own problems. Thus, in the psychological/memory continuity account, personal identity is constituted mainly by the continuation of either memory or any other psychological attributes like, values, feelings, hopes, fears, etc. As oppose to this, the physical/bodily continuity account of personal identity holds that, the continuity of the body or parts of the body, especially the brain, is necessary for establishing identity of a person. We discuss the materialist account given by Shoemaker and we contrast his account with Richard Swinburne’s dualist account. Here, it is to be noted that Swinburne’s account is discussed only to contrast it with Shoemaker’s account, since these two philosophers have developed their positions in response to each other.

Further, P. F. Strawson’s account of person as primitive concept is discussed. This account can be termed as a neutral account of personhood, as neither the psychological/memory continuity nor the physical/bodily continuity theory is accepted by Strawson. For him, the concept of person cannot be constituted by these two kinds of properties as they are just attributes of a person. A person precedes these attributes and is thus more primitive than either mental or physical attributes. This account is important because it adds a different perspective on the debate on personal identity by shifting the focus from the attributes of a person to the primitiveness of the concept of a person. The next account holds that there is no such thing called personal identity. Hume laid the foundation of this sceptical position by doubting the existence of enduring persons. The influence of Hume’s theory can still be found in contemporary philosophy, the most prominent being Derek Parfit’s account of personal identity – which we deal with in detail in chapter two. However, there are some thinkers who
claim that Hume is not a total sceptic and that his writings had been mis-interpreted. The re-interpretation of Hume’s theory given by them makes the debate livelier, and shows how much influence Hume still has in contemporary debates on personhood.

Also, we discuss the dualist account of personal identity given by Bernard Williams. The reason we choose to discussed this account is that, for Williams both the psychological/memory and physical/bodily continuities are needed to explain and understand personal identity. This standpoint is important because we find it more acceptable then accepting only one of the continuities as constituting a person. The reason is that, human being are complex beings and when we consider whether a person is the same or not over a long period of time, we need to and we actually do consider both the person’s memory as well as his/her physical features. In our everyday experience, just having only the same face or only the same memory cannot be taken as proof of one’s identity. Because, identical twins have the same face but they are not the same person and by eves-dropping to people’s conversation someone can claim to have the same memory. Thus, we find it is necessary to take both into our consideration.

The second chapter deals in detail with Derek Parfit’s theory of personal identity in his famous work *Reasons and Persons* (1984), as a counter to the very notion of personhood. For Parfit, what is important for survival is continuation of any kind of connectivity which he calls “relation-R” and nothing more. In other words, what matter is not personal identity as such but “relation-R”; as long as I am connected to my future self through the continuation of values, hopes, plans, etc., it should not scare me of my death even if this future me has a different body from the one I have now. However, such standpoint is difficult to accept not only because of the repercussions on our moral life, but also we need to accept the importance of bodily continuity when we consider our future. One positive contribution of Parfit’s theory is that it provides an important shift on the debate on personal identity. By questioning the importance of personal identity itself, Parfit shift our attention from “what constitute personal identity?” to “does personal identity matter?” This change of focus brings in a much needed break from the century old debate on personal identity which was nowhere near to finding an acceptable answer. Apart from this, Parfit discuss the influence of our present decisions on the future generation. This section makes us realise that every decision and action we perform makes us liable to
be held responsible for the result of our decisions and actions. We need to be aware of this connection between our metaphysical standpoint and the moral outcome of such standpoint. Here, Parfit brings in one of his most important contribution in the form of connecting personal identity and value theory. This connection is important because it is the connection which, we think is substantial for personal identity, and thus is explored in the other two chapters. The role of moral responsibility in shaping one’s identity finds its root in Parfit’s connection between personal identity account and value theory.

In the third chapter, we discuss what it is to be morally responsible from John Martin Fischer and Mark S. J. Ravizza’s *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility* (1998). From this discussion it become clear that before a person can be held morally responsible for his/her actions we have to take into consideration two important points: firstly, a person must have control over his/her actions and must not be coerced into performing that action. This is necessary because an action performed under duress cannot be held against the agent. As can be seen from our day-to-day experience, we usually do not judged a person guilty of wrong doing if he/she was forced. Here, we can say that before we hold someone morally responsible for his/her action we have to make sure that the agent’s act was voluntary, and he/she was in full control of his/her senses, possess freewill etc. Secondly, an action must also have an authentic history before it can be morally judged. Historicity provides us with authenticity of context regarding one’s action. This discussion is important because we need to be clear what moral responsibility means before we can judge. This chapter provide us with the minute details about what needs to be taken into consideration before we can hold someone morally responsible for actions they performed and so help us in gaining a better understanding about ourselves. This shows the relationship between moral responsibility and personal identity, as one’s moral standpoint reflects what kind of person he/she is.

The fourth chapter can be considered the most important chapter because we deal with the relationship between personal identity and moral responsibility from the first-person perspective in detail. In one sense, first three chapters was a build-up to the final and the fourth chapter. We do discuss briefly about this relationship in the second chapter where Parfit connect them for the first time. However, it is only in the fourth chapter that we will deal with this relationship in detail. Before we go into the
actual relationship between personal identity and moral responsibility, it is important for us to be clear about the subtle differences between self, person and agent. This will help us in seeing the relationship in a better light. A self is given, every human being is considered as a self. It does not matter whether he/she is too young or too old to differentiate right actions from wrong actions, mentally challenged, or physically impaired. But personhood is earned, as we learn how to reflect about our actions, attitudes, feelings, etc. and be able to differentiate right from wrong. So, we can say that a self need not necessarily be a person but a person must be a self. By agent we mean a person who is necessarily embodied, since without a body one cannot act. Also an agent is a person who is part of a society since it is only in a social context that is in relation to others, that an agent is answerable and accountable for his/her actions. Here, an agent necessarily must be a person while a person may or may not be an agent.

Further, the role of first-person perspective (which includes subjectivity, self-awareness and self-consciousness) in shaping our identity is discussed in detail. Without first-person perspective it would not be possible for us to reflect upon our actions and learn from our mistakes. We can say that first-person perspective plays the most important role in the development of one’s identity. These further enable us to discuss the relationship shared by personal identity and moral responsibility in better light. We can say that first-person perspective enables us to learn from the outside world, and the other. So, this relationship is mutually influencing as well as complimentary in nature. Also, by taking the consequences of our action we become more careful about our present actions and this act as a deterrent from performing harmful actions. Thus, we can say that the relationship between personal identity and moral responsibility depend necessarily on the presence of first-person perspective. This become clearer when we look at how an individual learn about right from wrong actions, good from bad actions/decisions, better from worse moral judgments, etc. First-person perspective gives us the ability to reflect on our actions, decisions and experiences, etc., and learn from all of them to become a better person. Thus we can see that the role of first-person perspective in understanding the relationship between personal identity and moral responsibility is important and we need to have more discussion on this.
The aim of this work is to look deeper into the relationship shared by personal identity and moral responsibility, and to find out the role of first-person perspective in shaping a person’s identity as well as to see how much personal identity and moral responsibility influence each other. From the first chapter – where we give an overview of the debate on personal identity, to the fourth chapter – where the relationship shared by personal identity and moral responsibility, we can see the thread that binds this relationship.

Thus, the whole discussion can be summarized as follows: –

**Role of the debates on personal identity** – A purely metaphysical theory of personal identity is necessary but not sufficient to provide a foundation on which the role of moral responsibility can be ascribed to. We are inclined towards a theory that will take both bodily continuity as well as psychological continuity into consideration, since personhood and agency are closely connected with each other.

**Relations between personal identity and moral responsibility** – The importance of the relationship between personal identity and moral responsibility cannot be doubted. If a theory separates the problem of moral responsibility from the problem of personhood, then our morally responsible actions will have no bearing on our personhood; which we think is an untenable position. And that is what we try to show by establishing the relationship between personal identity, moral responsibility and agency.

**Conditions of moral responsibility** – Before we can hold someone morally responsible for their actions, we need to take many details in to considerations. Like, whether the person is acting voluntarily, freely, or whether there is historicity or not, etc. This is necessary because, before we can judge someone we must make sure about the circumstances of his/her action.

**Contributions of the other/society in development of personal identity** – The role of the other in the development of our identity cannot be over emphasized. Without the interaction with other persons, our capabilities may not be properly developed; we learn from others as much as we learn from our mistakes. The society provides us with a mirror on which we can see what is wrong and good in us.
Role of first-person perspective – The role of first-person perspective in our discussion is immense. The relation between the development of one’s identity and moral responsibility can be seen in its best form when we look at it from the subjective point of view. The reason is that I cannot understand any other person better than I understand myself, due to the unique first-person perspective that I enjoyed.
INTRODUCTION

“What am I? Am I my body or my feelings, thoughts, values, etc., or something different from all these?” – Such questions constitute the problem of personal identity. There are two main points of view prevalent on persons – metaphysical and moral/ethical view. The main concern of philosophers in the metaphysical view pertains to the criterion of personal identity – how we identify a person over a period of time. So, there is the psychological/memory continuity theory, physical/bodily continuity theory, neutral account, ir-realist account, and the dualist account of personal identity. However, these problems can be considered only as one aspect of the many problems centering on the notion of personhood; it does not exhaust all the problems centering on the notion of person, because this problem has mainly been discussed from a metaphysical perspective. Over and above the metaphysical approach, we would like to take the ethical/moral aspect of personhood to make the debate broader. Also, the concept of person is “intimately linked with our concept of responsibility for past actions and with our practices of praise and blame.”

So, along with the metaphysical perspective, the role of person as a subject and an agent needs to be examined. As subjectivity and otherness goes together, questions of ethics bring in questions of others too, that is why it is also important for us to discuss how we relate to others. We are ethically obligated to larger community of people, not just our kith and kin. It is important for us to look at the larger concept of being an agent, which may go against our parents and community. We are responsible towards larger ethical values, and the question of freedom of choice also needs to be addressed. Therefore, subjectivity and moral responsibility go hand-in-hand in understanding a person; subjectivity, self-reflexivity and self-awareness come out in what kind of a person we are.

The question of personal identity becomes important from John Locke and David Hume onwards. We can say that Locke and Hume built the foundation on which the metaphysical debate on personal identity stands today. However, after centuries of debate on personal identity purely from a metaphysical perspective,

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1 Noonan, 1989; 1.
2 I have dealt with the metaphysical debate centering on person in my M. Phil Dissertation in detail. Here I want to deal with the broader frame-work of subjectivity and moral responsibility.
Derek Parfit (1984) relates personal identity with value theory at length for the first time. The importance of this relation needs further discussion if we are to learn more about ourselves. That is, a criterion of identity is to be supplemented with subjectivity and agency, as they provide the substantive attributes in the development of a person. Subjectivity and otherness go together in the formation of personal identity. For this reason, we will be looking further into the kind of relationships this concept shares with ethical and social aspect as they provide the other important parameters in shaping one’s identity. Also, we need to examine whether understanding the notion or criterion of identity alone may be necessary but not sufficient for personal identity.

Here, we would like to examine the role of personal identity in relation with the role of moral responsibility in particular, taking into consideration the first-person point of view which plays a crucial role in articulating the notion of person. The main questions we will be dealing with in this thesis can be listed as follows; what is the importance of determining what constitute personal identity? Can personal identity be determined without any moral responsibility, or vice versa? How far does moral responsibility in particular help me in understanding my own identity? Or, why are moral questions important for my taking myself as a person? And, what is the role of subjectivity in understanding the relationship shared by personal identity and moral responsibility? In short, the most important question that needs to be answered here will be – what makes a person, a person? And what are the factors that influence the way I perceive myself as a person or a subject? What is the role played by moral responsibility in particular, in the formation of my identity as a person?

We will be dealing with the relationship between personal identity and moral responsibility in general and an individual relationship with the “other” in particular. To provide an answer to the question “how do I perceive myself as a person? And what is the role of moral responsibility in shaping my perception?” – will be the main concerns of this work. We will look into the different views advocated and debated by philosophers on the relationship between the concept of personal identity and moral responsibility from first-person perspective.3 The concept of moral responsibility provides us with the ability to understand ourselves as a person as I am an agent

3 Here, first-person perspective means – how and to what extent one can understand one’s identity from one’s own point of view. Also, it is used as synonymous with subjectivity, self-consciousness, self-awareness, etc., unless specifically stated.
engaged in actions and judgments. As a result, ethical concepts such as - Justice, Duties, Rights and Responsibilities in relation to the self/subject cannot be over emphasized. These ethical concepts help us in developing the ability to make choices which ultimately influence the kind of person we become. We learn how to choose by seeing other people make choices in our everyday life. This shows the importance of the other in the development of a person’s identity. So, the relationship between personhood, agency, and moral responsibility in shaping personal identity needs to be made more prominent by going deeper into their connection. Also, the role of society in understanding personal identity is important as the image or idea I have of myself comes from how others look at me and how I think others are looking at me. Since we want to look at the notion of personhood over and above personal identity, we would like to know the role played by our moral responsibilities and obligations in determining our identity over a period of time.

We will be referring to seminal classic texts and contemporary texts in discussing and analyzing the views already given by other philosophers on the above topics, and we will try to look at the problem of personhood from diverse perspectives. At the same time, we will try to come up with a clearer view on the relationship between personal identity and moral responsibility through textual analysis. Also, the theme of the study will be to analyze the complex relationship shared by personal identity and moral responsibility⁴ extensively. We will try to have an in-depth analysis on the many layered and over-lapping relationship between one’s identity over a period of time and all the moral responsibilities and obligations expected by society upon any normal human being.

Further, any normal human being is expected to have some moral obligations towards other human beings. We will limit ourselves to those moral responsibilities and obligations expected from a person as an individual in society. For example, to fight for justice even when faced with suppression from authorities, to make the truth public even when it will hurt one’s family or friends, to perform one’s duties even to an extend of going against those in power. On the other hand, by personal identity we will limit to the identity of a person as known and accepted by the society and by

⁴ Here, by “Moral Responsibility”, we mean “individual” and not “corporate” moral responsibility. Even though corporate moral responsibility is more popular in internet debate and articles, we will limit our discussion to individual moral responsibility in this work.
which the person also operatess and interact with others. These two concepts will be
discussed from first-person perspective.

Here, it is important to note that there are two main differences in defining
personal identity – essentialism and anti-essentialism. “Essentialism holds that at least
some things may have certain properties essentially. For example, x not only has
property F essentially, x must have F in order to exist.” \(^5\) According to essentialism,
for a person to have an identity over a period of time one “unchanging continuous”
entity is necessary. It could be the mind or the brain or the unity of the two or memory
or any other kind of continuity, which is essential to maintain the person’s identity
and without which he/she will not be considered as a person. On the other hand,
many philosophers, Hume, Parfit, Buddhist philosophers, to name a few, adhere to the
impermanent nature of the soul, and also of persons. For them, identity is just an
illusion and there is just a moment of existence which is real. Here, we can see that
both views are extreme as they have rigid conditions and there are arguments and
counter-arguments to suggest which of these two standpoints are more acceptable.
However, we will restrict ourselves in putting forth their views, and concentrate more
on personhood and its relationship with moral responsibility in greater details.

In the first chapter, we will look back at some of the metaphysical debates on
personal identity from selected thinkers who represent different schools of thought
regarding the criterion of personal identity. For a materialist thinker like Sydney
Shoemaker – bodily continuity is a necessity for personal identity. And for a dualist
thinker like Richard Swinburne – bodily continuity as well as memory/psychological
continuity is a necessity for personal identity. For them, without the existence of an
essence, either in terms of bodily or in terms of memory/psychological continuity, we
cannot even think about personal identity. This makes them essentialist, and their
views have faced several criticisms in philosophical circle.\(^6\) On the other hand,
thinkers like David Hume, “…famously claimed that, when he introspected, he
always stumbled on some particular perception or another, and could never observe
anything but perceptions” which is also known as the elusiveness thesis\(^7\). And the
Buddhist theory of dependent origination, also known as pratityasamudapada holds

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\(^5\) Rocca, 1996: 186.
\(^6\) I have discussed in detail the views of Shoemaker and Swinburne in my M.Phil dissertation, their
response to each other, and the views of their critiques.
\(^7\) Cassam, 1994: 3.
that, “…in the empirical world dominated by the intellect everything is relative, conditional, dependent…and therefore impermanent.” 8 Here, it is important to note that the anti-essentialist may not reject continuity per se, but they reject substantivity.

So, in the first chapter, we will provide a short review of different theories of personal identity, and debates on the importance of what constitutes personal identity. This will help us in gaining a clearer understanding of the metaphysical problems related to the concept of personal identity. The importance of this chapter lies in the fact that it gives us an overview on what has been said so far on what constitutes personal identity. We start with John Locke’s account of memory criterion of personal identity that provides the foundation to the psychological criterion of personal identity. This is followed by the discussion of the materialist account of Sydney Shoemaker. Also, Richard Swinburne’s dualist account is also discussed to make Shoemaker’s account clearer.

Next is the neutral account propounded by P. F. Strawson, which gives us a different perspective from the materialist and the dualist accounts. This is important because “persons” are taken as something beyond its attributes – physical, emotional, psychological, etc. This account provides a perspective which is different from the bodily and psychological continuity account of personal identity. Also, the primitiveness of the concept of person can be further developed to present an alternative account from the existing theory on personal identity. This is followed by the ir-realist account or David Hume’s account of no-self, which ultimately become the foundation of skepticism and becomes an important yardstick to measure whether an argument is to be taken seriously based on how Hume’s questions are answered. Another theory of personal identity is presented by Bernard Williams’ dualist account where the importance of both bodily and psychological continuity is highlighted. The bodily continuity is considered to be more important, but the importance of psychological continuity is also stressed. So, in the first chapter, we try to present an overview of the debate on the criterion on personal identity by discussing selected viewpoints from thinkers who shaped and influenced the debate one way or another.

In the second chapter, we consider the views of Derek Parfit, which is extremely significant because it provides a radical brake from the prevalent flow of

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8 Sharma, 1987: 73.
debate on personal identity. Also, he explicitly discusses the connection between the criterion of personal identity and moral theory at length, and gives due importance to this connection. Further, his view of personal identity is considered as a radical view in the debate on identity, since he claims, “I believe that what fundamentally matters is Relation R, even if it does not have its normal cause. Thus it would not matter if my brain was replaced with an exact duplicate…This relation is about as good as ordinary survival.”9 This is a bit difficult to accept when the importance of identity is considered as a necessity.

Also, Parfit is considered a radical because, “…by undermining the importance given to the issue of identity, he launches into a trenchant critique of the utilitarian assumptions of individual self-interest on which most of English-language moral philosophy rests.”10 As a result, it is important to consider his position and try to highlight the significance of some of his claims, without rejecting the importance of personal identity, as Parfit himself does. Hence our aim will be to take the positive aspect of Parfit’s theory, like his views on “personal identity and rationality” and “personal identity and morality”11. The reason is that, the importance of personal identity cannot be ignored; it also has a great bearing on what we hold about moral responsibility. It is not possible for me to ignore the importance of my identity if I am concerned about what my moral responsibilities and obligations are. They are so intertwined that it is not possible to speak about one and totally ignore the other.

In the third chapter, we will deal with the relationship between moral responsibility and personhood in greater detail. Parfit had discussed the connection between these relationships and thus it becomes necessary to look deeper to have a better understanding of the relationship. Understanding the relations between the metaphysical concept of identity and the ethical concept of moral responsibility provide us with a new perspective in our quest for developing what personal identity consist of. This will help us (as a person/self/subject) further in developing better understanding of philosophical view on my own personhood, my moral responsibilities and obligations. Parfit’s account of identity is reductionist in nature, and what matters in survival is not personal identity but psychological continuity and

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10 Chatterjee, 2002: 127.
11 Parfit, 1984: chapters 14 and 15.
connectedness called “relation-R”. The upshot of this standpoint in the context of moral responsibility will be something totally different from our present understanding of how we are to act/live/exist in society. According to Parfit, “persons are like nations, not Cartesian Egos...On the Reductionist View that I defend, persons exist...But persons are not separately existing entities...Personal identity just involves certain kinds of connectedness and continuity when these obtain in one-one form.”

So, following upon the discussion initiated by Parfit, in third chapter, we will look at the connection between moral responsibility and personhood; what constitute moral responsibility in the true sense of the term. In their book Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility, (1998) John Martin Fischer, & Mark. S.J. Ravizza gives a detailed account of moral responsibility. In order to hold someone morally responsible for their actions, the person should not be in any kind of situation where he/she is not free. But the question arises “what do we mean by freedom?”, as there are many ways in which a person may seem to be free but is not. Fischer and Ravizza give us many situations where we need to be clear about moral responsibility and freedom before we held someone morally responsible for their actions. In chapter three we bring ethical notions into the work in detail after discussing purely metaphysical notion of personal identity in chapter one and introducing the relation between personal identity and moral responsibility in chapter two. The main aim of this work is to connect these two notions. We can see the importance of discussing moral responsibility here; we need to do so as to have a proper connection between the notion of personal identity and moral responsibility from the subjective point of view.

Here, the difference and similarities between personal identity and ethical notions needs to be dealt with in details if we are to have a clearer view on what actually is personal identity from a subjective viewpoint. It cannot be said that personal identity and other form of identities are totally different from each other, yet they have their distinct identities. Further, if we are to enquire deeper into the relationship between personal identity and moral responsibility, we need to have a clearer picture of what makes personal identity different from ethical, social and

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12 Parfit, 1984: 275.
political identity\textsuperscript{13}. The type of person I am as perceived by others cannot be too different from my true self even if I am a very good actor. Yet, someone can be totally unknown to others even if he/she stays in the same place throughout his/her lifetime.

Further, the aim of the whole thesis is to show the relation between personal identity and moral responsibility in terms of “self-other” relationship, also show the role played by morality in giving us better understanding of personal identity. The relationship between self and the other is based on mutual influence, as we learnt most of the things about ourselves from others and also judge each other based on what “ought” to be the case. Further, a person’s identity is often judged by his/her moral character, which is given by society formed by persons. A person’s moral believes and ethical standpoints seldom alter when occasion arises for him/her to apply them. This is due to the fact that this moral believes form the very basis of our nature. A normal mature adult always has some kind of moral standards which he/she follows and which he/she considered as paradigm for himself/herself in any given situation. No doubt, moral standards are different for person to person, but the fact remains that there is one.

The fourth chapter looks into the difference between self, person and agency, how these three concepts are connected and what is the underlying thread that binds them together. Also, the importance of other in forming an agent is discussed in details. In the process of developing the connection between personal identity and moral responsibility, the most important point is to know how we form an “idea”\textsuperscript{14} about ourselves. We can say that our idea of “self” stems largely from “others”, that is, I form an idea about myself from information, insights, views etc. that I received from my friends, family members, colleagues etc., basically from all other human beings. Not just this, but the very idea of my being a person stems from my taking others to be persons. According to Strawson, “It is a necessary condition of one’s ascribing states of consciousness, experiences, to oneself, in the way one does, that

\textsuperscript{13} Even though we will not be discussing the social and political identity here, it is a fact that the development of a person’s identity cannot be cut-off from social and political influence. The reason is that we are social being and our survival depends in co-existence. That is why we mention social and political identity here. However, we will discuss the impact of society and the development of social identity in chapter four.

\textsuperscript{14} Here, our impressions are the views/opinions we received from other persons, and we form ideas about ourselves. It is the same with other persons, thus we supplement and compliment each others.
one should also ascribe them, or be prepared to ascribe them, to others who are not oneself.\textsuperscript{15} This “idea” helps me form opinions about myself as well as about others. It is where the “self and other” supplement and complement each other. And it is important to be clear what roles moral responsibility plays in the idea formation of the relationship between self and other.

Further, in the process of this “idea” formation, the question that arises is: what convinces me that \( X \) is \( X \) and not \( Y \) or what convince others that I am me and not someone else? These are important questions that need to be answered if I am to have a clear idea of myself and others. We would do this by putting forth the theory of personhood that constitutes the main role in formation of ideas about others. It is this personhood that enables me as well as others to form ideas about each other and this is the reason behind my identity as well. Another form of “other” that we should distinguish from ourselves is the divine being. Unlike normal human beings, the divine beings are not morally responsible for their actions. Even though they are regarded as the creator and sustainer of the Universe, they are not responsible if something went wrong in the world. Instead it is taken as their will and so above any kinds of responsibility. Hence divine beings are not agents in the true sense of the term, since they are not subject to making any mistakes in their actions. Persons, however, are agents, and agency develops when we are self-conscious or self-reflective, when we have a first-person perspective on our actions and choices. Also, the role of other in the development of personhood needs to be highlighted. Other plays the main role of shaping a person’s identity as we learn about ourselves more from other persons. Subjectivity develops when we interact with other persons and this relationship gives rise to a form of intersubjectivity and mutual learning about each other as well as about the world. Subjectivity give us the ability to reflect upon our actions, intentions, values, etc., and in the absence of self-reflexivity, questions of moral responsibility have no meaning.

Further, the role of subjectivity needs more discussion here. According to Cavell, “a subject is a creature who can be seen both from a third-person and from a first-person point of view, and who can take both perspectives on herself. In turn, a view of another person that is objective about her must acknowledge that she has a

\textsuperscript{15} Strawson, 1959: 99.
first-person point of view.”¹⁶ The relation shared by first- and third-person point of view in a subject brings forth the role of other in the development of a person’s identity. A subject has self-reflexivity, while a person has both self-reflexivity and self-evaluation. We grade desires and beliefs when they clash, reason comes into play when we face such situations. When we make choices and are held accountable for our actions, we are considered as moral agents. Subjectivity can also be called “reflective self-awareness” which is often taken as,

…the thematic, articulated, and intensified self-awareness and is normally initiated in order to bring the primary intentional act into focus. In order to explain the occurrence of reflection, however, it is necessary that that which is to be disclosed and thematized is (unthetically) present; otherwise there would be nothing to motivate and called forth the act of reflection…it is in the nature of reflection to grasp something that was already given prior to the grasping. Reflection is characterized by disclosing, not by producing its theme.¹⁷

The above quote gives us an account of what reflective self-awareness needs for its successful occurrences. Without the objective world, subjectivity cannot develop as it is the objective others that motivates and sustains a subject’s reflexivity. And subjectivity helps a person develop better understanding of his/her own inner self as well as the world around us through intersubjectivity.

Further, human beings are moral agents; this means that understanding moral responsibility will help me in forming a better opinion about my identity. How I respond to X’s or Y’s moral responsibilities and obligations plays an important role in the formation of my identity. As a social being what others think about myself play an important role in what I think about myself. As oppose to our personal identity, our social identity is something which is flexible; it changes according to the particular circumstances we are in at different points of time. One can be a daughter/son, sister/brother, friend, colleague, wife/husband, neighbor, mother/father, aunt/uncle, grand-mother/grand-father etc. The changes occur as my surrounding changes, and they determine my identity in the society.

¹⁶ Cavell, 2006: 3.
¹⁷ Zahavi, 2005: 55.
On the other hand, my personal identity cannot be changed as soon as my circumstances change. It cannot be changed in a moment just as we may change our social identity. For example, as soon as x get selected for IAS, x’s social identity changes from those of an unemployed to an IAS officer. But, x’s personal identity does not change as quickly because x’s values, memories, physical structure do not change because of exam results or marriage or death in the family. The change in my personal identity is gradual and is not perceived immediately. At the same time, my social identity has a bearing on my personal identity as I cannot remain immune to what is happening in the society. Further, moral responsibility makes us think of others (one important attributes of society and so for survival as well). Without considering other people we would have perished long time back. The rules and guidelines given by moral laws and moral responsibilities enable us to form a society and support and care for each other. My identity depend largely on how I am perceived by the society, I cannot remain aloof from society for my whole life. Thus, it is important to know how and to what extent my identity is the product of my moral responsibilities and obligations.

In the conclusion will deal with the outcome of the analysis and discussions of all the chapters. Here, Frankfurt’s notion on the difference between human from other animals will give us clearer idea. He says,

It seems to be peculiarly characteristic of human, however, that they are able to form what I shall call “second-order desires” or “desires of the second order”…They are capable of wanting to be different, in their preferences and purposes, from what they are,…No animal other than man, however, appears to have the capacity for reflective self-evaluation that is manifested in the formation of second-order desires.18

For Frankfurt, first order desires are the simple desire to do or not to do one thing, which is shared by many animals. But the second order desire which is peculiar to human being is the capacity for self-reflection or self-evaluation19. These second order desires enable us to focus in the inter-personal relationships which form the foundation of our society. It also gives me the “idea” I need for the development of

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19 Here, “self-reflection” is being aware of having the desire that you have, and “self-evaluation” means evaluating the worth of the desire based on the awareness.
my personal identity through my interaction with others, which also prove that I am a conscious and embodied being.  

So, the crux of the work or the main points we will be focusing in this work can be given as follows: -

*To be Human is not necessarily to be a Person* – Hume had made the distinction between human beings and persons. For example, a three day old child is not a person. So, he/she cannot be made responsible for any of his/her actions which may cause harm. A human being becomes a person when he/she can reflect upon his/her actions, intentions, feelings etc. In other words, we can say that “Personhood” is gained; it is not something we are born with. Thus, self-knowledge, self-reflection, and self-awareness are necessary conditions for personhood.

*Being a person means being an agent* – We acquire personhood through our interactions with other. Our family, friends or even our experiences are related with other persons. As an agent, we interact with other persons in our everyday life. Without other to interact with, a human being will not be an agent and personhood will not be attained (in the normal sense of the term, our everyday use).

*Persons are agents because they are self-reflective* – It is only a self-reflective person who can engage in actions having moral bearings. The reason for this is that we act only when we are aware of our beliefs, desires, wants, needs, wishes etc. that is when we are self-reflectively engaged. Further, our self-awareness gives rise to our moral obligations, which makes us an agent.

*Finally, we cannot be an agent and hence a person unless we are both embodied and conscious* – The importance of our body cannot be ignored in order to have any kind of agency. At the same time we need to see whether

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20 Frankfurt, however, agrees that there is no limit to desires of higher order if our second order desires are in conflict sometimes. And it is only common sense and fatigue that save us by preventing us from the obsession to form desire of the next higher order or the next, which can never end. Otherwise, this can lead to the destruction of a person. (Frankfurt, 1971: 16).

21 Here, we can say that even if a human being were to be alone, there still will be a need for agency. Not for interpersonal contact though, but for individual needs.

22 These four points were an observation in my M.Phil Dissertation. To explain and expand them will be the main aim of the present work.
embodiment is the most important attributes or is it one of them. What are the other attributes, if they exist, and how are they important? – This needs to be answered.

So, we can say that I gain my personhood along with my other experiences, that is, I am not born with it. This is possible when I become aware of my intentions, desires, feelings etc. and I am able to reflect on my thoughts, decisions, actions etc. These emotions are acquired from my interaction with other human beings in general; I become an agent who is a part of the society, contributing to and, at the same time, gaining something from the society. This give rise to my moral obligations and responsibilities expected of me by the society, and I am judged accordingly. The result being how I am viewed by the society help form my identity, whether it be to others or to myself. Thus, the importance of my embodied and conscious self cannot be ignored if we are to have a better understanding of the relationship between personal identity and moral responsibility from first-person perspective. Our hope is that this work will help us in our attempt to develop better understanding of the relation. We can see how personal identity and moral responsibility influence and shape each other; our aim here is to find out what is the subject’s/self’s view in this interaction or how the self is affected. Thus, we can say that the aim of this work is to broaden the debate on personal identity by discussing the ethical aspects along with the metaphysical aspect. Further, we would like to show the role of the other in shaping the relationship between personal identity and moral responsibility in detail. Because moral identity is also closely connected with moral responsibility; the role of person as an agent brings in the question of ethics, which in turn brings in question of the other. Here, it is important to note that we are discussing the role of an agent in relation to others, and this is important to bring in the ethical aspects in the debate on personal identity so that we can examine the relationship shared by personal identity and moral responsibility. In order to do so, we will start with an overview of the debate on personal identity in the first chapter.
CHAPTER – 1

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM OF PERSONAL IDENTITY:
THE MAIN ONTOLOGICAL DEBATES

Really, the fundamental, ultimate mystery – the only thing you need to know to understand the deepest metaphysical secrets – is this: that for every outside there is an inside and for every inside there is an outside, and although they are different, they go together

Allan Watts (1885 – 1962)

Introduction

The history of personal identity can be traced back to thinkers like John Locke and David Hume. The main reason why it is considered important to start with their accounts is that they had provided new perspectives to the debate on personal identity. And hence, their views have influenced contemporary debates on the notion of personal identity till today. John Locke’s views still influence the psychological continuity theory, and David Hume’s skeptical questions about the existence of person still pose problems for those philosophers who accept person as an ontological category. Apart from these points, it is also important to consider the ways contemporary thinkers look at the problem of personal identity.

There are broadly two approaches to the concept of a person: the reductionist and the non-reductionist. Which of these two approaches one takes adds new dimensions to the existing debate, making the debate more interactive in the process. If a thinker subscribe to a reductionist concept of person it is important that he/she gives arguments to disprove the substantive notion of person. At the same time, there is also a need to prove, say, how the reductionist concept of person is better than its rivals. The same applies to non-reductionist approaches. Derek Parfit is a good example of a thinker who influences the nature of the debate on the concept of personal identity. Parfit’s arguments are persuasive and some of them are acceptable and believable as they are mostly based on our everyday experiences. His arguments are so strong that even if we do not accept it, we are bound to agree that we need to address his reductionist account of person.
Another reason why we want to look at this debate is that, it is important for every person to be clear about what one’s identity consists in. To be able to answer the question “who am I?” and connected questions like; what do I mean when I say – I am hungry? Can we really separate our body from our mind? What am I if I am not my body? Am I just my memory? Or, am I something totally different? – are significant for understanding ourselves as persons, and philosophers across the centuries have tried to provide satisfactory answers to them. In the process we encounter distinct and opposed points of views on the notion of personal identity. So, we will look at some of the important and influential accounts of personal identity and how they have shaped the existing debates, and how much they contribute to them. Also, it will be helpful to look at the many different interpretations of what Locke and Hume had said about personal identity, as it will give us different perspectives on the notion of personal identity. Also, we would like to concentrate on the metaphysical aspect of persons in this chapter. However, a metaphysical debate gained its importance only if we bring in the moral aspect of persons. The role of first-person perspective in developing one’s identity will provide us with a different perspective on the existing debate on personal identity. So, the aim of this thesis is to look into person as a moral agent, and the metaphysical debate will provide us with the foundation.

There are different ways of answering the question of personal identity, mainly given by: materialist account (Sydney Shoemaker), neutral account (P.F Strawson), ir-realist account (David Hume), and the dualist account (Bernard Williams), which we will consider in detail. These historical accounts of the development of the debates will help us in appreciating the contemporary accounts of personal identity. Also, to understand the debates on personal identity has a bearing on subjectivity and moral agency. Here, by “subjectivity” we mean how we understand ourselves as a person; the subject’s view/understanding of himself/herself as a person. The debates on personal identity will provide us with the background theory in our attempt to have a better understanding on subjectivity and person as a moral agent. It will enable us to draw a clearer picture on the relationship between understanding a person’s identity from a subjective point of view and understanding a person as a moral agent. In order to do so, we will discuss the different theories given by philosophers on what personal identity consists in.
Here, we will be discussing five main theories – memory/psychological continuity, physical/bodily continuity, Strawsonian account, ir-realist/no-ownership accounts, and dualist view. Here, we take memory/psychological accounts as one, and also the ir-realist/no-ownership accounts are clubbed together, but there is a subtle difference between them. The difference between memory and psychological accounts is that – the Lockean account of continuity holds that memory alone provides the criterion of personal identity, while for psychological accounts, “any causal links between past factors and present psychological traits can be subsumed under the notion of psychological connectedness.”23 The difference between the ir-realist and no-ownership accounts is that – according to Hume’s account, also known as ir-realist notion, personal identity is a fiction. While for Wittgenstein’s no-ownership account, it is improper to ascribe states of consciousness to a body at all as there is no such thing called person.24

Before we discuss these views in detail, it is important to have a broad outline of the main points of difference between these accounts: -

1. Memory/psychological continuity accounts hold that the identity of a person over time consists in the understanding of the relation of psychological continuity, like memory. For example, a person B existing at a time $t_2$ is the same as a person A existing at a time $t_1$ if and only if B remembers, or can remember, at $t_2$ actions or experiences of A occurring at $t_1$. There are two versions of this view; one says that the cause of psychological continuity must be normal if it is to preserve personal identity, like, memory – also called the narrow version. The wider version holds that any kinds of cause will suffice whether normal or abnormal, like, teleportation, fusion, fission, etc. Here, John Locke’s theory and the important upshots of his views will be the main points we will be dealing with.

2. Physical/bodily continuity accounts hold that the identity of a person over time consists in the obtaining of some relation of physical continuity, body or brain continuity. To be the same person in this view, means to be the same biological object whether body or brain. For example, the matter which forms

24 Shaffner, 1968: 94.
my body is organized in a certain way, into parts - legs, arms, heart, liver, etc., which are interconnected in regular ways. What makes my body of today the same as my body of yesterday is that most of the matter is the same, although I may have lost some and gained some others, and its organization has remained roughly the same. Here, Sydney Shoemaker and Richard Swinburne25 are the main thinkers we will be dealing with. As they represent two sides of the same coin.

3. Strawsonian account holds that, the concept of a person is a primitive concept and so cannot be defines in terms of either a person’s body or his/her memory. The concept of a person is something without which psychological or physical properties cannot be accounted for, but persons as such cannot be define in terms of either of these two kinds of properties. Here, we will be concentrating mainly on the views put forth by P. F Strawson in Individuals, (1959).

4. Ir-realistic/no-ownership account hold that personal identity is not to be taken seriously as what is important is moments in which a person lives, which themselves are fleeting. There is nothing that persists over time and so it is not necessary to have a substantive account of a person. When we speak of identity, we are speaking of something that persists, but as everything is momentary we may as well not talk about identity as such. Here, we will be dealing with the views put forth by David Hume.

5. Dualist view holds that, on its own, neither the memory/psychological nor physical/bodily continuity criterion is correct. The best account of a person’s identity over time will have to make reference to both physical and psychological continuities. In order to be able to identify oneself as the same person over a period of time, we need the body as well as personal characters, and memory. Here, Bernard Williams will be the main thinker we will be dealing with.

25 Here, we will be discussing Swinburne’s account only to make Shoemaker’s account more clear. That is, in order to bring out the main points of Shoemaker’s account, we will contrast it with Swinburne’s account. And the discussion will be based on Shoemaker & Swinburne’s Personal Identity, 1984.
Here, we can say that most often there are different views on personal identity. These metaphysical debates help us in understanding what the criterion of a person’s identity is. We will now go into details of the above points. Also, we will try and find out whether a particular thinker is a reductionist or non-reductionist, and try and discuss the repercussions of their standpoints on the broader debate on personal identity.

1.1 Role of Memory in Personal Identity or the Psychological Continuity Thesis

It is important to consider the role of memory/psychological continuity in personal identity as one’s memory is what we turn to when we want to establish the continuity of our experience and thought. For example, if I come across a very close friend after many years, and she cannot remember me at all, then it is possible that she is my friend lookalike. On the other hand, if someone whom I have never seen claims that she is my close friend and she narrates the times we spent together, we usually think that she cannot be my friend, and she could have heard such details from my real friend. The point to be emphasized is that we turn to our memory when we are in doubt about continuity of our experiences, in particular, and life in general. In situations where someone has lost his/her memory, we say that the person is no longer “himself/herself”. This shows the importance of memory in the continuity of personal identity. The role of memory in personal identity can be traced back to John Locke’s famous words where he said that in memory,

…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.26

The core of Locke’s view can be seen when he says,

consciousness makes personal identity…persons are not thinking substance, even though when a person thinks it is a thinking substance that does the thinking for it; and men are not persons, for when man is no longer conscious of a past action he is not the same person as the one who committed the action, though he remains the same man (human courts, in punishing him, treat him as if he is the same person, but

26 Locke, 1924: 211-212.
that is merely because ‘the fact is proved against him and want of consciousness cannot be proved for him’, Essay II, xxvii. 22).\(^ {27} \)

From the above quote, we can see that consciousness constitutes identity for Locke, and if one is not conscious about one’s past life, then one’s identity cannot be proved. According to Noonan, “Consciousness, in short, is the life of persons. Identity of consciousness determines identity of persons as identity of life determines identity of organism.”\(^ {28} \) Noonan thinks that one line of thought behind Locke’s conviction that personal identity must consist in sameness of consciousness is that of psychological identity, which is epistemological in nature. So we can say that sameness of consciousness is sufficient for personal identity for Locke, which Locke considered superior to the dualist proposal that sameness of person is sameness of soul. The problem, however, is whether Locke considers sameness of consciousness as the necessary as well as sufficient condition for personal identity.

However, some modifications are needed in order to be able to accept Locke’s view. For Locke, “consciousness” is used as a synonym for “conscience” and so used in the strong sense. That is, consciousness, for Locke, is a reflexive second-order act, the perception of what passes in man’s mind. The shared knowledge had by a present self of a past self’s actions constitute personal identity. However, as can be seen from the famous objections raised by Thomas Reid and Joseph Butler\(^ {29} \), we cannot accept Locke’s argument without modifications. The fact that we forget some of our long past experiences do not prove that we are totally a different person, and here lies the main problem in Locke’s theory. If only consciousness, which is both a necessary and sufficient condition for personal identity, makes us who we are, then we will have a problem in cases where we do not remember our experiences we had in childhood. The fact that I cannot remember what I had worn on my first ever Christmas celebration, in the absence of photograph, does not mean that I am a different person.

The influence of Locke’s account can be seen till today. However there are some thinkers who are opposed to Locke’s view. Their arguments give rise to new perspectives on the problem of personal identity. Like Locke, Leibniz also finds it

\(^ {27} \) As quoted in Noonan, 1989: 33-34.

\(^ {28} \) Noonan, 1989: 41. Here, it is important to remember that for Locke, consciousness means self-consciousness and self-reflexivity.

\(^ {29} \) Reid, 1941 and Butler, 1736.
important to give an account of personal identity that will explain why “what constitute personal identity” matters. In *Discourse on Metaphysics*, written before Leibniz encountered Locke, personal identity is regarded as the ground for moral responsibility, similar in spirit with Locke’s account. According to Noonan, “Locke’s remarks concern the attitude of a present person towards a past one, whereas Leibniz’s concern is the attitude of a present person towards a future one: but the thought is clearly exactly the same.” The more striking difference is that, for Leibniz, identity of substance is also necessary for personal identity.

However, after encountering Locke, Leibniz wrote *The New Essays Concerning Understanding*, in which he holds that memory is not a necessary constituent of personal identity. Identity of substance is not only necessary but also sufficient for identity of person. Substance here is an active monad whose identity over time does not have to be taken as an un-analyzable datum but is grounded in the connectedness between its states. It is different from what Locke refers to as a substance – a bare substratum of mental life. Here, it is important to point out that Locke’s account of personal identity can be termed as reductionist in nature. According to Noonan, “when Locke says that personal identity consists in sameness of consciousness he means that it consists in shared knowledge – the knowledge shared by the present and the past self.” So, by reducing personal identity to consciousness, Locke paves the way for the development of memory/psychological continuity accounts of personal identity. It is in order to defend Locke’s memory continuity account and answer some of Locke’s critiques that Shoemaker (1970) gives quasi-memory account. So, we can see that Locke’s account become the foundation on which many other thinkers based their arguments.

Here, we will be looking at two important objections to psychological continuity account of personal identity. The first one is Butler and Reid’s objection to Locke’s view on personal identity, called the vicious circularity objection. According to Noonan, Butler holds that, “one should really think it self-evident that consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore constitute, personal identity, and more than knowledge, in any other case, can constitute truth, which it

30 Leibniz, 1953.
32 Leibniz, 1981.
33 Noonan, 1989: 54.
presupposes."\(^{34}\) Noonan puts forth Reid’s argument which is even more blunt. For Reid,

> To say that my remembering that I did such a thing, or...my being conscious that I did it, makes me to have done it, appears to me as great an absurdity as it would be to say, that my belief that the world was created made it to be created, it is to attribute to memory or consciousness a strange magical power of producing its object, though that object must have existed before the memory or consciousness which produced it.\(^{35}\)

However, Noonan holds that Locke is not vulnerable to objections of circularity as the sameness of consciousness is not a relation between persons but a relation between thinking substances.

Noonan goes on to defend Locke from the vicious circularity objection. As we noted, the vicious circularity objection says that since memory presupposes personal identity, any account of personal identity in terms of memory will necessarily be viciously circular and therefore cannot be used to define it. In order to have the concept of memory, the person must already have the concept of personal identity. In other words, “the concept of personal identity is epistemologically prior to that of memory, and so cannot be defined in terms of it.”\(^{36}\) One way, according to Noonan, of answering the circularity objection is provided by Shoemaker (1970), where he accepts that identity cannot be defined in terms of memory, but in order to retain the position of the memory theorists he introduced the notion of “quasi-memory” to replace all references to memory wherever it occurs.

Further, according to Shoemaker, in a world where we “quasi remember” our past histories, the privileged access we have of our own memories will be weaker as compared to where we actually “remember”. This is because quasi-memory could occur only if there is a branching of \(M\)-type causal chains – “a causal chain that links a past action or experience to a veridical memory of it”\(^{37}\). Thus, according to Noonan, Shoemaker’s arguments establish that, “if personal identity can be defined, in the way he thinks, in terms of quasi-memory (\(R\)) then quasi-memories (\(R\)) will have a certain a

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\(^{34}\) As quoted in Noonan, 1989: 68.

\(^{35}\) Ibid, pp. 68-69.

\(^{36}\) Noonan, 1989: 172.

\(^{37}\) Ibid, p. 175.
priori evidential status relative to claims of personal identity.”

Further, in the world where a person is quasi-remembering, and not remembering, the person will still have special access to his/her own past lives which is essentially a non-critical knowledge. Also, the region of the past to which the quasi-rememberer has access to is to be restricted, because if the area is too vast it will fail to yield any knowledge at all.

However, Noonan argues that Shoemaker’s argument fails to answer the circularity objection to the account of personal identity, because just like the concept of memory itself the concept of quasi-memory (R) is also epistemologically posterior to the concept of personal identity. This can be seen in situations where there are “possible cases of quasi-memory which are not cases of memory so long as branching of M-type causal chains is a possibility.” In a case like fission, where an offshoot of an original person quasi-remembers some events which was witnessed by that person this will not be a case of memory. The question arises “how are we to decide someone is an offshoot of a previous person?” The answer is that, only in situation where the present person had been related to the past person without any other existing candidate, otherwise not. But if this is the case, then one can determine that someone is quasi-remembering only by employing the concept of personal identity.

For one can determine that someone is quasi-remembering only by determining that he is (at least) an offshoot of the person whose life he apparently remembers, and one can determine that this is so only by considering the applicability of the concept of personal identity to the (possibly counterfactual) situation in which no competing candidate for identity with that earlier person is available.

Noonan further holds that Shoemaker’s defense of his definition against the charge of circularity fails as he is unable to reject the “only x and y” principle – which says, “whether x is identical with y can only depend upon the intrinsic relationship

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38 Ibid, p. 179.
39 Here, Noonan differentiates between the two notions of quasi-memory given by Shoemaker called - quasi-memory (R) and quasi-memory (G). The difference is that quasi-memory (R) is explicitly a causal notion, whereas the notion of quasi-memory (G) is not. (Details can be seen in Noonan, 1989: 176).
40 Noonan, 1989: 188.
41 Ibid., p. 188.
42 We will be discussing Shoemaker’s account of personal identity in the next section in detail.
between them, it cannot be determined extrinsically. In case of personal identity we can say that whether $P_2$ is identical with $P_1$ can depend only on facts about $P_2$ and $P_1$ and the intrinsic relationships between them. No facts about individuals other than $P_2$ and $P_1$ can be relevant to whether $P_2$ is the same person as $P_1$. The reason is that,

On the account of personal identity being proposed a quasi-memory will fail to be a memory only when there has been a branching of $M$-type causal chains and all that will prevent a quasi-rememberer in such a case from being a rememberer is that he is only one of several rival candidates for identity with the original person or (as the case of fusion) that there are several rival candidates for identity with him.

As we can see, in the absence of branching of $M$-type causal chain, quasi-memory will be in a position to take the place of memory. If this is the case then the “only $x$ and $y$ principle” should be accepted, which entails that Shoemaker’s defense fails.

Here, before we move on to the second objection on psychological continuity theory of personal identity, it is important to be clear about what exactly is the “only $x$ and $y$ principle”. The intent of the principle is to rule out the “best candidate” theories of identity over time – “according to which whether a later individual $y$ is identical with an earlier individual $x$ can depend upon whether there is any better candidate than $y$ around at the later time for identity with $x$.” One of the most sophisticated versions of the “best candidate” approach is Robert Nozick’s “closest continuer” theory. There are two versions of this proposal – local and global. The main point of these versions can be given as follows:

According to the local version of the theory the closest continuer of an item is that item. So if an item has two continuers, each sufficiently close to qualify as that item’s successor under identity, but one is significantly closer than the other, then that is the item, even if it is substantially shorter-lived than the other close continuer. According to the global version of the theory there is a bias in favor of longevity. The successor under identity of an item is that longest-lived item which, as a whole, is a sufficiently close continuer of the original item, and significantly closer than any comparable long-lived entity – even if some initial temporal part of that item is a significantly less

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43 Noonan, 1989: 152.
44 Ibid., p. 16.
46 Ibid., p. 152.
47 Nozick, 1981.
close continuer of the original than some other contemporaneous item of comparable duration.\textsuperscript{48}

Thus, we can see that Shoemaker’s account of “quasi-memory” is unable to overcome the problem posed by the “only $x$ and $y$ principle”.

The second main objections to the view that personal identity is to be understood in terms of psychological continuity is the Reduplication Argument put forward by Bernard Williams in his “Personal Identity and Individuation” (1956). This argument influenced discussions on the problem of personal identity as it brought into question the possibility of not only non-bodily criterion of personal identity but any criteria of personal identity at all. It remained one of the main focus of interest in the debate on personal identity and played an important part in Parfit’s statement and original thesis that says “identity is not what matters in survival”. The problem of Reduplication Argument arises in situations where,

A supposed criterion of identity allows there to be two distinct items B and C, each of which satisfies the criterion in just the way it would if the other did not exist. But this is not so with the bodily continuity: what is true of B when it is in the ordinary way continuous with A is just not the same as what is true of it when, together with C, it has been produced from A by fission… the difference between being straightforwardly continuous with A, and being a fission product of A, is a genuine difference in the history of B.\textsuperscript{49}

Here, any view on the argument of personality that requires physical persistence for identification will be wide open to the reduplication argument. The argument become widely accepted among the philosophers who are against any account that uses as a criterion of identity a conceivably duplicable relation, and not just to refute psychological continuity of personal identity as intended by Williams in the first place. Here, it is important to mention the physical criterion\textsuperscript{50} because it has been the case that Williams argument is equally applicable not only to psychological criterion but to bodily criterion as well. And it is important to point out that the

\textsuperscript{48} Noonan, 1989: 153.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 151.
\textsuperscript{50} Physical criterion of personal identity holds that, “what is necessary for personal identity is not identity of the whole of the brain, but identity of enough of the brain to be the brain of a living person: person $P_2$ at $t_2$ is the same person as person $P_1$ at $t_1$ if and only if enough of the brain of $P_1$ at $t_1$ survives in $P_2$ at $t_2$ to be the brain of a living person.” (Noonan, 1989: 7-8).
Reduplication Argument can pose problem to both the psychological and bodily continuity theory of personal identity. Also, the Reduplication Argument fundamentally relies on the “only $x$ and $y$ principle”. According to Noonan, Nozick said that, “it seems so unfair for a person to be doomed by an echo of his former self.”\textsuperscript{51} This is the global version of the theory that gives more importance to longevity. The local version of the theory gives more importance to the one that is closest to the original item, even if it is short-lived than the other.

However, Noonan points out that even though the aim of reduplication argument is to rule out the “best candidate” theories of identity over time as Nozick’s theory tries to do, it is unable to do so. If we take Nozick’s theory as true, then $y$ is $x$ because it is the closest continuer in one situation. But in another possible situation where $z$ is the closest continuer of $x$, $z$ will be $x$. For Noonan,

The only $x$ and $y$ principle ought to entail that situation is impossible, but as so far formulated it is not clear how it can do so. For if $z$ is $x$ in the possible situation envisaged, as the closest continuer entails, then facts about $z$ are not facts about something other than $x$ or $y$, as they would have to be if they were to be certified irrelevant to the question whether $x = y$ by the only $x$ and $y$ principle.\textsuperscript{52}

This means that more careful formulation is needed in order to see whether the only $x$ and $y$ principle is compatible with the “best candidate” approach to identity over time. One objection to the best candidate approach is that, by accepting this approach we will reach an absurd consequence that says,

two events may be part of the history of a single entity in some situation, but may fail to be parts of the history of that, or any single entity of the kind, in a second situation in which both they, and all the events which were parts of the history of the entity in the first situation, remain present.\textsuperscript{53}

In order to overcome this objection, Noonan reformulate the only $x$ and $y$ principle as,

if two events are parts of the history of a single entity of a kind in one situation then they must also be parts of the history of a single entity of the kind in any second

\textsuperscript{51} Noonan, 1989: 153.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., pp. 153-154.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 161.
situation in which, as judged by the *Cambridge criterion*, both they, and all the events which are parts of the history of the entity in the first situation, remain present.\footnote{Ibid, p. 164.}

Here, *Cambridge criterion* or change means that a proposition undergoes change in its truth-values, and there is no change in the object itself. For example, when my brother grew taller than me, the change in my brother is real as his height actually altered. But the change in me is a mere Cambridge change, a change in relation to my brother. Noonan further states that his newly formulated “only $x$ and $y$ principle” has a condition which makes it inconsistent with identity over time for any entities possessing the “best candidate” structure. This condition was missing in the original version of the “only $x$ and $y$ principle”. It can now be seen that “the only $x$ and $y$ principle” is the fundamental assumption to which the Reduplication Argument appeals. The problem is whether to accept the simple view or to accept the relation between “only $x$ and $y$ principle” and reduplication argument.

For Noonan, the final formulation of the only $x$ and $y$ principle is an undeniable constraint on our concept of personal identity. Thus, we can see that the memory/psychological continuity theory has a lot of problems to deal with before it can be accepted as it was given by Locke. The account has become more sophisticated even with its problems; it has become one of the more acceptable theories of personal identity in contemporary debates. Here, it is important to note that, the reason we are dealing with the two main objections on Locke’s theory is that, the answer to these objections enable thinkers to come up with more acceptable accounts of Locke’s theory. In the process of answering these objections, thinkers are able to come up with new way of interpreting Locke’s original theory. However, it is important to note that from here on we will not be dealing with objections in each and every account, but only as and when it is needed to move forward the argument or where an objection provides new perspectives. In the next section we will consider physical/bodily continuity accounts of personal identity.

1.2 Role of Physical/Bodily Continuity in Personal Identity: Materialist Account

In this section, the accounts of personal identity we deal with will include “the bodily criterion”, “the brain criterion”, and “the physical criterion”. These three criteria are clubbed together because they all subscribe to the view that personal...
identity has to be understood in materialistic terms. According to bodily continuity account “P₂ at times t₂ is the same person as P₁ at time t₁ if and only if P₂ has the same body as P₁ had.”⁵⁵ In order to have bodily continuity of a person P₂ at time t₂ and person P₁ at time t₁, we do not need that P₂ and P₁ are materially identical. What we need is merely that the matter constituting P₂ has resulted from that constituting P₁ by a series of more or less gradual replacements in such a way that it is correct to say that the body of P₂ at t₂ is identical with the body of P₁ at t₁.

According to brain continuity account of personal identity, “P₂ at t₂ will be the same person as P₁ at t₁ just in case P₂ at t₂ has the same brain as P₁ at t₁.”⁵⁶ What is required for personal identity is not identity of the whole body but, merely, identity of the brain, as it is the central organ controlling memory, character and personality. However, according to the physical continuity account of personal identity, we do not need identity of the whole of the brain but identity of enough of the brain to be the brain of a living person. That is, “person P₂ at t₂ is the same person as person P₁ at t₁ if and only if enough of the brain of P₁ at t₁ survives in P₂ at t₂ to be the brain of a living person.”⁵⁷ There are many objections to these accounts of personal identity but we will not be looking at the objections here. The reason is that though they are important issues, we want to go beyond the metaphysical arguments and try to look at the ontological and ethical aspects of these accounts.⁵⁸

When we look at theories of physical/bodily continuity of personal identity, we note that these theories mainly deal with the question whether continuity of material body is important for personal identity. So, we will look into the debate between materialist and immaterialist with regard to personal identity here, in order to make the materialist account clearer. The main point of the materialist concept of personal identity is that,

an informative account of what personal identity consists in is possible, since personal identity is nothing over and above those observable and introspectable facts

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 3.
⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 5.
⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 7-8.
⁵⁸ Here, the difference between metaphysical and ontological arguments is that – a metaphysical argument deals with the abstract idea of self, a metaphysical self distinct from an ontological aspect of self, which is an aspect of self as a being.
of physical and psychological continuity which provide the only evidence for it…persons are nothing ‘over and above’ their brains, bodies and experiences.\(^{59}\)

For the materialist, everything in the world, even the most complex behavior of human beings, can be resolved into interactions between the physical atoms. And the so-called mental events are nothing but physical events occurring in physical objects. Further, nothing exists apart from the physical – like matter, energy and the void.

Also, in answer to the question “what are mental phenomena – like thoughts, feelings, wishes, etc.? there are four answers given by different kinds of materialism. Firstly, the unintelligibility thesis says that, mental phenomena are like superstitious belief and so must be rejected. This cannot be accepted as we are sure that mental events like thoughts, feelings, wishes, etc. do exist as we experience it in our daily life. Secondly, the avowal theory holds that, when we utter “I am in pain”, we are not asserting anything. Instead they are just bits of behavior and effects of certain inner physical conditions. That is, avowals are just expressions of our behavior and nothing more.

However, this is not true when we use it in third person utterances like “he is in pain”. So, this is also rejected. Thirdly, behaviorism holds that mental phenomena have meanings only in physical behavior. But this is not true all the time; we can misinterpret someone’s body language, also cases of good movies where the actors acted their part well does not mean she actually feels those emotions. This is also rejected. Finally, according to the identity theory, mental phenomena are identical with states and processes of the body, or nervous systems or the brain. Here, “identical” is used in the sense similar to the “identity” in the sentence “the morning star is identical with the evening star”. This is the most acceptable views, and is strongly debated upon by philosophers on its acceptability.\(^{60}\)

Materialist Account

We would like to note here that it is in contrast or response to Lockean idea of personal identity that Shoemaker gives his materialist account of personal identity.

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\(^{60}\) Here, the unintelligible thesis is given by Shaffer as one possible view, the avowal theory is supported by Ludwig Wittgenstein, behaviourism theory is supported by Gilbert Ryle and identity theory is supported by thinker like John Locke. (details can be seen in Shaffer, 1968: 43)
Sydney Shoemaker and Richard Swinburne have contributed extensively in the debate between materialist and dualist account of personal identity (Shoemaker, S & Swinburne, R’s, *Personal Identity*, 1984). They differ in where exactly lies the most important connection in a person’s identity over time. According to Sydney Shoemaker, the importance of the continuity of the body, the brain in particular, in personal identity is undeniable. We can say that, \( X \) at \( t_1 \) is the same as \( Y \) at \( t_2 \) if and only if enough of \( X \)’s brain survives at \( t_2 \), and has the capacity to support a full human consciousness, and is now \( Y \)’s brain: and if no other person \( Z \) exist at \( t_2 \) who also has enough of \( X \)’s brain to support a full human consciousness. So, mental phenomena are identical with states and processes of the brain. On the other hand, Swinburne’s view is dualist in nature, but differs from the classical dualists account as he rejects the existence of an immortal soul or self as the seat of personal identity. For Swinburne, the continuity of the brain as well as the memory is important for personal identity. That is, both the brain continuity as well as memory continuity is necessary in order for a person to claim that he/she is actually the same person over a period of time.

According to Swinburne, personal identity is un-analyzable in terms of empirical data as we need the continuity of both the body as well as psychology. He claims that it is coherent to suppose that a person could continue to exist with an entirely new body or with no body at all. And as it is not logically necessary that a person has a body made of certain matter, or has certain apparent memories to be the person who he or she is, it is not even necessitated by laws of nature. But it must be determined by something else, and all that a person needs in order to be who he/she is, are certain mental capacities for having conscious experiences. For example, having thoughts or sensations and performing intentional actions. Swinburne claims that, the continuity of a person is a datum of experience: and if it were not, we could have little knowledge of the world. Also,

among the data of experience are not merely that certain experiences are the successive experiences of a common subject, but also that certain simultaneous experiences are the experiences of a common subject. For example, at a single

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61 Here, we will deal extensively with Shoemaker’s view only, and Swinburne’s view will be given only to make Shoemaker’s view clearer. This is because we would not like to go into the detail of debate between them, as we will not be able to do justice to their debate here.

moment of time you feel cramp in your leg, hear the noise of my voice, and see the movement of my arms.\(^{63}\)

Further, for Swinburne, similarity of appearance at different times is an indirect criterion of personal identity, because it is evidence of bodily identity, which in turn is evidence for personal identity. Also, brain identity is important because it is chosen as the organ whose continuity is vital for personal identity as its continuity guarantees continuity of apparent memory and character. He says,

Our selection of brain continuity as evidence of personal identity is because that is the part of the body which is correlated with continuity of apparent memory and character, suggests that but for a correlation with apparent memory and character we would not use any part of the body as evidence of personal identity.\(^{64}\)

In order to make Swinburne’s point clearer, let’s take an example; given that P\(_2\) and an earlier P\(_1\) have the same brains, P\(_2\) in general apparently remembers the deeds and experiences of P\(_1\) and behave in somewhat similar ways to P\(_1\). And if brains were split, there will remain some part of the memory in both the parts, and whosoever gets the brain will have some memory of P\(_2\)’s past experiences. Thus, we can say that it is brain continuity which is evidence of personal identity. In defending his claim about apparent memory being important for personal identity, Swinburne argues that doubting apparent memory could lead us to a deep skepticism. In other words, if you have a memory of brown table in the room and doubt it, then you will be committing the error of “principle of credulity.”\(^{65}\) And he goes on to argue further that the dependence on apparent memory is a special unavoidable case of application of the principle of credulity. And if the principle of credulity suffices to justify reliance on apparent memories, it suffices also to justify reliance on apparent perceptions, such as there being a brown table in front of you without appeal to anything further, such as apparent memories. However, Swinburne does concede that apparent memory can commit error sometimes. As a result, it is subject to correction just like apparent perception. And also that the criterion of apparent memory can be used and its

\(^{63}\) Ibid., p. 45.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., p. 52.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., p. 57. The “principle of credulity” says that, probably things are as they seem to be (in the epistemic sense). For example, if it seems to me that there is in front of me a brown table, or a Greek vase, then probably there is; and I ought so to believe unless counter-evidence turns up.
deliverances can be checked privately and publicly without any reliance on any bodily criterion.

However, for Shoemaker, to use memory as evidence of personal identity is not just a matter of application of the principle of credulity. A satisfactory theory of personal identity ought to explain whether and how the things that we take as evidence really are evidence, based on empirical facts; material things which can be analyzed and put to test. An account of personal identity ought to be compatible with a materialistic account of the world, so that it will cohere with the rest of what we know about the world. For him, what Locke called memory or “remembering from the inside” cannot be characterized without the use of the notion of personal identity. Here, “remembering from inside”, means “a way of remembering past experiences and actions such that, if someone remembers X (an action or experience) in that way, it follows that X was an experience or action of that person.”

For Shoemaker, memory is a causal notion. We can say that what is a necessary condition of a person’s remembering a past event is that his memory of that event should be caused, in an appropriate way, by that event itself. For example, the brain of Brown is transferred to Robinson, and these results in “Brownson”. In this case, Brownson has the same personality traits that Brown had acquired. This shows that, as Brownson has Brown’s brain there is a relationship of causal dependence between Brown’s traits before the transfer and Brownson’s traits after the transfer. If Brown’s trait had been different, Brownson’s trait would have been different in corresponding ways. So for Shoemaker, the term “psychological continuity” covers both “continuity of memory” and “causal relations” which are empirical relations. Here, if we go further in the case of “Brown” and “Brownson”, the idea of causal connection or relation will become clearer. As Brownson’s memories are counterfactually dependent on Brown’s past life, if Brown’s life had been different, then Brownson’s memories would also be different. For example, if Brown had a lonely childhood then Brownson would also have had a memory of his lonely childhood. This causal relation makes possible the claim that our memories and other personal traits of a person are related from one moment to the next. Thus, the reason

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66 Shoemaker & Swinburne, 1984: 77.
67 Ibid., p. 78.
for including “causal relation” with the world around us is very important for materialist concept of mind.

Shoemaker goes on to discuss the relationship his view has with the functionalist view of the mind. According to functionalism every mental state is a “functional state”. It is a state which can be defined in terms of its relations (primarily its causal relations) to sensory inputs, behavioral outputs, and other functional (mental) states. The functionalist view claims that, “it is of the essence of a mental state to be caused in certain ways, and to produce, in conjunction with other mental states, certain effects (behavior or other mental states).” Shoemaker agrees with the functionalist’s view that it is in conjunction with other mental states of the same person that a mental state produces the effects it does. And, the immediate effects (states or behavior) will also belong to the same person who had the mental state in question. There is, in the functionalist view, a very intimate connection between the question “what is the nature of the various mental states?” and the question “how different mental states must be causally connected in order to be “co-personal”, that is, to belong to one and the same person?” Shoemaker points out that as the functionalist’s account of mental states implicitly invoke personal identity; it will be circular if we define personal identity in terms of causal relations between mental states. In order to come out of this circularity, he suggests the notion of “Ramsey sentence” proposed by David Lewis. Shoemaker’s view is that the nature of personal identity is, in effect, determined by the nature of the various sorts of mental states persons have. So, once we have said what the mental states are, and have specified their functional natures, there is no room for conventional decision about what the identity conditions of their subjects are – those identity conditions are built into the nature of the mental states themselves.

Further, according to Shoemaker, personal identity is determined by the nature of the various sorts of mental states persons have. Identity conditions are built into the nature of the mental states themselves. So, even if a person is capable of undergoing a change of body, e.g., Mr. Brown becoming Mr. Brownson, the conclusion that the person is not identical to his body gives no support to dualism, as it is perfectly

68 Ibid., p. 93.
69 Ibid., p. 99. Ramsey sentence provide us with variables for the properties of a sentence, turning it into an open one. Then, it is prefaced with existential quantifiers, to enable the sentence to come out of circularity.
compatible with materialist view of the world. Here it is important to remember that, all that materialism requires is that all of the actual realizations of mental states be physical. So, we can say that it is compatible with their being different in different species or different creatures. For Shoemaker,

The realization of mental state involves the existence of a mechanism whereby it stands in the causal connections that are definitive of it, that is, a mechanism whereby it produces copersonal successor states in conjunction with copersonal states simultaneous with it. If this mechanism is entirely physical, so will be the realization of the relationship of copersonality.70

In order to support his argument, Shoemaker goes on to examine a hypothetical situation in which there is a machine called “The brain-state transfer device”, in which a person’s brain is transferred from one body to another cloned body in order to preserve the brain. In such situations, where we are to allow this device as person-preserving, we will have to accept that a cloned person is the same as the original, and also the device as a part of our survival. In this imagined case it is natural to store cells taken from the same person. These cells are stored, so that the person can change his/her body by using the device, say after every 2 or 5 years as the case may be. Thus, in such situation, we will have personal identity without the identity of any body, even though nothing non-physical is involved in such person. However, such account faces the “duplication objection”; the possibility that the brain-state device (BST-device) malfunctions and produces the state of A’s brain in B’s brain without obliterating those same states in A’s brain. The result is that, post-transfer possessor of the state, that is, brain B would not be identical with the pre-transfer possessor of the state, that is, brain A.

However, Shoemaker argues that the duplication objection is due to a failure to distinguish rigid and non-rigid designators and their roles in identity statements. He holds that, definite descriptions like “post-transfer B-body person” are non-rigid designators, while names like “Paul” or “John” are rigid designators that have the same reference whether in real or in hypothetical situations. So, for Shoemaker, the malfunctioning of the BST-devise will not hamper the continued existence of the person whose brain was in the process of being transferred. In case the BST-device

70 Shoemaker and Swinburne, 1984: 107.
malfunctions, a person whose brain was transferred but still alive will remain in the old body, and the newly created person will not be the same as the old one, he/she will be a different person.

Thus, for Shoemaker, the psychological continuity account of personal identity is implicit in the functional specifications of the various sorts of mental states. That is, it is impossible to have a functionalist account of persons without having, at least in outline, a psychological continuity account of what the identity of person consists in. Here, both conceptual analysis as well as factual analysis on the account of personal identity is important. Thus, Shoemaker's view on personal identity is materialistic in nature. He holds that personal identity should be understood in terms of identity of material things. For him, identity of a person depends on the continuity of his/her body/brain. In the absence of one’s memory about oneself 5 years before, it will be very difficult to accept that person as the same. Therefore, brain/body continuity is important in order to have personal identity. Here, we can see that Shoemaker’s account can be taken as reductionist in nature.

1.3 Neutral Account of Personal Identity

Another important account of personal identity may be called the neutral account. It is so called because this view subscribes neither to the physical/bodily continuity nor to the memory/psychological continuity accounts of personal identity. In other words, who subscribe neither to the materialist nor to the immaterialist account of personal identity. One of the main thinkers of such account we will be dealing with here is P. F. Strawson. According to him, the concept of person is more primitive than those of material body and immaterial soul. The concept of person is not reducible to concepts like ego or material bodies as person precedes both the body and the mind. For Strawson, person is a type “of entity such that both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation etc., are equally applicable to a single individual of that single type.” States of consciousness is ascribed to this type of entity, for without presupposing persons we cannot account for states of consciousness. For Strawson,

71 To answer “what personal identity consists in”, we can either give conceptual analysis or factual analysis, or say that, personal identity can be defined in terms of “matter” or material things such as being a member of a particular biological species.
states of consciousness cannot be ascribed at all, unless they were ascribed to persons." We can say that concept of person as a primitive concept is necessary for us to understand first in order to understand the concept of personal identity.

It is important to consider the overall picture of Strawson’s position in order to understand his account of person. For Strawson, there are two types of identification: the speaker’s identification and the hearer’s identification. There are many means of expressions which we use to identify a person, like, proper names (Mary, James, John etc.) and pronouns (I, you etc.). According to Strawson, when these expressions are used by a speaker to refer to a particular, he/she is making an identifying reference to a particular. Also, the speaker actually identifies the particular by making an identifying reference. For this, it is also important that a hearer identifies the particular referred to by the speaker on the basis of the identifying reference that the speaker makes to the particular. For Strawson, this form of identification can be either basic or non-basic. In case of non-basic particulars, the hearer needs to identify the basic particular in order to identify the particular being identifyingly referred to. For example, in order to identify the house referred to by the referring expression “the house that Tom built” the hearer needs to identify the person Tom.

However, in case of basic particulars, “it is possible to make all the identifying reference to a set of particulars without the requirement of making identifying reference to particulars of another kind.” For example, identification of private experience like having a “head-ache”, “tooth-ache” etc. do not need any more identifying reference to another kind. Strawson further holds that persons should be taken as basic particulars instead of seats of private experiences. The reason is that, the concept of person needs to be identified first before we could identify private sensations. For him, “identifying references to private particular depend on identifying references to particulars of another type altogether, namely persons.”

The importance of this relation can further be seen when he says, “on a particular occasion of reference, the identification of a private experience need not be directly

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73 Ibid., p. 102.
74 Sen, 2009: 480.
75 Strawson, 1959: 41.
dependent on the identification of the person whose experience it was, it must still be indirectly so dependent.”

Strawson goes on to discuss persons and says that, the material bodies are basic particulars because they could be identified without reference to particulars of other types or other categories. Instead, the identification of other particulars of other types or categories ultimately rested on the identification of material bodies. Further, he inquires whether we can have a conceptual scheme which provided for objective particulars but where material bodies are not basic. So, he asks – how we make distinction between oneself and other. What are the conditions of distinctions, why we make such a distinction? In order to do that he starts with how we talk of ourselves ordinarily. How we ascribe to ourselves actions and intentions, sensations, thoughts and feelings, perceptions and memories etc. Also, we ascribe position to ourselves, i.e. location and attitude. We ascribe not only temporary characteristics, but also relatively enduring characteristics like height, shape, and weight to ourselves. We ascribe to ourselves things that we also ascribe to material bodies. As we ascribe both one’s thoughts and sensations to the same thing we ascribe physical characteristics – two related questions arises for Strawson – “Why are one’s states of consciousness ascribed to anything at all? And, why are they ascribed to the very same thing as certain corporeal characteristics, a certain physical situation etc.”

In order to provide answers to the above questions, Strawson holds that, even if the facts in question explain why a subject of experience should pick out one body from a host of other bodies and ascribe all the characteristics it has, it does not explain why the experiences should be ascribed to any subject at all. Also, it is not clear that, if it has to be ascribed at all, why it is ascribed to the body on which the characteristics are ascribed to. It does not explain the use of “I”, the concept we have of a person. An important reaction to the above concept is Wittgenstein’s and Schlick’s account of “no-ownership” or “no-subject” doctrine of the self. According to them, even though we do have experiences there is no person that owns them. Thus, both the views hold that the “I” and the attribute we ascribed to it are totally different. We cannot imagine two people possessing the same particular state or

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76 Ibid., p. 43.
77 Ibid., p. 90.
78 As mention in Strawson, 1959: 94-95.
experience, it is logically impossible as the requirement of identity rules out logical transferability of ownership. The reason is that, when the no-ownership theorist talks about attributes, they have to attribute it to something. If not, they have to say that we can never refer to particular states or experiences at all; and this is not acceptable.

For Strawson, the reason for rejecting the no-ownership theory is as follows, “it is a necessary condition of one’s ascribing states of consciousness, experiences, to oneself, in the way one does, that one should also ascribe them, or be prepared to ascribe them, to others who are not oneself.”\textsuperscript{79} In order to be able to ascribe states of consciousness, like pain, to oneself we should be able to ascribe it to others. For this, we must identify others as subjects of experience and possessors of states of consciousness as well. And this kind of identification is possible, according to Strawson, only when we acknowledge the primitiveness of the “Concept of a Person”, the notion that other than persons, we cannot ascribe states of consciousness to anything else at all. Therefore, we can say that the concept of pure individual consciousness – pure ego – cannot exist as a primitive concept. It can exist only as a secondary non-primitive concept that is to be explained and analyzed in terms of the concept of person. The word “I” refers not to the pure ego, but to the person. The concept of person is logically prior to that of an individual consciousness. While a person cannot be an embodied ego, an ego might be a disembodied person that still retains the logical benefit of individuality from having been a person.

\textbf{M-Predicates and P-Predicates}

Strawson famously introduced two kinds of predicates M & P, which represents the two types of characteristics ascribed to persons. This distinction can be understood in the following way:

1. M-Predicates – these are predicates which can also properly be applied to material bodies like, “weigh 10 stone”, “is in the drawing room”, etc.

2. P-Predicates – these are predicates which are applied exclusively to persons, like, “is smiling”, “is going for a walk”, “is in pain”, and so on.

\textsuperscript{79} Strawson, 1959: 99.
For Strawson, the discussion of the concept of persons is based on a distinction between M-predicates and P-predicates. The difference between these two kinds of predicates lies in the fact that, M-predicates are those that could be ascribed also to material objects; whereas P-predicates are those that could not possibly be ascribed to material objects. For example, P-predicates include such predicates as actions and intentions, thoughts and feelings, perceptions, memories and sensations. This shows that, it is not the case that persons are things which just happen to have bodily attributes, nor is it the case that they are things which just happen to have mental attributes. We can say that the essential quality of a person is that they are entities which necessarily have both mental and bodily attributes. It is true that not all P-predicates can be regarded as “predicates ascribing states of consciousness”. For example, “is going for a walk” is not purely a predicate ascribing states of consciousness. Yet, these kinds of predicates may be said to have one thing in common with consciousness ascribing predicates like intention, which, for him, is that “they imply the possession of consciousness on the part of which they are ascribed.”

Another feature of P-predicates is that they are both self-ascriptive and other-ascriptive; it is possible to ascribe P-predicates to oneself as well as to others. In case of self-ascription, it is not the case that one requires the same behavioral criteria to decide whether one should ascribe P-predicates to oneself.

Here, it can be asked – how statements like “I am happy, I feel tired” are reconciled with the doctrine of ascribing P-predicates to others? According to Strawson, this difficulty is a form of failure to recognize the special character of P-predicates. There is no single primary process of learning the inner meaning of these predicates and another process for applying them. Also there is no primary process of learning to apply these predicates to others on the strength of behavioral criteria, and another process to acquire first-person P-utterances form of behavior. For Strawson, in order to understand the above question,

One must acknowledge that there is a kind of predicate which is unambiguously and adequately ascribable both on the basis of observation of the subject of the predicate and not on this basis, i.e., independently of observation of the subject: the second case is the case where the ascriber is also the subject. If there were no concepts answering

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80 Ibid., p. 105.
to the characterization I have just given, we should indeed have no philosophical problem about the soul; but equally we should not have our concept of a person.81

So, we can say that the importance of the concept of P-predicates lies in the fact that they are attributes of the persons.

**Idea of Personhood**

For Strawson, an answer to the question “Is the concept of person possible?” is identical with an answer to the question “How are P-predicates possible?” The reason lies in the fact that the primitiveness of the concept of person is understood in terms of the unique character of the P-predicates. In order to answer the above questions, Strawson considers a particular kind of P-predicates which is ascribed to individuals when they are involved in doing something. For example, “going for a walk”, “writing a letter”, etc., which is different from “thinking of going for a walk” etc. Here, according to Sen,

The reason why he brings these predicates into a central position in order to understand the working of P-predicates is that though they are self-ascribed without observation and other-ascribed due to observation of particular behavior, “in the case of these predicates one feels minimal reluctance to concede that what is ascribed in these two different ways is the same.” The reason we are happier to concede that the same predicate is ascribed both in the first as well as in the third person case is due to the fact that these kinds of actions are identified by their marked pattern of physical movements. The reason why we know bodily movements of this kind without observation is due to the further fact that we are able to interpret them in terms of their intentions, and to that extent, we take them to be actions rather than mere movements.82

What can be seen here is that, the fact that we perform actions with intentions, not only act, but act in response to other’s action, etc. shows that we can take ourselves and others as persons.

Further, for Strawson both mental and physical attributes are important for a person, as they are attributes that makes a person distinct from non-persons. So, we could say of the person called “Jane” that, Jane is six feet tall, weight fifty-seven kg,

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81 Ibid., p. 108.
and is walking at the rate of 3km an hour (all physical attributes). Also, we could say 
of the very same entity, Jane, that she is now thinking about a book she is writing, 
feels excited about finishing the book, and then wishes that she has time to complete 
the book (all mental attributes). Here, we can see that we have neither attributions to 
two different subjects, a mind and a body (dualism), nor attributions to a body only 
(materialism), but attributions to the person named Jane. Thus, we may say that the 
person has a mind and a body, but all that means is that both mental and physical 
attributes are applicable to her. For Strawson there are two different types of subjects 
or basic particulars in the natural world, viz., physical bodies and persons. The 
difference between them is that physical bodies necessarily can have M-predicates, 
while persons have both M-predicates and P-predicates.

Also, according to Strawson, the notion of attributing a state of consciousness 
to a subject cannot be analyzed as the notion of attributing a state of consciousness to 
a body. The reason is that, subjects are different from mere bodies, by virtue of the 
fact that subjects have mental capacities. For Strawson, in order for the materialists to 
formulate their claims on persons, they must have a concept of a subject of mental 
states which is different from the concept of material body. For the materialists to be 
able to single out sets of mental states and make the nontrivial claim about each of 
those sets, they cannot rely merely on the body. Hence, it is important that their notion 
of a subject of states of consciousness must be different from their notion of material 
body. Otherwise, their claim degenerates into the triviality that all those states of 
consciousness dependent upon a body are dependent upon that body, a claim too 
empty to be worth asserting.

Here, we can look at some of the difference between Strawson’s account and 
some other metaphysical doctrines which serve to connect the problem of individual 
consciousness with the general topic of identification; Leibniz’s Monads being a case 
in point. Wherever particulars occur in any ontological theory, the theoretical 
indispensability of demonstrative elements in identifying thought about particulars is 
a necessary feature of any conceptual scheme. Identifying reference to particulars 
rests ultimately on use of expressions with demonstrative force. However, according 
to Leibniz’s “Identity of Indiscernible” – “it is necessarily true that there exists, for 
every individual, some description in purely universal, or general, terms, such that
only that individual answers to that description.”

Another point where Leibniz’s monads and Strawson’s thesis differ is that, unlike Strawson’s consciousness predicates that need to be ascribed to persons, Leibniz’s monads are themselves states of consciousness. They do not need any reference to persons or bodies.

Further, for Leibniz, only the monads, i.e. consciousness, or potential, or quasi-consciousness, and their states are real. And we do not have public space but private spaces only, because space is internal to the monads. Strawson treats Leibniz’s system as an attempt at ontology of particulars in which uniqueness of reference is theoretically secured without demonstratives; also he tries to show how the attempt fails in spite of its complex ingenuity. The difficulty for Leibniz was that there can be many indistinguishable monad-particulars of a given monad-type. Strawson’s difficulty will also be similar to Leibniz’s if the notion of particular consciousness is taken as primary or basic type of particular. And this difficulty would be insoluble – that there may be many exactly similar particular consciousness associated in the same way with a single particular body. Therefore, Strawson argues that the private particulars are not primary concept. The concept of persons is a primary concept, a concept with corporeal characteristics, occupying space and time, distinguishable and identifiable. So, for Strawson, “for each user of language, there is just one person in ascribing to whom states of consciousness he does not need to use the criteria of the observed behavior of that person, though he does not necessarily not do so; and that person is himself.”

Thus, Strawson’s account of person provides a different perspective from the materialist/immaterialist account, and hence the significance of this account in the debate on personal identity. Further, Strawson holds that his purpose in declaring the concept of a person as a primitive concept is,

- to resist certain kinds of reduction of the concept. One is the Cartesian reduction, which represents the concept of a person as the concept of a unique kind of combination of an individual soul and an individual body…another…is the view that

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83 Strawson, 1959: 120.
84 Ibid., p. 134.
the concept of a person is identical with that of a living human body…the concept of a personal body is secondary to, and derivative from, that of a person.85

Here, we can see that Strawson’s account of personal identity is a non-reductionist account, as a person is neither the body nor the mind. Person, for Strawson, is a primitive concept. Further, we can say that the debate on personal identity as only bodily or psychological continuity is redundant. And one way of saying it so is making person a primitive notion. There is another way of saying that the debate on personal identity is redundant, and that is to say that the concept of person is ir-real. We therefore need to consider the ir-realist account of personal identity.

### 1.4 Ir-realist Account of Personal Identity

The ir-realist account of personal identity includes both the “no-self theory” and “reductionist theory” of personal identity. Both these theories reject the notion of a substantive self which exists beyond the bounds of experience. However, they differ in a very important point; while the no-self theory rejects the notion of personal identity in its totality, the reductionist theory, on the other hand, go on and resurrect the self and its identity as psychological relations (memory continuity theory) or body theories (body/brain continuity theory). So, in this chapter we will deal with David Hume’s view on self or identity. Also, the reductionist account of personal identity as given by Derek Parfit will be dealt with in the next chapter in detail. Despite the difference, both the no-self theory and the reductionist theory of personal identity are similar in the sense that they reject the existence of substantive self. There are many differences in the reasons given to refute the continuity theory, but the main point of these views can be stated as, “there is no such thing as Personal Identity, and whether it exist or not does not matter. What is important is the existence of the successive moments that gives an illusion of continuity.”86 Parfit’s view is more radical than those of Hume’s, the similarity lies in the denial of personal identity per se.

Here we will not present Parfit’s view in detail, as we will be dealing with it in the next chapter. However, it is important to mention the main point of Parfit’s account of personal identity. For Parfit, what matters for a person’s survival is what

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85 Ibid., p. 215.
he called “Relation-R, a psychological continuity and connectedness.” 87 No doubt Parfit’s account is heavily influence by Hume’s view and by the time Parfit takes up this path, Hume’s skepticism is totally transformed to a new level of skepticism. There are many problems with Parfit’s view, the most obvious being, if his view is true then the impact of the view on our moral life will be totally different from what we see so far. If there is no over-arching concept that will hold a person responsible about her actions today, then what is the point in doing the good things which are difficult? If there is nothing to prove my identity that can hold me responsible for my actions, then it is a bit difficult to think that we will have an orderly society, human nature being the way it is. 88

David Hume’s View on Personal Identity

In the section “Of Personal Identity” in Book I of A Treatise of Human Nature, (1978) Hume points out that although some thinkers believe we are continuously aware of something called the self, when he looks into his own experience there is nothing permanent and enduring to substantiate this belief. He is never aware of any constant invariable impression that could be called a “self”.

87 Parfit, 1984: 268.
88 Here, it is important to note the case of Early Buddhism’s view on self in Indian philosophy, also called the theory of Momentariness. This theory can be said to be the crux of Buddhism as every other theory depends on this account of Momentariness. Buddhism advances three arguments in support of the concept of no-self. Firstly, human experience is neither eternally continuous nor absolutely discontinuous. Secondly, instead of an enduring subject, which synthesizes and controls the various constituents of human experience, Buddhism posits the interplay of five psycho-physical elements, traditionally known as the five skandhas. Namely, self-awareness, selflessness, the cosmic dimension of the self, the transcendence of the mind-body dichotomy, and the transcendence of the self-other dichotomy. Human experience emerges in the interplay between all five components. Thus, Buddhism shatters the egological conception that it is the experiential “I” which originates consciousness, feelings, pain, etc.; instead it substitutes a non-linear complex structure as the explanatory model of human experience for that of an individual, enduring agency. Thirdly, the notion of no-self is warranted by the fundamental mechanism underlying the phenomenal world, that is, co-dependent origination. We can see that Buddhists reject the notion of essence altogether. Further, for the Buddhist philosopher, personal identity is indeterminate and a meaningless concept. Also, in Buddhism, when one uses these personal pronouns to make a statement about oneself, they never refer to an inner core. The pronoun “I”, usually points only to a particular aspect of oneself. For example, “I wash myself” refers to my body, “I am happy” concerns my feeling, etc. The same holds for the “self”, yet the person carries on and can be identified as such because there is continuity. Thus, we can see that, according to early Buddhism, what is important is the ever changing phenomena and not any constant substance that can be called “self”. The interesting thing to note here is that, even though there are many differences among the diverse schools of Buddhism, all of them agree in the theory of “no-self”.

Rather, what he experienced is a continuous flow of perceptions that replace one another in rapid succession. He says,

...when I enter most intimately into what I called myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at anytime without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound-sleep, so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death, and could neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate, after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is farther requisite to make me a perfect non-entity. If anyone upon serious and unprejudiced reflection thinks he has a different notion of himself, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in that particular. He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continued, which he calls himself; though I am certain there is no such principle in me.89

For Hume, therefore, there is nothing to the mind but these perceptions; consequently, there is never any simplicity within the mind at one time or identity at two different times. So, Hume propounded the elusiveness thesis vis-à-vis the self that says, “When one is introspectively aware of one’s thoughts, experiences, and sensations, one is never aware of a persisting self which has them.”90 Further, for Hume, we do not have any idea of a self; for every real idea must be derived from an impression: “but self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have reference.”91

Hume turns next to the question of why we ascribe identity to our successive perceptions. He points out that there is a distinction between “personal identity as it regards our thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves.”92 He answers by distinguishing between the ideas of identity and diversity. In the former case we have the idea of an object that persists, invariably and uninterrupted, through a particular span of time. It is this that comprises our idea of identity. In the case of diversity we have the “idea of several different objects existing

89 Hume, 1978: 162.
90 Cassam, 1994: 3.
92 Ibid., p. 253.
in succession, and connected together by a close relation.”93 Here, we mistakenly take
that an object at one time is identical with an object at another time, when in fact the
two are little more than a succession of different objects connected by a close relation.
And in order to justify these ascriptions of identity we either come up with the notion
of a substantive self by feigning the continued existence of our perceptions, or we
imagine the existence of something mysterious which binds our many perceptions

Hume goes on to argue that, it is due to this mistake that the problem of
personal identity is not merely a verbal dispute. It is natural to ask what induces us to
attribute identity to something while being a succession of objects it is really an
instance of diversity. The answer can be found in the workings of imagination. That
is, for Hume, the reason why we might make such an attribution, is that, “the passage
of thought from the object before the change to the object after it, is so smooth and
easy, that we scarce perceive the transition, and are apt to imagine, that ‘tis nothing
but a continu’d survey of the same object.”94 This is especially true when the
alteration is either relatively small or when it occurs gradually. For Hume, the identity
of the mind, like that of such changing things as plants, animals, repaired ships,
rebuilt churches, and republics, is only a fictitious identity. It must therefore be
similarly explicable in terms of the workings of the imagination. Hume concludes his
account with the important remark that all “nice and subtle” questions concerning
personal identity are best considered as grammatical rather than philosophical
difficulties.95 Thus, except where the notion of a fictional entity or principle is
involved, all disputes about personal identity are merely verbal disputes and can never
possibly be decided.

For Hume, persons do not endure self-identically over time; nor does ordinary
objects like, plants, animals, etc. The idea of identity is incompatible with the idea of
change; it is an idea of an object that remains invariable and uninterrupted over-time.
The similarity between plants and animal bodies on the one hand and persons on the
other hand is in the sense that ascription of identity to persons is comparable to the
ascription of identity to any material body; both the cases being illusory. The problem

93 Ibid., p. 253.
94 Ibid., p. 256.
95 Ibid., p. 263.
of our false belief in the existence of enduring persons is part of a wider problem for our false belief in the identity over time of changing things generally. And the same mechanism is responsible for this false belief. Thus for Hume, “the identity which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one and of a like kind with that which we ascribe to vegetable and animal bodies. It cannot, therefore, have a different origin, but must proceed from a like operation of the imagination upon like objects.” 6

The main problem, however, for Hume is how to explain the universal but mistaken belief in the existence of enduring persons. Our everyday assertion of identity over time and through change is not merely indicative of looseness in speech, but of actual error in thoughts. That is why, according to Noonan, Hume says,

> The succession of my perceptions is merely a succession of distinct related objects. But because the objects in the succession are closely related the action of the imagination in surveying the succession is almost the same to the feeling as the action of the imagination in considering an uninterrupted and invariable object. As in the other cases, the similarity between the two acts of mind leads me to confound the two situations and thus to regard the two succession of related perceptions as really united by identity. And so I am led to believe in the unity of the self, which is as much a fiction as in the other cases of the operation of the mechanism, and, proceeds entirely from the smooth and uninterrupted progress of the thought along a train of connected ideas according to the principles above explained. 7

For Hume, resemblance and causation are the two links of our successive perceptions that brings about this uninterrupted progress of thought. So, memory does not produce but discovers personal identity, by showing us the relation of cause and effect among our perceptions. Further, Hume holds that there is no such continuing substance which is separate from perceptions and that nothing can be perceived that will distinguish substance from accident. We can see that for Hume, the concept of substance is nothing but a bundle of perception and so it is meaningless to consider it as a principle behind continuity. As personal identity is devoid of attributes, it is neither perceptible nor does it exhort any influence on the phenomena of human existence. Thus, personal identity can be taken as either non-existent or existing and yet completely irrelevant to human experience. This means that, for Hume, concepts

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6 Ibid., p. 253.
7 Noonan, 1989: 94.
like “individual”, “person” and even “continuity” are a mere product of human imagination.

As we know, philosophers since Hume have tried to show where he may have gone wrong. And we can here mention some of the objections that may be raised against Hume’s skeptical position. According to Noonan, there are two objections to be noted in Hume’s account of personal identity. Firstly, Hume is wrong in comparing perceptions with the citizens of a republic. The comparison is fundamentally flawed, as perceptions are not capable of existing independently, while citizen of a republic are. Secondly, Hume is wrong in saying that identity is incompatible with change. There are some things which cannot change, but identity is not one of them. In fact, persons “are entities which can survive many changes without ceasing to exist.”

Noonan further argue that, Hume’s standpoint that the mind, “as a result of surveying a certain sort of sequence of perceptions, is caused to have a mistaken belief in the existence of a unitary self,” is also internally inconsistent. Because, Hume used “mind” and “self” as interchangeable in this context, so this will mean that the mind have a mistaken belief in its own existence, when it surveys certain sequence of perceptions. Not only these problems, Noonan holds that Hume’s view is a failure on its own term “since it cannot explain the pattern of self-ascriptions of mental states which actually exists, and is in principle incapable of providing an adequate principle of individuation of mind.” However, Hume’s view that memory alone cannot constitute personal identity but is one of the causal links between the earlier and later psychological states of a person which constitute his/her identity, is accepted by all proponents of psychological continuity criteria of personal identity and is regarded as the primary source for this idea. Also, Hume’s analogy between self and state serves as the primary source of the reductionists’ tradition in discussions of personal identity, as can be seen in the writings of Derek Parfit.

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98 Ibid., p. 96.
99 Ibid., p. 98.
100 Ibid., p. 102.
According to Gallagher, Hume’s text contains both a critique of personal identity and an affirmation concerning the nature of consciousness. This is evident from some of what he said in the Treatise of Human Nature,

We are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement...The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in different; whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity.

Here, we can see that for Hume, the fundamental reality of consciousness is temporality – a temporal flow or succession of perceptions (impressions and ideas) which perpetually and spontaneously glide away. This flow is characterized by immanent disconnection. It is a system of differences, as he says that, “the true idea of the human mind, is to consider it as a system of different perceptions or different existences, which . . . mutually produce, destroy, influence, and modify each other.” That one perception is different from another means, in Hume’s mind, not only that each is distinct from every other, but that each “is a distinct existence, and is different, and distinguishable, and separable from each other perception.” Gallagher goes on to say that, for Hume consciousness is composed of unconnected perceptions and is therefore not a unitary phenomenon. Difference takes priority over system; cinematic succession takes priority over theatrical structure; and precisely for this reason identity is put into doubt. That is why Hume says, identity “is nothing really belonging to these different perceptions, and uniting them together; but is merely a quality, which we attribute to them, because of the union of their ideas in the imagination, when we reflect on them.”

According to Pike, another interpreter of Hume’s position, Hume assumes that our idea of mind is derived from introspective observation or inward sensations.

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105 Ibid., p. 259.
106 Ibid., p. 260.
107 Pike, 1967: 159-165.
And these inward perceptions are series of numerically distinct perceptions. So, when Hume compares the mind to a theater, it means that the successive perceptions only are the constituent of the mind. Here, we can say that the conclusion is stated in the material mode of speech. It is presented as a theory about the make-up of the mind. But the same conclusion is more enlighteningly stated in the Abstract to a Treatise of Human Nature, (1938). For Pike, according to Hume,

As our idea of any body, a peach, for instance, is only that of a particular taste, color, figure, size, consistence, etc. So our idea of any mind is only that of particular perceptions, without the notion of anything we call substance, either simple or compound…The point is that the bundle theory of the self is offered by Hume as an analysis of the idea of mind…According to some philosophers, Hume says, the self is a simple substance that has perceptions…It is not simply the collection of perceptions itself…Unfortunately for these philosophers, Hume continues, we have no idea of the self “after the manner it is here explained”…We have no impression of a self-substance that has perceptions, and, accordingly, “we have no such idea.”

At this point, we will consider an objection discussed by Pike on Hume’s account. It can be said that the above quote may have led some thinkers to suppose that Hume explicitly denied the existence of an idea of self. But if one looks closely at the paragraphs where Hume discusses this point in details, we can see that that they contain no such denial. Hume says that we have no idea of a certain kind of mind, viz., a mental-substance which has perceptions. He does not say that we have no idea of mind. Rather, what he said is that, we do have an idea of mind, but on analysis we discover that this idea is not the idea of a mental-substance; it is, rather, the idea of a bundle of perceptions. We can say that, Hume rejects a certain philosophical analysis of our idea of mind, but he does not deny that there is an idea of mind to be analyzed. Pike further says that,

For Hume, the mind does not do anything – it includes things. Statements containing mental verbs (whether the objects receiving the action of such verbs be physical objects or mental states) are used by Hume as conveniences – manners of speech. We get to the real meaning of such statements via a Humean analysis. In analysis, statements mentioning the activities of mind are replaced by statements affirming

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109 This is the main points as discussed by Pike in his article, he gave an elaborate account on how Hume did not deny the existence of mind as such, and deny only that could be analyzed.
only the presence of certain mental substances (perceptions) within a certain collection. Hume presupposes no Transcendental Ego. Given his analysis of “mind” there is nothing for such an Ego to do.\textsuperscript{110}

In Pike’s discussion we come across a different perspective on Hume’s account of personal identity. This perspective adds a new dimension to the discussion as Hume’s account is considered as something more than a mere skeptical one. It is also important to consider the arguments for and against Hume’s account as it brings out how much influence Hume’s account still hold in contemporary debates on personal identity.

\subsection*{1.5 Dualist Account of Personal Identity}

It is important to discuss the dualist account propounded by Bernard Williams because his view adds yet a different perspective to the debate on personal identity. In his book \textit{Problems of the Self}, (1973) Williams puts together a wide range of discussion on the necessity of bodily continuity and the importance of psychological continuity for personal identity. For him personal identity needs both bodily and psychological continuity together. He says,

\begin{quote}
If I am asked whether the person in front of me is the same person as one uniquely present at place \(a\) at time \(t\), I shall not necessarily be justified in answering “yes” merely because I am justified in saying that this human body is the same as that person at \(a\) at \(t\). Identity of body is at least not a sufficient condition of personal identity, and other considerations, of personal characteristics and, above all, memory, must be invoked.\textsuperscript{111}
\end{quote}

We can see that for Williams bodily continuity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for personal identity; psychological continuity is also needed for personal identity. So, bodily continuity and psychological continuity together form necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity.

Further, he holds that an adequate criterion of personal identity must enable us to differentiate between identity and mere resemblance. The importance of one-one relation can be seen when he says,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{110} Pike, 1967: 165.
\textsuperscript{111} Williams, 1973: 1.
\end{footnotesize}
Identity is one-one relation, and that no principle can be a criterion of identity for things of type T if it relies only on what is logically a one-many or many-many relation between things of type T. What is wrong with the supposed criterion of identity for persons which relies only on memory claims is just that “…being disposed to make sincere memory claims which exactly fit the life of…” is not a one-one, but a many-one, relation, and hence cannot possibly be adequate in logic to constitute a criterion of identity.\(^\text{112}\)

That is, it is not possible for 'y' at \(t_1\ldots t_n\) to have exactly the same kind of experiences or feelings which are being possessed by 'x' at \(t_1\ldots t_n\). Only the relation of being bodily continuous gives us the required logical one-one relation for personal identity. We can say that, only \(x\) will have the exact feelings and experiences as \(x\) during \(t_1\ldots t_n\), and the same applies to \(y\). Moreover, having the same ostensible memories like, personalities, abilities, skills, etc., are not of logical one-one relation as it is logically possible that two or more logically distinct persons have the same ostensible memories as some other individual.

In order to make his point clearer, Williams further consider a case where Charles become more like Guy Fawkes in personality, memory, skills and abilities; even in such case it will be wrong to consider them as the same person. The fact remains that there is no logical one-one relation between Charles and Guy Fawkes; they resemble each other but they are not identical. Also, another reason in this kind of case is that, if we allow the transformation of Charles to Guy Fawkes, there is a possibility that Tom can also transform himself into Guy Fawkes. We will then have two people, Charles and Tom, who claim to be Guy Fawkes, and this is absurd. Thus, we can see the importance of logical one-one relation.

Further, for Williams, the importance of bodily continuity as a necessary condition of personal identity cannot be overstated. The reason is “that the omission of the body takes away all contents from the idea of personal identity."\(^\text{113}\) The continuity of body is necessary for the accounts in the history of one person to be connected as identification made on bodily grounds at some stages is necessary. He rejects any claim that bodily considerations can be absolutely omitted from the criteria of personal identity. Also, Williams holds that bodily interchange theory are not to be

\(^{112}\) Ibid., p. 21.
\(^{113}\) Ibid., p. 10.
taken for granted as there are unforeseen logical limits to what can happen in this directions. We can say that, memory on its own is rejected by Williams as a criterion of one’s own identity, because similarity of memory claims and personal characteristics alone, without bodily continuity, cannot be taken as sufficient conditions of personal identity.

Further, Williams goes on to discuss the role of psychological continuity in maintaining one’s identity. He give us a thought experiment in which two persons X and Y exchange their bodies – as in X becomes Y and Y becomes X. For example, there is a certain process which can exchange the memories, actions and character of X and Y. But before they exchange their bodies they are told to choose between “torture” and Rs. 1 lac. Here, it will most probably be the case that – X chooses that Y-body be given Rs. 1 lac and torture X-body, while Y chooses the reverse. Here we can see that to care about what happens to me in the future is not necessarily to care about what happens to the body I have at this moment.114

Another argument Williams put forth to argue for the importance of psychological continuity is the fact that we have moral conflict – such as conflict of desire and conflict of beliefs.115 Here, conflicts of desire are clashes between desires arising from some contingent matter of fact. That is, it is a matter of fact that makes it impossible for both the desires to be satisfied; but we can consistently imagine a state of affairs in which they could both be satisfied. For example, a student who wants to score good marks in exam but is too lazy to study may represent his difficulty to himself as his both wanting to work (in this case study) and wanting to enjoy. His problem will be solved the moment he started to study or stop wanting to score good grades in exam. Conflict of beliefs, on the other hand, is to do with a case where a man has inconsistent beliefs. The statements which adequately express his beliefs involve a logical contradiction or where a man holds two beliefs which for empirical reason cannot both be true. For example, if a man believes that Mt. Everest is the highest mountain in the world and is situated in Europe. These two beliefs will not be inconsistent if the man is ignorant of the fact that the two beliefs are conflicting. However, if he still believes in this after he is informed of his mis-informed belief, then he is in a situation of actually having an inconsistent belief.

114 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
115 Ibid., p. 170.
From the above discussion, Williams wants to show that conflict of belief and conflict of desire presuppose psychological continuity. It will not be possible to have “conflicts” in our thoughts if we are not psychologically continuous with ourselves. If it is a fact that we have beliefs and desires, then it is also a fact that sometimes there is a conflict in what we believe and what actually the case is. There are also times when we do not get what we desire. Having experiences about different kinds of emotions itself testify to the fact that psychological continuity is important for personal identity. A person undergoing any kinds of conflict in his/her mind cannot say that the conflicting thoughts are happening in somebody else’s mind and he/she has just come to know about them. So, we can see that psychological continuity is also important in personal identity, along with the bodily continuity. From the above discussions, we can see that, for Williams, both the bodily and psychological continuity is needed in order to have a proper and acceptable account of personal identity.

At this point, it is important to look at the account of Bernard Williams in “The Self and the Future,” (1970)\(^\text{116}\) where he points out that there is nothing straightforwardly wrong with either the psychological continuity account of personal identity or the bodily continuity account of personal identity. Instead, the problem seems to be that there is some sort of conflict at the heart of our concept of personal identity.\(^\text{117}\) Williams give two apparently puzzle account and argue that one is acceptable to the proponents of psychological continuity of personal identity, and the other to proponents of physical continuity. In the first case, a scientific experiment was conducted in which \(A\)-body person and \(B\)-body person’s brain was exchange by entering a machine. After \(A\) and \(B\) emerge from the machine, \(A\)-body person has what seems to be \(B\)’s memories, character traits, projects etc. and vice versa with \(B\)-body person. This first case shows the importance of psychological continuity in personal identity. In the second case, I am being told that, a machine will copy and record all the content of my brain related to my determination of dispositional and occurrent mentality. After that I will be tortured to such an extent that I will forget my present memories and have an entirely new set of memories, character traits, values and knowledge which is similar to someone who is alive. So, by tomorrow my brain will have an entirely new dispositional and occurrent mental feature which will be very

\(^{116}\) Ibid., pp. 46-63.
\(^{117}\) Noonan, 1989: 211.
different from my present ones. Williams argue that, in the second case, I will still be scared of the torture even if I know that my memories will be altered totally. This shows that bodily continuity is a crucial element in personal identity; as faced with such situation, he says,

Fear, surely, would 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 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.118

However, Noonan argues that Williams’ argument is misleading and also there is nothing wrong with both the bodily continuity and psychological continuity accounts of the concept of personal identity. Noonan first took up the case where Williams give the example of A-body person and B-body person (in short, A and B) swapping their brain. Here, before the experiment starts, both A and B tells the experimenter the kind of memory they want to get rid of. The experiment is a success, as a result of which the memory swapping is complete after the experiment. When A and B were ask whether they still have the same troublesome memory, they answered that they do not know what they are being asked, as they still have all the troublesome memories they have had before the experiment. Noonan holds that, since A and B accepts the bodily continuity criterion of personal identity, they ought to say that they do not know what the experimenter is talking about. But in this case, as A has some kind of illusory unpleasant memories of B’s life and vice versa, the experiment is a complete success. However, Williams is able to give his argument some kind of plausibility only by mis-describing what A and B will say in the situations he puts them to. So, Noonan argues that, Williams’ argument for describing his first case as a case of body-switching is unconvincing.

Noonan took up the second case given by Williams, where a person who can control A informs A that he/she will be tortured tomorrow. But by the time of torture, all A’s memories will be altered so that A will not have any recollection of his/her memories which he/she has now. However, this will not be enough to prevent A from fearing the torture. Noonan argues that,

118 As quoted by Noonan, 1989: 214.
but this is no argument against someone who regards psychological continuity grounded in brain continuity as a sufficient condition for personal identity, since he can simply point out that the description given of what is to happen is general enough to cover both a situation in which the change described is brought about by a process of, say, brain-washing and hypnosis, which leaves your psychological state at least to some extent counter-factually dependent on your own past history, and a situation in which the change described is brought about by the removal of your brain and its replacement by another…So, if Williams’ argument is intended to cast doubt on the thesis that psychological continuity grounded in brain-continuity is a sufficient condition of personal identity…then it is an unconvincing objection to that thesis.119

As a result, Williams view cannot be considered a threat to the memory continuity view either. Here, we can say that even with all the problems it face from thinker like Noonan, Williams’ argument for the importance of both bodily and psychological continuity together for personal identity provides a new perspective in the debate on personal identity.

So, we can see that Williams account tries to bring together both psychological and bodily continuity as necessary and sufficient condition for personal identity. In spite of the challenge by Noonan, we can say that, Williams account is more acceptable then just bodily or only psychological continuity theory of personal identity. The main reason is that, persons are complex beings and we cannot simplify it by saying that only bodily or memory continuity is enough to give our identity. This is also one reason why there is no one acceptable theory on personal identity even after thinkers have been debating for centuries. Also, we can say that Williams’ account of personal identity, by giving more importance to bodily continuity, is a reductionist account. Here, psychological continuity is as important as bodily continuity, and both are needed to have an account of personal identity which will be more acceptable. And Williams’ account, by giving equal importance to both criterion of identity, can be considered as one of the more acceptable account of personal identity. That is, we can say that the dualist account is more acceptable than only bodily continuity or psychological continuity criterion alone. Because, when we consider a person’s identity we look at both the person’s bodily appearances and memory in deciding his/her identity. However, the problem with dualism is that it has

to answer the problems faced by both bodily continuity and psychological continuity criterion of personal identity too. Thus, the importance of discussing Williams’ account lies in the fact that it provides the middle path as compared to the other accounts of personal identity we have discussed.

**Conclusion**

We would like to say that it is important to be clear that personal identity is a matter of deep importance for every person. Each one of us cares about what our identity consists in. Being a social animal we are bound to care what our identity consists in, so that we can care about what matters. By looking at the history of personal identity, we can say that philosophers and thinkers have tried their best to provide the most satisfactory and acceptable answer to this quest by providing us with different criteria of personal identity. However, human beings are more dynamic and complex than other beings, and therefore none of these attempts have been able to provide us with a complete answer to what a person is. May be, there is no such complete answer to this query. However, P.F Strawson’s idea of a primitive concept of person is appealing as it does not give importance to the attributes of persons. Rather it is the “person” itself that is taken as the core, as the primitive, in what matters in personal identity. No doubt, this theory needs a lot of refining as there could be many objections to Strawson’s original position in *Individuals*, (1959). This could be taken up for further research and could be presented as an alternative claim to the existing theories of personal identity. Also, Strawson’s account is the only non-reductionist account that we deal with in the above discussion.

By looking at the psychological/memory continuity accounts, we could see the influence of Locke in many accounts. Locke’s account provides the foundation of more refined and sophisticated account of personal identity in contemporary debates, and hence the importance. As we already discussed, it is from defending Locke’s memory account of personal identity from Reid’s and Butler’s objections that Shoemaker’s account develop. So, with its entire problem we can still see the importance of Locke’s account of personal identity. Further, in the physical/bodily continuity theory, after mentioning the different type of theory included in this section, we mainly focus our discussion on the materialist account of personal identity. The physical/bodily continuity theory cannot be ignored because we judge
whether someone is the same as we know largely by appearance in our everyday life. In order to be consistent with his theory on the importance of memory, Shoemaker’s account stress on the importance of the “brain” for personal identity. That is, for Shoemaker an account of personal identity must be based on something materialistic in nature – the brain, to be specific. So, we can say that, both the psychological/memory theory and physical/bodily theory of personal identity is a reductionist account. And both ultimately rely on the brain, directly or indirectly, to support their theory of personal identity.

The ir-realist account of David Hume is important because it provide the foundation for “strong” reductionist account of personal identity propounded by thinker like Derek Parfit. It is called “strong” reductionist as oppose to reductionist theories propounded by Locke and Shoemaker, because Parfit’s account questioned the importance of personal identity itself. The ir-realist account holds that there is no one thing that endures, but a succession of things/events happen so quickly that we imagine them to be enduring things. So, ultimately the ir-realist account can also be considered as a reductionist account in which personal identity is nothing but our imagination. Bernard Williams account tries to show the importance of both bodily and psychological continuity for personal identity. Here, it is important to point out that Williams’ account is not included in the physical/bodily continuity account because of an important reason. Even though Williams give more importance to bodily continuity, the importance of psychological continuity is not ignored, which is generally not the case in physical/bodily continuity accounts. To have an account of personal identity in which both bodily and psychological continuity are together provides new perspectives to the existing debates. And Williams’ account can be considered as the first step towards that goal. There is no doubt that a lot of work and discussions will be needed before we can have an account of personal identity which is acceptable to all. But it will be an interesting journey if we could consider Williams’ account as one possible way to reach that goal. Also, Williams account can also be considered as a reductionist account.

We can further say that the above discussed accounts of personal identity provides the groundwork to what the alternative theory will have to avoid and give importance to, when it is presented. Also, from the above discussions we can say that the debates on what constitute personal identity can still have different dimensions
and perspectives. However, we would like to mention that the above views are by no means exhaustive; there are many slightly different views which are not discussed here. We have discussed only those views which are broadly distinguished and most discussed. Our aim in putting these theories together is to have a broad overview of the metaphysical debates on persons put forth by philosophers through centuries of providing for or against a standpoint. So that we can move forward and connect these views with the ethical notion of moral responsibility. To look deeper into how these two notions connect and help shape each other.

As we discussed the various important standpoints on the importance of personal identity, we will now go on to discuss one of the most important contemporary thinkers – Derek Parfit – in the next chapter. His views provide a paradigm shift on the debate on personal identity, and even though his views are considered radical by many thinkers, he is important as he is the first thinker to connect personal identity with value theory extensively. Even though his views are hard to accept in its totality, we will look into details how he put forth convincing arguments in support of his standpoints. Also, Parfit’s account of personal identity is considered as a strong reductionist account. This is because his view is in somehow a culmination of all the above reductionist accounts we have discussed. In the sense that, the tradition of reductionism reach a high point in Parfit’s standpoint. However, it is difficult to accept his view because Parfit went a step further from the other reductionist and holds that “personal identity does not matter”, but “what matter is survival in any form”. We will see the detail discussion in the next chapter.