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When someone undergoes a radical change it is common to say that she has "become a different person." This claim is usually meant figuratively and does not imply that the original person has actually gone out of existence. It is striking nevertheless that such cases are described in terms of identity, and although it is unwise to put too much weight on turns of phrase it is worth thinking about what talk of identity signifies here. Undoubtedly in some instances it is nothing more than a slightly exaggerated way of saying that the differences found within the life of a single person are of a kind or magnitude that usually occurs only between two distinct people. But sometimes it seems to imply more, suggesting a meaningful parallel between identity in this figurative sense and literal, numerical identity. This is an intriguing possibility, since we tend to think that identity in the more figurative sense is *malleable* – that it can be molded and changed by our actions and attitudes. We do not tend to think this about numerical identity, which is taken to be a metaphysical fact independent of what we think and do. If there are structural parallels between figurative and numerical identity, perhaps literal identity is more malleable than we think.

This chapter explores this possibility and sketches an account of literal identity on which it is malleable to at least some degree. The first section identifies a subgroup of figurative cases of identity change in which the notion of "identity" at issue seems especially closely related to literal identity and examines the kind of malleability "identity" in this sense possesses. The next section examines two major approaches to questions of numerical identity – biological views and psychological views – showing that on neither is identity

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malleable. The final section sketches an alternative account according to which literal identity is, to some degree, malleable.

FIGURATIVE IDENTITY AND SURVIVAL

There are many different kinds of cases in which we might say that someone has become a different person. We might say this, for instance, of an aimless friend who becomes energized and purposeful after starting a new job, or of the shy classmate from high school who has dramatically changed his appearance and become outgoing and confident. We might also say it of someone who has been through a trauma and become fearful and edgy or of the free spirit who becomes conservative and careworn as she ages.

The heterogeneous group of circumstances that might be described in terms of a change in identity could be divided up in many different ways. One important division is between cases in which it is clear the locution is meant only to emphasize change and cases which, though still cases in which the person literally survives, are in some important sense akin to ceasing to exist. The first few cases described above are examples of the former kind. I am hardly going to say that a friend who has been invigorated and found new purpose has not survived the transition; it is much more natural to say that she has finally come into her own. And if the shy classmate gets contact lenses, goes to the gym, and takes classes to improve his interpersonal style I will more likely say that he has blossomed than that he did not make it through the transition from high school to adulthood. This kind of "becoming a new person," call it "survival-maintaining" change, is a kind of change one sticks around to enjoy or celebrate, not one that results in one's absence. This point is made (almost) explicit in Gloria Gaynor's 1978 disco hit in which she explains to her ex-lover that she is "not that chained-up little person still in love with [him]," while repeatedly asserting the continuation of that person with the title line: "I will survive."

The other cases (call them "survival-threatening" change) are quite different in this respect. Consider a famous fictional example from Derek Parfit's *Reasons and Persons*. Parfit imagines a nineteenth-century Russian who is deeply sympathetic to the peasants. He knows that he will inherit a great deal of land when he gets

older, and fears that wealth will corrupt him. He therefore draws up a document transferring his inheritance, when he receives it, to the peasants. This document can be revoked only with his wife's permission, which he tells her never to give, explaining "I regard my ideals as essential to me. If I lose these ideals, I want you to think that I cease to exist. I want you to regard your husband then, not as me, the man who asks you for this promise, but only as his corrupted later self" (Parfit 1984: 327). A real and disturbing example of this kind of case is recounted in a recent article in the *National Post* which includes an interview with the family of a Canadian veteran who committed suicide. "Jamie never came home," the veteran's father says. "A different person came back from Afghanistan" (O'Connor 2011).

There are, of course, many other kinds of cases frequently described as changes of identity that fall at various points on a spectrum between these two. Here, however, we will focus just on the sorts of cases described above, asking what distinguishes them, making the language of failure to survive apply in one kind of case but not the other. In the abstract it might seem that the answer would lie in the degree or rapidity of change. Changes that are very extreme and happen quickly, we might think, seem like replacement of one person with another, while changes that are gradual and more modest seem to preserve the individual. This is not borne out by the examples. There is no reason to think, for instance, that the change in Parfit's Russian noble is any more rapid or extreme than that in the shy schoolmate; it might be less so.

The examples may seem to suggest another possibility. Perhaps the difference is nothing more than whether we perceive the change undergone as positive or negative. Becoming more confident and happy makes life better, and in changes of this kind we are unlikely to think about transformation in terms of someone ceasing to exist. Becoming greedy and corrupt or depressed and fearful are negative changes that make life worse, and it is here that observations about failing to survive seem more at home. This makes a good deal of sense. Where there is negative change there is a kind of mourning for a way of life that has been lost – something one values and cannot recover – while in the case of positive change there is something gained.

This analysis requires some refinement, however. As it happens, there are cases in which positive change can also be seen as survival-threatening. Psychiatrist Peter Kramer, for instance, reports a patient whose condition improved markedly on Prozac. While in some clear sense he undoubtedly felt better on the drug he did not wish to continue taking it because he "did not feel like himself" (Kramer 1993: 290–91). Similar concerns have been raised with respect to the use of Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) as a treatment for depression. Some patients who respond very well and experience alleviation of symptoms also report that they find the changes unsettling and disturbing, as if they have been replaced by someone else (e.g. Economist 2005). In these cases there is obviously something more or different going on; these patients perceive the changes they undergo as survival-threatening even though they do not deny that they are in some sense positive. The life they lead to is better, but it is somehow not *their* lives which have improved.¹

One diagnosis of these kinds of cases would point to differences concerning the degree of control a person has over the changes he undergoes. Radical change that results from one's own efforts, we might suggest, amounts to transformation of an existing self, while change that results from manipulations like medication or brain stimulation looks like replacement of the self. Again there is undoubtedly something right in this analysis, but we need to think more carefully about the relevant notion of "control." In some sense the person who takes an antidepressant, or gives informed consent for the placement of electrodes in DBS is just as much in control of change as someone who embarks on a course of self-improvement via behavioral therapy, and more in control than the person who falls into the job that changes her outlook on life. In fact, Kramer's patient who is made uncomfortable by his transformation on Prozac is in the minority. Many of his patients, even those who have been depressed for most of their lives, describe the changes brought on by the drug by saying that for the first time they are "truly themselves," and several report a feeling of being in control that was previously absent (e.g. Kramer 1993: 10).

Rather than a difference in degree of control per se the relevant difference between survival-maintaining and survival-threatening change seems to depend upon whether the individual who undergoes

a transformation feels alienated from the change or identifies with it. It is alienation that makes a change feel like replacement, and identification that makes it feel instead like a kind of actualization. Of course, a person is more likely to feel alienated from a change of which she disapproves or which she feels she does not control. As we have seen, however, there are exceptions. A person can feel alienated from a change she played some role in bringing about or judges as objectively positive (e.g. the uncomfortable reactions to Prozac and DBS), or identify with one that is a matter of pure serendipity (e.g. falling into a life-changing job).

To develop this proposal fully it would of course be necessary to say something more about identification and alienation, which are notoriously difficult notions to pin down. This is a project well beyond the scope of the current discussion. As a rough approximation we can say that identification consists in being able to see how the person before and after the change can both be you. This is what is missing for Parft's Russian, who states quite clearly that he cannot imagine that a person who wanted to hold on to aristocratic wealth and ways could be the same person as him. It is presumably also true for the traumatized soldier, who simply cannot recognize the carefree young man who used to enjoy watching sports with his father as himself. These are cases of alienation. The cases we have described as survival-maintaining are quite different in this regard. Here the fact that the person sees the intelligibility of being the same person on both sides of the change is demonstrated in the kind of satisfaction this kind of change often entails. This is what the language of actualization implies. The shy or timid person experiences the confidence he develops as having been dormant within him, and patients comfortable with the dramatic changes brought about by Prozac presumably see their newfound happy selves as the selves they were all along, selves whose expression was inhibited by depression.

It may seem that "identification" and "alienation" so described are merely new names for the distinction with which we started. What we really need to know, it might be argued, is what it is that makes identification possible in some cases but not others. This misses the point. The suggestion being made here is that attitudes of identification and alienation play a role in *constituting* the outcome of these changes, partly determining matters of identity and survival in this

figurative sense. For this to be plausible, it is necessary to understand that identification and alienation should not be understood as isolated judgments about one's identity. Instead these terms refer to deeply held attitudes towards one's past or future with profound and far-reaching psychological and behavioral implications.

Whether someone understands herself as having survived some vicissitude will determine whether she experiences self-regarding emotions with respect to particular past actions. It will also affect her understanding of what she is responsible for, and of what she has reason to do, and condition her interaction with others. It is not just that a traumatized veteran, for instance, *feels* like a different person. Because he feels this way he is cut off from his past life in very tangible ways. He is no longer able to do the same things he did before, or relate to his parents and wife and friends as the son and husband and buddy who left them. He does not see any reason to take up the projects or pursue the goals that were central to life before deployment. The life lived by the carefree young man is not livable by him. And these facts in turn feed the feeling of alienation in a dynamic way that drives a real wedge between his past life and his present. The kind of survival to which this kind of identification contributes is thus not only, or even primarily, an internal state. It is an ongoing form of interaction with the world which is continuous over time where there is identification and which breaks radically where there is alienation. Alienation, as understood here, prevents the person who experiences it from picking up the thread of a life.²

This analysis reveals another important point. Up until now I have not discriminated between judgments of figurative identity and survival as they are made in the first-, second- or third-person. Identification and alienation are first-personal attitudes. The recognition that these attitudes are intrinsically connected with behavioral and interactive changes helps us to see how they can be the basis of judgments about identity and survival from the outside as well. The changes in the conduct of life that are a part of alienation in most cases will lead also to external judgments of identity change. It must be acknowledged, however, that internal and external perspectives do sometimes diverge. I may claim I haven't changed while my friend insists I've become a different person and vice versa, and we need to know what to say about identity in these circumstances. Here it is important to underscore that

the relevant form of survival is interactive and not just internal. This means that the identity judgment of the individual who has changed is not privileged or incorrigible. It also means that there are methods for resolving disagreements about identity change – facts that can be marshaled in favor of one claim or another. If I say I am still the same person and my friend disagrees, I can point to the ways in which what I am doing now represents a continuation of what I did before and can be seen as an expression of dormant tendencies. My friend, meanwhile, can point to ways in which I have radically broken from my past. In *A Christmas Carol*, for instance, Scrooge's young fiancée tells him he is not the man who promised to marry her. When Scrooge denies he has changed toward her she points out the ways in which his ambition has in fact caused him to do so, and he comes to recognize that she is right (Dickens 1984: 71–72).³ Conversely, Parfit's Russian may convince his wife to revoke the transfer of property by pointing to all the ways in which, although he has changed his mind on this, he remains the same person.

The details of these kinds of negotiations are extremely complicated, and we cannot explore them any further here. This brief discussion has, however, revealed that there is a meaningful sense in which, at least in these figurative cases, identity can be malleable. It is not merely the degree or nature of change that determines my identity and survival. My own attitudes of identification or alienation, in interaction with others' attitudes and actions, determine whether my life after some vicissitude is continuous with the earlier life in the relevant sense. Whether I survive this change thus depends on whether I and others believe that I have.

This conclusion may seem credible for figurative notions of identity and survival, but attitude, it would seem, cannot impact *literal* survival in this way. I turn next to an exploration of whether this is really so, beginning with a discussion of two approaches that have dominated much of the philosophical discussion – the psychological approach and the bodily or biological approach.

THEORIES OF NUMERICAL IDENTITY

As the names suggest, psychological accounts claim that personal identity should be defined in terms of psychological connections

and biological accounts that it should be defined in physiological or biological terms.

Current psychological views are in many ways descendants of John Locke's account. Locke says that to find the identity criteria for any object we need first to know what kind of object it is. A person, he says, is "a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places" (Locke 1975: 335). And also, famously, that "person" is "a Forensic Term appropriating Actions and their Merit, and so belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law, and Happiness and Misery" (Locke 1975: 346). A person, for Locke, is a self-conscious subject who, in virtue of its self-consciousness, is capable of prudential reasoning and moral agency. In ordinary life, Locke acknowledges, sameness of person and of "man" (human) coincide. If they were to come apart, however, we would judge that the *person* goes where the psychological life goes, and does not stay with the body.

He offers a hypothetical case to make this point. We are to imagine that the consciousness of a prince comes to enter the body of a cobbler, replacing the cobbler's own consciousness. Everyone would judge, Locke says, that the person with the prince's consciousness and the cobbler's body would be responsible for what the prince had done before and not for what the cobbler had. We can add that anticipating the switch the prince would have reason to ensure that the individual with the cobbler's body and his consciousness would have access to the wealth and power of the kingdom. It would also be this individual who would be in a position to take up the prince's relationships with the king, queen, and princess. Locke therefore concludes that it is sameness of consciousness and not of substance, either material (the body) or immaterial (the soul), that constitutes personal identity. Similar stories are ubiquitous in popular culture – for instance the film *Precky Friday* depicts the consciousness of a mother and daughter switching bodies for a day. We are clearly meant to understand this as a case where the mother and daughter themselves switch bodies, each following her consciousness to the body of the other, and this is how most people automatically interpret it.

Present-day psychological theorists offer similar forms of argument. Derek Parfit, for instance, presents us with the much-

discussed case of Teletransportation, in which a person's brain and body are destroyed and a molecule-for-molecule replica built on another planet (Parfit 1984: 199–200). The assumption is that exact duplication of the brain will exactly duplicate psychological life. The person who steps out of the transporter station on the distant planet will thus experience a memory of stepping into the booth on earth and all that went before. This case, like those described above, is meant to support the psychological approach, and we are to conclude that Teletransportation is a way to travel quickly to distant places – that when I am teleported the person who emerges at the other end will be me. A fairly significant number of those sympathetic to the psychological approach actually do not have this intuition, however, and view Teletransportation as death followed by replacement with a replica. These theorists hold that psychological continuity constitutes personal identity only if it is generated by the continued functioning of the same brain.

The current major competitor to the psychological approach is the bodily or biological approach. The general idea here is that persons are fundamentally human animals, and personal identity must be defined in terms of the identity of an individual organism. This approach has always had adherents, and has enjoyed a recent resurgence of popularity due to the development of updated biological accounts, also known as “animalist” views.⁴ Animalists argue that the Lockean notion of personhood does not really give us an account of what an entity is. To be a Lockean person is not to be a particular kind of thing, but rather to be a thing that possesses capacities for self-conscious reflection, prudential reasoning, and moral agency. We still need to answer the question of *what* it is that has those capacities, the animalist argues. Is it, for instance, a human? A chimp? A cyborg? The persons we know are *human* persons – humans that have the capacities of personhood. The human exists before gaining these capacities (as a fetus or infant) and can continue to exist after losing them (in, for instance, a vegetative state).

The key claim is that no entity literally comes into existence when a human (or other entity) gains the capacity for reflective self-consciousness, prudence, or agency, and no entity goes out of existence when a human (or other entity) loses these capacities. Moreover, when the capacities of personhood are present in human persons there are not two distinct entities, a person and a human animal,

both thinking the same thoughts and taking the same actions at the same time. There is instead a single being that has the ability to think those kinds of thoughts and take those kinds of actions. The intuitions generated by cases like that of the prince and the cobbler are not intuitions about the numerical identity of an entity, animalists argue, but instead about which attributes of an entity we find especially salient or important.

The debate between psychological theorists and animalists is vigorous and ongoing and we will not resolve it here. We do, however, have enough information to see that each denies that one's self-understanding might play a role in determining facts about numerical identity or survival. Consider first the biological approach. On this view it is explicit that identity is a metaphysical/biological fact that is independent of what we think about it. It might seem that things are different with the psychological view, since our attitudes towards our survival are part of our overall psychological lives and so can contribute to psychological continuity or lack thereof. If we look at the view as it is usually presented, however, there is no room for a person's judgments or attitudes to play a role in determining her identity. To see this it is necessary to have a slightly more detailed picture of the psychological approach. According to this approach what makes a person at time t_2 the same person as someone at earlier time t_1 is that there is “psychological continuity” between the two times. The relevant kind of psychological continuity is typically defined in terms of overlapping chains of individual psychological connections.⁵ The relevant connections are those that hold between a memory and the experience of which it is a memory, between an intention and the action that carries it out, and between the different moments of a continuing belief, value, or desire. When there is a large enough number of connections between each successive moment between t_1 and t_2 then, according to the psychological view, the person at t_2 is the same person as the person at t_1 .⁶

Whether psychological connections of this sort are or are not present seems to be a fact that is independent of our judgments or attitudes. Of course, judgments and attitudes are *among* our psychological states, and so in that sense relevant to our continuation. If I am now an adherent of the biological account of identity, for instance, and become an adherent of the psychological approach, there is one fewer psychological connection over time than there

would be if I had maintained my belief in the biological view. But views about my identity or survival have no special status, and do not count more toward creating identity-constituting psychological continuity than any other psychological state. Think, for instance, of Teletransportation as Parfit describes it. To determine whether the person who steps out of the teleporter is the same as the person who stepped in on earth we look at the psychological states and count how many are in common. By presumption they all are, including whatever attitudes I might have about whether Teletransportation will preserve my identity. This is all we need to know to determine that I am the same person. The question of *which* view I hold on this topic is unimportant.

On neither of these two major views of personal identity is it possible for our judgments or attitudes about whether someone survives some vicissitude to make a difference to whether she in fact does. This is not a very surprising result; few would expect a metaphysical fact of this sort to depend upon our judgments. In the next section, however, I will suggest that if we take seriously the idea that there are parallels between figurative claims of survival-threatening loss of identity and literal failures to survive we will find an account of our literal identity according to which something like identification does play a role.

LITERAL SURVIVAL AND SELF-UNDERSTANDING

In the first section we saw that identification played a role in figurative survival because of the way it impacts psychological life, behavior, and interactions with others. I suggest that there is a more basic kind of identification that impacts behavior and interactions at a more fundamental level and arguably plays a role in determining facts about literal survival. Both the proposal and the reasons for accepting it are complex and contentious, and I can do no more here than offer a brief overview.

The alienation involved in cases of survival-threatening change in the first section was profound but not complete. While those experiencing such alienation judged themselves to be "a different person" in terms of goals, dreams, aspirations, values, and temperament, they also acknowledged themselves to be the same person in many other respects. None of these individuals suggested that they

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were in *no* sense continuous with their past selves, and their situations are so poignant precisely because of their acknowledgment that in some sense they are. The veteran who "never came home" recognized the parents of the person who went to war as *his* parents and that person's wife as *his* wife. He was just unable to interact with them as the person he had been. And Parfit's Russian knows that that future landowner, however different politically, will be the one to collect his inheritance. Moreover, he instructs his wife on what to do because she will be the wife of that future person. There is thus recognition of literal continuation in these cases, and this has practical consequences.

My proposal is that there can be a more fundamental alienation that involves a denial of literal identity as well, and that this has implications sufficiently extreme that in the right circumstances it can impact literal survival. The break in a human life is going to be much more dramatic and much more complete when a person believes that he is literally a different person from some earlier person than if he believes only that he differs in fundamental values, desires, commitment, and temperament. I do not expect much disagreement with the claim that failure to recognize oneself as in any sense the person who previously inhabited one's body would constitute a terrible disruption in the flow of a life. The claim that this situation involves a change in literal or numerical identity brought on by alienation is likely to be far more controversial, however. If the man we know as John Smith suddenly insists that he is not John Smith at all, but is instead Napoleon or Brad Pitt, and tries to live Napoleon's or Brad Pitt's life, Smith's life will indeed be a mess. We will not conclude, however, that John Smith has died and been replaced, in his body, by Napoleon or Brad Pitt. We will conclude that John Smith has had a psychotic break and needs treatment.

All this shows, however, is that this profound kind of alienation does not *always* lead to change in literal identity; it does not show that it cannot do so in the right circumstances. Understanding what these circumstances are brings us back to the observations made at the end of the first section; that it is not a person's own attitude toward survival alone that is implicated in its malleability, but also the attitudes of others, which interact dynamically with her own. In our world it is simply taken for granted that the literal limits of a single person coincide with the limits of a single human animal.

If we know that there is a single animal we assume that there is a single person; the question of whether this is the same person in a literal sense just does not arise. This is not an arbitrary choice about how to construct identity or a matter of mere convention. There are immense pressures, evolutionary, biological, and social, for thinking about persons in this way, and such thinking is therefore woven into the whole fabric of our lives. The psychotic who claims he is Brad Pitt and not John Smith is in fact John Smith with a shattered self-concept not simply because others think he is, but because the way our social infrastructure is set up he cannot live any life but John Smith's, and certainly cannot pick up the thread of Brad Pitt's life. He will thus live John Smith's fractured life and remain John Smith.

The fact that we never question the one body/one person principle in everyday life does not, however, imply that we cannot imagine circumstances in which it would be reasonable to do so. We have, in fact, already imagined such circumstances in the case of Teletransportation, where the principle is potentially violated not by the existence of more than one person in a single human body, but by the existence of a single person inhabiting different human bodies at different times. As we saw earlier, there is no consensus about whether the traveler who emerges from the Teletransportation booth on a distant planet is or is not the same person who entered on earth, and this makes the question of identity a real one. Let's explore this case a bit further. It is natural at first to presume that there is a fact of the matter about what happens in Teletransportation, even if we disagree about what it is. Either Teletransportation preserves identity or it does not. Parfit, however, suggests a third alternative; that the question of identity here is an "empty" one (Parfit 1984: 213). An empty question is one that we cannot answer because there is no determinate answer to be had. His example is the identity of a club. Suppose at some point in a club's history most members cease to attend but a few continue meeting. They convene in a different location, change the procedures a bit, add new members, and take up new topics. We might ask if the current club is the same as the original or whether the original club has disbanded and some of its members started a new and distinct club. We may not be able to give a definitive answer to this question — not because there is something we do not know, Parfit says, but because the question is an empty

one. Affirming and denying that the current club is the same as the original are just two different ways of describing the same state of affairs. What we are arguing about is word choice, not a deep metaphysical fact. Ultimately, Parfit says, questions of personal identity are also empty in these tricky cases. We know everything that happens in Teletransportation, and it is just a matter of how we choose to describe it.

I am suggesting a fourth possibility, that the question of identity in this case is neither settled in advance nor necessarily indeterminate. Rather it is underdetermined by the details we have been given. Teletransportation might result in the survival of the traveler from earth or it might not, and the difference, on the view I am exploring, depends partly on how the traveler himself and others understand the impact of Teletransportation on survival. This is a complicated and counterintuitive claim, so let's unpack it a bit. Start by focusing on the traveler. I mentioned earlier that psychological theorists do not see a meaningful distinction between cases where travelers believe Teletransportation involves survival and cases where they do not. For the traveler, however, there will be a world of difference. If someone takes it for granted that Teletransportation is an efficient way of traveling the person who walks out of the terminus booth will have the same attitude toward the person who entered on earth as we have to our past selves in everyday life, and so will pick up the thread of the earlier life without a thought. Things will be quite different for someone who believes that Teletransportation is death (indeed it is hard to see why someone who thinks this would agree to be teleported). In this case the person who steps out of the booth will believe himself to be newly minted. He will view the beliefs, desires, and plans he experiences as someone else's and the traveler's friends and relations as people he has never met but for whom he has artificially been given strong emotions. We would not expect someone in this situation to simply pick up the thread of the old life, and it is somewhat difficult to imagine what he would do.

One reason it is difficult to fill in the details here is that we do not know how people more generally think about Teletransportation in the imagined world where it exists. If it is broadly taken for granted that this is a means of travel, an individual's protestations that he is a brand new person when he steps out of the transporter will be

treated as a kind of psychosis, and he will be in the same situation as John Smith. But things will be quite different if everybody in this world takes it for granted that Teletransportation is death and replacement by a replica. In such a world no one would see the person stepping out the booth as the person who went in or treat him as the same person. In this case, I suggest, the social infrastructure would differ at a fundamental level and a whole new life would indeed begin for the person stepping out of the booth on the distant planet. In this society, a person who insisted that he was the same person as the earth traveler would be perceived as psychotic, misled by the fact that he has been created with memory implants.

The space of possibilities here is actually quite vast. To oversimplify a bit, however, the position is that in a world in which Teletransportation is viewed as a perfectly ordinary means of travel, the traveler whose attitudes are in synch with those of his society will survive the trip; in a world where Teletransportation is viewed as a form of replacement, a traveler whose views are in synch with those of his society will not survive. Cases where there is divergence of views, either within the society or between the society and the traveler, require detailed individual analysis.

To many, the fact that this view makes numerical identity dependent on our judgments will make it a nonstarter. What I have been discussing, they might argue, is a more fundamental figurative notion of identity, but the literal fact of whether a single object is involved in Teletransportation cannot be constituted by whether we think that it is. This kind of objection goes directly to foundational questions of metaphysics which will certainly not be resolved here. I conclude, however, with two thoughts which might make the idea more palatable. First, it is important to appreciate just how different it will really be for a traveler in a world where she and everyone else see Teletransportation as travel and a world in which they see it as death. The entire organization of human life will be different, and in a very robust way. This is not something that a society could simply decide to change its mind about on a whim; judgments of identity sit at the very core of almost everything we do. Second, lest it seem that literal identity cannot possibly consist in the continuity of a life because a continuous life requires that there first be a continuous entity to live it, we should remember that organisms

provide an example of a case in which an entity and its life coincide, neither predating the other.

There are obviously many questions left to be answered and challenges to be met before this proposal can be fully understood, let alone defended. Among other tasks, we will need to answer some of the objections animalists raise to the psychological approach, which seem on the surface to apply also to this view, and speak to worries that the view presupposes an unacceptably conventionalist view of our survival, which are sure to arise. It does, however, offer the intriguing possibility that there are more parallels between figurative and literal identity claims than are immediately evident, and that identity may be more malleable than we thought.

NOTES

- 1 A slight variation on some of our own positive cases might give a similar result. The woman freed from a destructive relationship, for instance, might tell the ex-lover that the girl he knew before is gone.
- 2 Or, when experienced in anticipation (as with Parfit's Russian), leads to the anticipation of such a break.
- 3 The exchange here is a remarkable example of this phenomenon and well worth reading.
- 4 See, e.g., Snowdon 1990; van Inwagen 1990; Olson 1997.
- 5 With perhaps, as mentioned earlier, a requirement about how connections are caused, as well as a few other stipulations that we can safely ignore here.
- 6 Again, some views make additional stipulations.