

This covers some of what we may have talked about in discussion section, but is not necessarily a replacement for attendance and participation in discussion section.

Name and Section: \_\_\_\_\_.

## Identity Basics

1. Define the following terms:

(a) Qualitative Identity: \_\_\_\_\_.

(b) Quantitative (Numeric) Identity: \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Give an example of two things that are qualitatively—but not numerically—identical, and explain why.

3. Give an example of two things that are numerically identical, and explain why.

There are two general “laws” that relate qualitative and numeric identity that are worth knowing about: the Indiscernibility of Identicals and The Identity of Indiscernibles.

The Indiscernibility of Identicals says that for any two things, if they are numerically identical, then they are also qualitatively identical. This is relatively uncontroversial.

The Identity of Indiscernibles says the reverse: for any two things, if they are qualitatively identical, then they are also numerically identical. This is controversial!

## Personal Identity

### Pre-Exercise Check

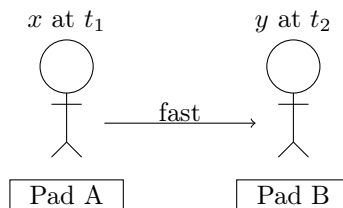
Before we get to particular cases, what do you think about the sufficiency/necessity of psychological and biological continuity? Please answer with what you actually think.

4. Is psychological continuity sufficient for personal identity?  Yes.  No.
5. Is psychological continuity necessary for personal identity?  Yes.  No.
6. Is biological continuity sufficient for personal identity?  Yes.  No.
7. Is biological continuity necessary for personal identity?  Yes.  No.

What follows are four separate cases. In each case, think about it and decide whether you think that  $x$  at  $t_1$  is the same person as  $y$  at  $t_2$ , and why you think that. Further, also consider whether you think that  $x$  dies at any point in the case described.

### Case 1

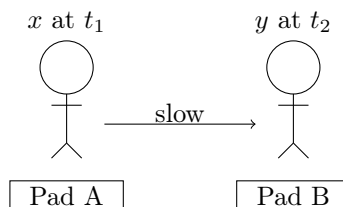
Imagine that  $x$  at  $t_1$  stands on a transporter pad (much like the kind you might be familiar with from Star Trek). Whatever it is that's on transporter pad B is  $y$  at  $t_2$ . This transporter moves all of  $x$ 's atoms from transporter pad A to transporter pad B. All of  $y$ 's atoms are numerically identical to  $x$ 's atoms; further, all of  $y$ 's atoms are in exactly the same configuration after the transportation as  $x$ 's were before. The whole process takes under one tenth of a second. Suppose that  $y$  is psychologically continuous with  $x$ .



8. Answer the following for case 1:
  - (a) Is  $x$  at  $t_1$  the same person as  $y$  at  $t_2$ ?  Yes.  No.
  - (b) Does  $x$  die in the case described?  Yes.  No.

### Case 2

This case is exactly like case 1, except for one difference. In this case, the transporter stores all of  $x$ 's atoms in a tank for five years before assembling  $y$  at  $t_2$  on pad B. Suppose that  $y$  is psychologically continuous with  $x$ .

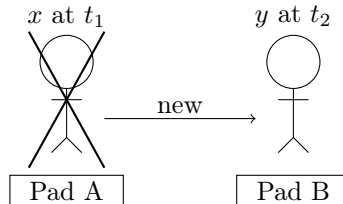


9. Answer the following for case 2:
  - (a) Is  $x$  at  $t_1$  the same person as  $y$  at  $t_2$ ?  Yes.  No.
  - (b) Does  $x$  die in the case described?  Yes.  No.

The cases continue on the next page.

**Case 3**

Imagine that  $x$  at  $t_1$  stands on a transporter pad (much like the kind you might be familiar with from Star Trek). This transporter is different from the one in cases 1 and 2. This transporter scans and records the state of all of  $x$ 's atoms at  $t_1$ . It then takes *new* matter and assembles  $y$  at  $t_2$  on pad B. All of  $y$ 's atoms at  $t_2$  are in exactly the same configuration as  $x$ 's were at  $t_1$ . However, the instant immediately before the transporter assembles  $y$  at  $t_2$ , it destroys  $x$ . The whole process takes under one tenth of a second. Suppose that  $y$  is psychologically continuous with  $x$ .

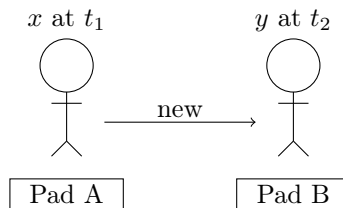


10. Answer the following for case 3:

- (a) Is  $x$  at  $t_1$  the same person as  $y$  at  $t_2$ ?  Yes.  No.  
 (b) Does  $x$  die in the case described?  Yes.  No.

**Case 4**

This case is exactly like case 3, except for one difference. In this case,  $x$  at  $t_1$  is not destroyed.



11. Answer the following for case 4:

- (a) Is  $x$  at  $t_1$  the same person as  $y$  at  $t_2$ ?  Yes.  No.  
 (b) Does  $x$  die in the case described?  Yes.  No.

**Post-Exercise Check**

Now that you've thought about these four cases, what do you think about the sufficiency/necessity of psychological and biological continuity? Please answer with what you actually think.

12. Is psychological continuity sufficient for personal identity?  Yes.  No.  
 13. Is psychological continuity necessary for personal identity?  Yes.  No.  
 14. Is biological continuity sufficient for personal identity?  Yes.  No.  
 15. Is biological continuity necessary for personal identity?  Yes.  No.

For a debrief on these exercises, go to the next page.

## Debrief

What are these cases meant to show you? Well, a few things.

First, if you think that psychological continuity *is sufficient* for personal identity, then you have to answer ‘yes’ to (a) in all four cases. If you answered ‘no’ even once, then this would seem to reveal that you must think that psychological continuity *is not sufficient* for personal identity.

Second, if you think that biological continuity *is necessary* for personal identity, then you have to answer ‘no’ to (a) in all four cases (excepting, perhaps, case 1). If you answered ‘yes’ even once, then this would seem to reveal that you must think that biological continuity *is not necessary* for personal identity.

Third, if for any particular case you answered ‘yes’ to both (a) and (b), then this would seem to reveal that you think that people can survive their deaths (or, in other words, come back to life after having died). If you think that people can’t come back to life after having died, then for any case where you answered ‘yes’ to (b), you must also answer ‘no’ to (a).

Finally, here’s some general patterns I’ve seen in past responses from students.

- Many students answer ‘yes’ to (a) in cases 1 and 2, but quickly change to ‘no’ to (a) in cases 3 and 4.
- Very few students answer only ‘yes’ or only ‘no’ to (a) in all four cases.
- Many students answer ‘no’ to (b) in case 1, but ‘yes’ to (b) in case 2.
- Conversely, many students answer ‘yes’ to (b) in case 3, but ‘no’ to (b) in case 4.

Many students start out this activity thinking that psychological continuity is sufficient for personal identity, but their answers seem to show that they may actually think otherwise!

It is worth reflecting on what your initial answers were, what your answers in each case were, and what your final answers were afterward. Hopefully you found these cases interesting, and that they helped you get a better handle on the philosophical problem we’re trying to grapple with here.