

## Derek Parfit (born 1942)

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### PERSONAL IDENTITY

from *Reasons and Persons*

I enter the Teletransporter. I have been to Mars before, but only by the old method, a spaceship journey taking several weeks. This machine will send me at the speed of light. I merely have to press the green button. Like others, I am nervous. Will it work? I remind myself what I have been told to expect. When I press the button, I shall lose consciousness, and then wake up at what seems a moment later. In fact I shall have been unconscious for about an hour. The Scanner here on Earth will destroy my brain and body, while recording the exact states of all of my cells. It will then transmit this information by radio. Traveling at the speed of light, the message will take three minutes to reach the Replicator on Mars. This will then create, out of new matter, a brain and body exactly like mine. It will be in this body that I shall wake up.

Though I believe that this is what will happen, I still hesitate. But then I remember seeing my wife grin when, at breakfast today, I revealed my nervousness. As she reminded me, she has often been teletransported, and there is nothing wrong with her. I press the button. As predicted, I lose and seem at once to regain consciousness, but in a different cubicle. Examining my new body, I find no change at all. Even the cut on my upper lip, from this morning's shave, is still there.

Several years pass, during which I am often Teletransported. I am now back in the cubicle, ready for another trip to Mars. But this time, when I press the green button, I do not lose consciousness. There is a whirring sound, then silence. I leave the cubicle, and say to the attendant: "It's not working. What did I do wrong?"

"It's working," he replies, handing me a printed card. This reads: "The New Scanner records your blueprint without destroying your brain and body. We hope that you will welcome the opportunities which this technical advance offers."

The attendant tells me that I am one of the first people to use the New Scanner. He adds that, if I stay for an hour, I can use the Intercom to see and talk to myself on Mars.

"Wait a minute," I reply. "If I'm here I can't also be on Mars." Someone politely coughs, a white-coated man who asks to speak to me in private. We go to his office, where he tells me to sit down, and pauses. Then he says, "I'm afraid that we're having problems with the New Scanner. It records your blueprint just as accurately, as you will see when you talk to yourself on Mars. But it seems to be damaging the cardiac systems which it scans. Judging from the results so far, though you will be quite healthy on Mars, here on Earth you must expect cardiac failure within the next few days..."

## Simple Teletransportation and the Branch-Line Case

Simple Teletransportation, as just described, is a common feature in science fiction. And it is believed by some readers of this fiction merely to be the fastest way of traveling. They believe that my Replica *would* be me. Other science fiction readers, and some of the characters in this fiction, take a different view. They believe that when I press the green button, I die. My Replica is *someone else*, who has been made to be exactly like me.

This second view seems to be supported by the end of my story. The New Scanner does not destroy my brain and body. Besides gathering the information, it merely damages my heart. While I am in the cubicle, with the green button pressed, nothing seems to happen. I walk out, and learn that in a few days I shall die. I later talk, by two-way television, to my Replica on Mars. Let us continue the story. Since my Replica knows that I am about to die, he tries to console me with the same thoughts with which I recently tried to console a dying friend. It is sad to learn, on the receiving end, how unconsoling these thoughts are. My Replica then assures me that he will take up my life where I leave off. He loves my wife, and together they will care for my children. And he will finish the book that I am writing. Besides having all of my drafts, he has all of my intentions. I must admit that he can finish my book as well as I could. All these facts console me a little. Dying when I know that I shall have a Replica is not quite as bad as, simply, dying. Even so, I shall soon lose consciousness, forever. In Simple Teletransportation, I do not co-exist with my Replica. This makes it easier to believe that this is a way of traveling, that my Replica is me. At the end of my story, my life and that of my Replica overlap. Call this the *Branch-Line Case*. In this case, I cannot hope to travel on the *Main Line*, waking up on Mars with forty years of life ahead. I shall remain on the *Branch-Line*, on Earth, which ends a few days later. Since I can talk to my Replica, it seems clear that he is *not* me. Though he is exactly like me, he is one person, and I am another. When I pinch myself, he feels nothing. When I have my heart attack, he will again feel nothing. And when I am dead he will live for another forty years.

If we believe that my Replica is not me, it is natural to assume that my prospect, on the Branch Line, is almost as bad as ordinary death. I shall deny this assumption. As I shall argue later, I ought to regard having a Replica as being about as good as ordinary survival....

### Qualitative and Numerical Identity

There are two kinds of sameness, or identity. I and my Replica are *qualitatively identical*, or exactly alike. But we may not be *numerically identical*, or one and the same person. Similarly, two white billiard balls are not numerically but may be qualitatively identical. If I paint one of these balls red, it will not now be qualitatively identical to itself yesterday. But the red ball that I see now and the white ball that I painted red are numerically identical. They are one and the same ball.

We might say, of someone, "After his accident, he is no longer the same person." This is a claim about both kinds of identity. We claim that *he*, the same person, is *not* now the same person. This is not a contradiction. We merely mean that this person's character has changed. This numerically identical person is now qualitatively different.

When we are concerned about our future, it is our numerical identity that we are concerned about. I may believe that after my marriage, I shall not be the same person. But this does not make marriage death. However much I change, I shall still be alive if there will be some person living who is numerically identical with me.

The philosophical debate is about the nature both of persons and of personal identity over time. It will help to distinguish these questions:

1. What is the nature of a person?
2. What is it that makes a person at two different times one and the same person?
3. What is necessarily involved in the continued existence of each person over time?

The answer to (2) can take this form: "X today is one and the same person as Y at some past time *if and only if* . . ." This answer states the *necessary and sufficient conditions* for personal identity over time. And the answer to (2) provides the answer to (3). Each person's continued existence has the *same* necessary and sufficient conditions.

In answering (2) and (3) we shall also partly answer (1). The necessary features of our continued existence depend upon our nature. And the simplest answer to (1) is that, to be a person, a being must be self-conscious, aware of its identity and its continued existence over time. . . .

## The Physical Criterion of Personal Identity

On one view, what makes me the same person over time is that I have the same brain and body. . . . I shall continue to exist if and only if this particular brain and body continue both to exist and to be the brain and body of a living person.

This is the simplest version of this view. There is a better version.

*The Physical Criterion:* (1) What is necessary is not the continued existence of the whole body, but the continued existence of *enough* of the brain to be the brain of a living person. X today is one and the same person as Y at some past time if and only if (2) enough of Y's brain continued to exist, and is now X's brain, and (3) there does not exist a different person who also has enough of Y's brain.

(4) Personal identity over time just consists in the holding of facts like (2) and (3).

(1) is clearly needed in certain actual cases. Some people continue to exist even though they lose much of their bodies, perhaps including their hearts and lungs if they are on heart-lung machines. The need for (3) will be clear later.

Those who believe in the Physical Criterion would reject Teletransportation. They would believe this to be a way not of traveling, but of dying. They would also reject, as inconceivable, reincarnation. They believe that someone cannot have a life after death, unless he lives this life in a resurrection of the very same, physically continuous body. . . .

## The Psychological Criterion

Some people believe in a kind of psychological continuity that resembles physical continuity. This involves the continued existence of a purely mental *entity* or thing, a soul, or spiritual substance. I shall return to this view. But I shall first explain another kind of psychological continuity. This is less like physical continuity, since it does not consist in the continued existence of some entity. But this other kind of psychological continuity involves only facts with which we are familiar.

What has been most discussed is the continuity of memory. This is because it is memory that makes most of us aware of our own continued existence over time. The exceptions are the people who are suffering from amnesia. Most amnesiacs lose only two sets of memories. They lose all of their memories of having particular past experiences — or, for short, their *experience memories*. They also lose some of their memories about facts, those that are about their own past lives. But they remember other facts, and they remember how to do different things, such as how to speak, or swim.

Locke suggested that experience memory provides the criterion of personal identity.<sup>1</sup> Though this is not, on its own, a plausible view, I believe that it can be part of such a view. I shall therefore try to answer Locke's critics.

Locke claimed that someone cannot have committed some crime unless he now remembers doing so. We can understand a reluctance to punish people for crimes that they cannot remember. But, taken as a view about what is involved in a person's continued existence, Locke's claim is clearly false. If it was true, it would not be possible for someone to forget any of the things that he once did, or any of the experiences that he once had. But this is possible. I cannot now remember putting on my shirt this morning.

There are several ways to extend the experience-memory criterion so as to cover such cases. I shall appeal to the concept of an overlapping chain of experience-memories. Let us say that, between X today and Y twenty years ago, there are *direct memory connections* if X can now remember having some of the experiences that Y had twenty years ago. On Locke's view, this makes X and Y one and the same person. Even if there are no such direct memory connections, there may be *continuity of memory* between X now and Y twenty years ago. This would be so if between X now and Y at that time there has been an overlapping chain of direct memories. In the case of most people who are over twenty-three, there would be such an overlapping

1. See section 9 of Locke's "Of Identity and Diversity" (earlier in this chapter).

chain. In each day within the last twenty years, most of these people remembered some of their experiences on the previous day. On the revised version of Locke's view, some present person X is the same as some past person Y if there is between them continuity of memory.

This revision meets one objection to Locke's view. We should also revise the view so that it appeals to other facts. Besides direct memories, there are several other kinds of direct psychological connection. One such connection is that which holds between an intention and the later act in which this intention is carried out. Other such direct connections are those which hold when a belief, or a desire, or any other psychological feature, continues to be had.

I can now define two general relations:

*Psychological connectedness* is the holding of particular direct psychological connections.

*Psychological continuity* is the holding of overlapping chains of *strong connectedness*.

Of these two general relations, connectedness is more important both in theory and in practice. Connectedness can hold to any degree. Between X today and Y yesterday there might be several thousand direct psychological connections, or only a single connection. If there was only a single connection, X and Y would not be, on the revised Lockean view, the same person. For X and Y to be the same person, there must be over every day *enough* direct psychological connections. Since connectedness is a matter of degree, we cannot plausibly define precisely what counts as enough. But we can claim that there is enough connectedness if the number of connections, over any day, is *at least half* the number of direct connections that hold, over every day, in the lives of nearly every actual person. When there are enough direct connections, there is what I call *strong connectedness*.

This relation cannot be the criterion of personal identity. A relation F is *transitive* if it is true that, if X is F-related to Y, and Y is F-related to Z, X and Z *must* be F-related. Personal identity is a transitive relation. If Bertie was one and the same person as the philosopher Russell,<sup>2</sup> and Russell was one and the same person as the author of *Why I Am Not a Christian*, this author and Bertie must be one and the same person.

Strong connectedness is *not* a transitive relation. I am now strongly connected to myself yesterday, when I was strongly connected to myself two days ago, when I was strongly connected to myself three days ago, and so on. It does not follow that I am now strongly connected to myself twenty years ago. And this is not true. Between me now and myself twenty years ago there are many fewer than the number of direct psychological connections that hold over any day in the lives of nearly all adults. For example, while these adults have many memories of experiences that they had in the previous day, I have few memories of experiences that I had twenty years ago.

2. British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970).

By "the criterion of personal identity over time" I mean what this identity necessarily involves or consists in. Because identity is a transitive relation, the criterion of identity must be a transitive relation. Since strong connectedness is not transitive, it cannot be the criterion of identity. And I have just described a case in which this is shown. I am the same person as myself twenty years ago, though I am not now strongly connected to myself then.

Though a defender of Locke's view cannot appeal to psychological connectedness, he can appeal to psychological continuity, which is transitive. He can appeal to . . .

*The Psychological Criterion:* (1) There is *psychological continuity* if and only if there are overlapping chains of strong connectedness. X today is one and the same person as Y at some past time if and only if (2) X is psychologically continuous with Y, (3) this continuity has the right kind of cause, and (4) there does not exist a different person who is also psychologically continuous with Y. (5) Personal identity over time just consists in the holding of facts like (2) to (4).

As with the Physical Criterion, the need for (4) will be clear later. . . .

## What Happens When I Divide?

Suppose first that I am one of a pair of identical twins, and that both my body and my twin's brain have been fatally injured. Because of advances in neurosurgery, it is not inevitable that these injuries will cause us both to die. We have between us one healthy brain and one healthy body. Surgeons can put these together.

This could be done even with existing techniques. Just as my brain could be extracted, and kept alive by a connection with a heart-lung machine, it could be kept alive by a connection with the heart and lungs in my twin's body. The drawback, today, is that the nerves from my brain could not be connected with the nerves in my twin's body. My brain could survive if transplanted into his body, but the resulting person would be paralysed. . . .

Let us suppose, however, that surgeons are able to connect my brain to the nerves in my twin's body. The resulting person would have no paralysis, and would be completely healthy. Who would this person be?

This is not a difficult question. . . .

On all versions of the Psychological Criterion, the resulting person would be me. And most believers in the Physical Criterion could be persuaded that, in this case, this is true. As I have claimed, the Physical Criterion should require only the continued existence of *enough* of my brain to be the brain of a living person, provided that no one else has enough of this brain. This would make it me who would wake up, after the operation. And if my twin's body was just like mine, I might even fail to notice that I had a new body.

It is in fact true that one hemisphere is enough. There are many people who have survived, when a stroke or injury puts out of action one of their hemispheres. With his remaining hemisphere, such a person may need to re-learn certain things, such as adult speech, or how to control both hands. But this is possible. In my example I am assuming that, as may be true of certain actual people, both of my hemispheres have the full range of abilities. I could thus survive with either hemisphere, without any need for re-learning.

I shall now combine these last two claims. I would survive if my brain was successfully transplanted into my twin's body. And I could survive with only half my brain, the other half having been destroyed. Given these two facts, it seems clear that I would survive if half my brain was successfully transplanted into my twin's body, and the other half was destroyed.

What if the other half was *not* destroyed? This is [a case] in which a person, like an amoeba, divides. To simplify the case, I assume that I am one of three identical triplets. Consider

*My Division.* My body is fatally injured, as are the brains of my two brothers. My brain is divided, and each half is successfully transplanted into the body of one of my brothers. Each of the resulting people believes that he is me, seems to remember living my life, has my character, and is in every other way psychologically continuous with me. And he has a body that is very like mine. . . .

It may help to state, in advance, what I believe this case to show. . . . The main conclusion to be drawn is that *personal identity is not what matters*.

It is natural to believe that our identity is what matters. Reconsider the Branch-Line Case, where I have talked to my Replica on Mars, and am about to die. Suppose we believe that I and my Replica are different people. It is then natural to assume that my prospect is almost as bad as ordinary death. In a few days, there will be no one living who will be me. It is natural to assume that *this* is what matters. In discussing My Division, I shall start by making this assumption.

In this case, each half of my brain will be successfully transplanted into the very similar body of one of my two brothers. Both of the resulting people will be fully psychologically continuous with me, as I am now. What happens to me?

There are only four possibilities: (1) I do not survive; (2) I survive as one of the two people; (3) I survive as the other; (4) I survive as both.

The objection to (1) is this. I would survive if my brain was successfully transplanted. And people have in fact survived with half their brains destroyed. Given these facts, it seems clear that I would survive if half my brain was successfully transplanted, and the other half was destroyed. So how could I fail to survive if the other half was also successfully transplanted? How could a double success be a failure?

Consider the next two possibilities. Perhaps one success is the maximum score. Perhaps I shall be one of the two resulting people. The objection here is that in this case, each half of my brain is exactly similar, and so, to start with, is each resulting

person. Given these facts, how can I survive as only one of the two people? What can make me one of them rather than the other?

These first three possibilities cannot be dismissed as incoherent. We can understand them. But, while we assume that identity is what matters, (1) is not plausible. It is not plausible that My Division is equivalent to death. Nor are (2) and (3) plausible. There remains the fourth possibility: that I survive as both of the resulting people. . . .

After I have had this operation, the two "products" each have all of the features of a person. They could live at opposite ends of the Earth. Suppose that they have poor memories, and that their appearance changes in different ways. After many years, they might meet again, and fail even to recognise each other. We might have to claim of such a pair, innocently playing tennis: "What you see out there is a single person, playing tennis with himself. In each half of his mind he mistakenly believes that he is playing tennis with someone else." If we are not yet Reductionists,<sup>3</sup> we believe that there is one true answer to the question whether these two tennis-players are a single person. Given what we mean by "person," the answer must be No. . . .

On the Reductionist View, the problem disappears. On this view, the claims that I have discussed do not describe different possibilities, any of which might be true, and one of which must be true. These claims are merely different descriptions of the same outcome. We know what this outcome is. There will be two future people, each of whom will have the body of one of my brothers, and will be fully psychologically continuous with me, because he has half of my brain. Knowing this, we know everything. I may ask, "But shall I be one of these two people, or the other, or neither?" But I should regard this as an empty question. Here is a similar question. In 1881 the French Socialist Party split. What happened? Did the French Socialist Party cease to exist, or did it continue to exist as one or other of the two new Parties? Given certain further details, this would be an empty question. Even if we have no answer to this question, we could know just what happened.

I must now distinguish two ways in which a question may be empty. About some questions we should claim both that they are empty, and that they have no answers. We could decide to *give* these questions answers. But . . . any possible answer would be arbitrary. . . .

There is another kind of case in which a question may be empty. In such a case, this question has an answer. The question is empty because it does not describe different possibilities, any one of which might be true, and one of which must be true. The question merely gives us different descriptions of the same outcome. We could know the full truth about this outcome without choosing one of these descriptions. But, if we do decide to give an answer to this empty question, one of these descriptions is better than the others. Since this is so, we can claim that this description is the answer to this question. And I claim that there is a best description of the case where I divide. The best description is that neither of the resulting people will be me. . . .

3. "Reductionism" is Parfit's name for the view that the facts of personal identity are wholly determined by more basic facts about bodily continuity, psychological continuity, and the like, and that when these facts fail to settle whether a future person Y is the same person as some present person X, then there is *simply no answer to the question* whether X and Y are the same person.

## What Matters When I Divide?

Some people would regard division as being as bad, or nearly as bad, as ordinary death. This reaction is irrational. We ought to regard division as being about as good as ordinary survival. As I have argued, the two "products" of this operation would be two different people. Consider my relation to each of these people. Does this relation fail to contain some vital element that is contained in ordinary survival? It seems clear that it does not. I would survive if I stood in this very same relation to only one of the resulting people. It is a fact that someone can survive even if half his brain is destroyed. And on reflection it was clear that I would survive if my whole brain was successfully transplanted into my brother's body. It was therefore clear that I would survive if half my brain was destroyed, and the other half was successfully transplanted into my brother's body. In the case that we are now considering, my relation to each of the resulting people thus contains everything that would be needed for me to survive as that person. It cannot be the *nature* of my relation to each of the resulting people that, in this case, causes it to fail to be survival. Nothing is *missing*. What is wrong can only be the duplication.

Suppose that I accept this, but still regard division as being nearly as bad as death. My reaction is now indefensible. I would be like someone who, when told of a drug that could double his years of life, regarded the taking of this drug as death. The only difference in the case of division is that the extra years are to run concurrently. This is an interesting difference. But it cannot mean that there are *no* years to run. We might say: "You will lose your identity. But there are at least two ways of doing this. Dying is one, dividing is another. To regard these as the same is to confuse two with zero. Double survival is not the same as ordinary survival. But this does not make it death. It is further away from death than ordinary survival."

The problem with double survival is that it does not fit the logic of identity. Like certain other Reductionists, I claim

*Relation R* is what matters. *R* is psychological connectedness and/or psychological continuity, with the right kind of cause. . . .

In the imagined case where I divide, *R* takes a "branching" form. But personal identity cannot take a branching form. I and the two resulting people cannot be one and the same person. Since I cannot be identical with two different people, and it would be arbitrary to call one of these people me, we can best describe the case by saying neither of these people will be me.

Which is the relation that is important? Is what matters personal identity, or relation *R*? In ordinary cases we need not decide which of these is what matters, since these relations coincide. In the case of My Division these relations do not coincide. We must therefore decide which of the two is what matters.

If we believe that we are separately existing entities,<sup>4</sup> we could plausibly claim that identity is what matters. On this view, personal identity is a deep further fact. But we have sufficient evidence to reject this view. If we are Reductionists, we *cannot* plausibly claim that, of these two relations, it is identity that matters. On our view, the fact of personal identity just consists in the holding of relation *R*, when it takes a non-branching form. If personal identity just consists in this other relation, this other relation must be what matters.

It may be objected: "You are wrong to claim that there is nothing more to identity than relation *R*. As you have said, personal identity has one extra feature, not contained in relation *R*. Personal identity consists in *R* holding *uniquely*—holding between one present person and *only one* future person. Since there is something more to personal identity than to relation *R*, we can rationally claim that, of the two, it is identity which is what matters."

In answering this objection, it will help to use some abbreviations. Call personal identity *PI*. When some relation holds uniquely, or in a one-one form, call this fact *U*. The view that I accept can be stated with this formula:

$$PI = R + U$$

Most of us are convinced that *PI* matters, or has value. Assume that *R* may also have value. There are then four possibilities:

1. *R* without *U* has no value.
2. *U* enhances the value of *R*, but *R* has value even without *U*.
3. *U* makes no difference to the value of *R*.
4. *U* reduces the value of *R* (but not enough to eliminate this value, since  $R + U = PI$ , which has value).

Can the presence or absence of *U* make a great difference to the value of *R*? As I shall argue, this is not plausible. If I will be *R*-related to some future person, the presence or absence of *U* makes no difference to the intrinsic nature of my relation to this person. And what matters most must be the intrinsic nature of this relation.

Since this is so, *R* without *U* would still have most of its value. Adding *U* makes  $R = PI$ . If adding *U* does not greatly increase the value of *R*, *R* must be what fundamentally matters, and *PI* mostly matters just because of the presence of *R*. If *U* makes no difference to the value of *R*, *PI* matters only because of the presence of *R*. Since *U* can be plausibly claimed to make a small difference, *PI* may, compared with *R*, have some extra value. But this value would be much less than the intrinsic value of *R*. The extra value of *PI* is much less than the value that *R* would have in the absence of *PI*, when *U* fails to hold.

4. That is, entities whose persistence through time is not determined by the underlying facts of physical and psychological continuity.



If it were put forward on its own, it would be difficult to accept the view that personal identity is not what matters. But I believe that, when we consider the case of division, this difficulty disappears. When we see *why* neither resulting person will be me, I believe that, on reflection, we can also see that this does not matter, or matters only a little . . . .

In the case where I divide, though my relation to each of the resulting people cannot be called identity, it contains what fundamentally matters. When we deny identity here, we are not denying an important judgement. Since my relation to each of the resulting people is about as good as if it were identity, it carries most of the ordinary implications of identity. Even when the person in Jack's body cannot be called me, because the other transplant succeeds, he can just as much deserve punishment or reward for what I have done. So can the person in Bill's body. As Wiggins writes: "a malefactor could scarcely evade responsibility by contriving his own fission."<sup>5</sup> . . . .

## Is the True View Believable?

I have now reviewed the main arguments for the Reductionist View. Do I find it impossible to believe this view?

What I find is this. I can believe this view at the intellectual or reflective level. I am convinced by the arguments in favour of this view. But I think it likely that, at some other level, I shall always have doubts.

My belief is firmest when I am considering some of these imagined cases. I am convinced that if I divided, it would be an empty question whether I would then be one, or the other, or neither of the resulting people. I believe that there is nothing that could make these different possibilities, any of which might be what would really happen . . . .

When I consider certain other cases, my conviction is less firm. One example is Teletransportation. I imagine that I am in the cubicle, about to press the green button. I might suddenly have doubts. I might be tempted to change my mind, and pay the larger fare of a space-ship journey.

I suspect that reviewing my arguments would never wholly remove my doubts. At the reflective or intellectual level, I would remain convinced that the Reductionist View is true. But at some lower level I would still be inclined to believe that there must always be a real difference between some future person's being me, and his being someone else. Something similar is true when I look through a window at the top of a skyscraper. I know that I am in no danger. But looking down from this dizzying height, I am afraid I would have a similar irrational fear if I was about to press the green button.

It may help to add these remarks. On the Reductionist View, my continued existence just involves physical and psychological continuity. On the Non-Reductionist

5. David Wiggins "Locke, Butler and the Stream of Consciousness," in Amelie Rorty, ed., *The Identities of Persons* (University of California Press, 1976), p. 146. [Parfit's note.]

View, it involves a further fact. It is natural to believe in this further fact, and to believe that, compared with the continuities, it is a *deep* fact, and is the fact that really matters. When I fear that, in Teletransportation, I shall not get to Mars, my fear is that the abnormal cause may fail to produce this further fact. As I have argued, there is no such fact. What I fear will not happen, *never* happens. I want the person on Mars to be me in a specially intimate way in which no future person will ever be me. My continued existence never involves this deep further fact. What I fear will be missing is *always* missing. Even a spaceship journey would not produce the further fact in which I am inclined to believe.

When I come to see that my continued existence does not involve this further fact, I lose my reason for preferring a spaceship journey. But, judged from the standpoint of my earlier belief, this is not because Teletransportation is *about as good as ordinary* survival. It is because ordinary survival is *about as bad as, or little better than, Teletransportation. Ordinary survival is about as bad as being destroyed and having a Replica.*

By rehearsing arguments like these, I might do enough to reduce my fear. I might be able to bring myself to press the green button. But I expect that I would never completely lose my intuitive belief in the Non-Reductionist View. It is hard to be serenely confident in my Reductionist conclusions. It is hard to believe that personal identity is not what matters. If tomorrow someone will be in agony, it is hard to believe that it could be an empty question whether this agony will be felt by *me*. And it is hard to believe that, if I am about to lose consciousness, there may be no answer to the question "Am I about to die?"

Nagel<sup>6</sup> once claimed that it is psychologically impossible to believe the Reductionist View. Buddha claimed that though this is very hard, it is possible.<sup>7</sup> I find Buddha's claim to be true. After reviewing my arguments, I find that, at the reflective or intellectual level, though it is very hard to believe the Reductionist View, this is possible. My remaining doubts or fears seem to me irrational. Since I can believe this view, I assume that others can do so too. We can believe the truth about ourselves.

## TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Which of the following pairs are (a) numerically identical, (b) not numerically identical but only qualitatively identical?
  - (i) The author of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*; John Locke.
  - (ii) Your copy of this book; your classmate's copy of this book.
  - (iii) 2 + 3; 5.

6. American philosopher Thomas Nagel (1937-), author of selections in chapters 9, 14, and 18 of this anthology.

7. In an appendix to *Reasons and Persons* Parfit gives some quotations from Buddhist texts to support his claim that the Buddha was a Reductionist.