

Metaphysics

Personal identity II

Chapman University. PHIL305. Lecture 4. 2/10/2021.

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Discussion board posts due 2/12

- ▶ **Post 1:** In your own words, explain what you think is the most plausible theory of personal identity and why. 200-300 words.
- ▶ **Post 2:** Provide constructive feedback to a post on another student's thread. 150-250 words.

Assignment Rubric Details

Discussion Board Posts				
Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Post 1 Response to prompt	5.0 pts Excellent The post clearly answers the prompt, demonstrates understanding of the reading, and illustrates independent thinking.	3.0 pts Adequate The post attempts to answer the prompt, demonstrates partial understanding of the reading, but lacks independent thinking.	1.0 pts Inadequate Does not provide clear answer to the prompt and does not demonstrate understanding of the reading.	5.0 pts
Post 2 Constructive feedback	5.0 pts Excellent The post responds clearly to another student's post, offers constructive ideas, and is respectful.	3.0 pts Adequate The post attempts to respond to another student's post, but lacks either constructive ideas or respectful language.	1.0 pts Inadequate Does not respond to another student's post in way that demonstrates thoughtfulness.	5.0 pts
				Total Points: 10.0

The question of personal identity

- ▶ What makes persons *numerically* identical over time?
 - ▶ What makes person A at time T identical to person B at time T* ($T \neq T^*$)?

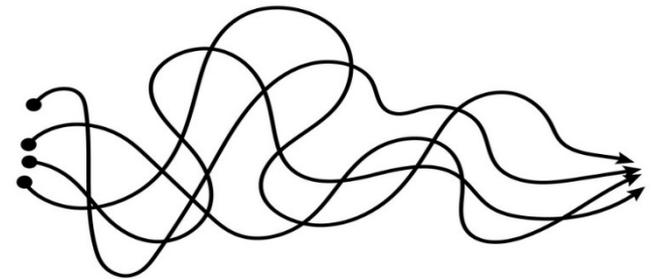
Same-matter theory



Soul theory



Spatiotemporal continuity theory

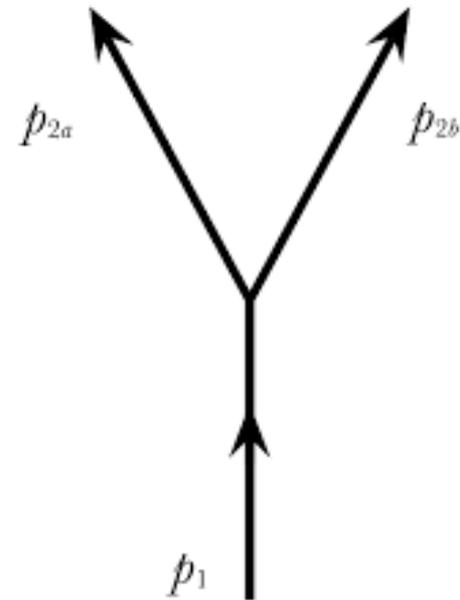


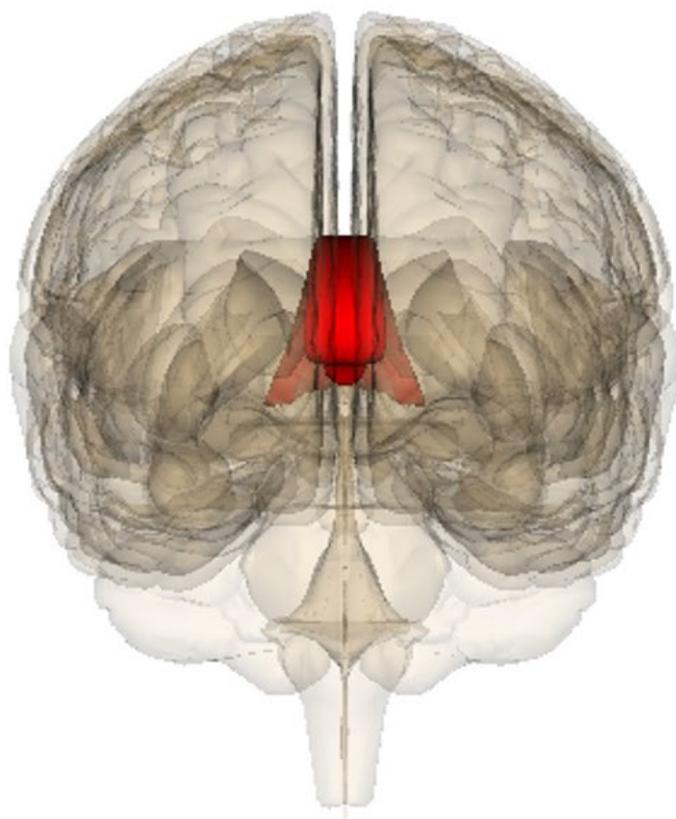
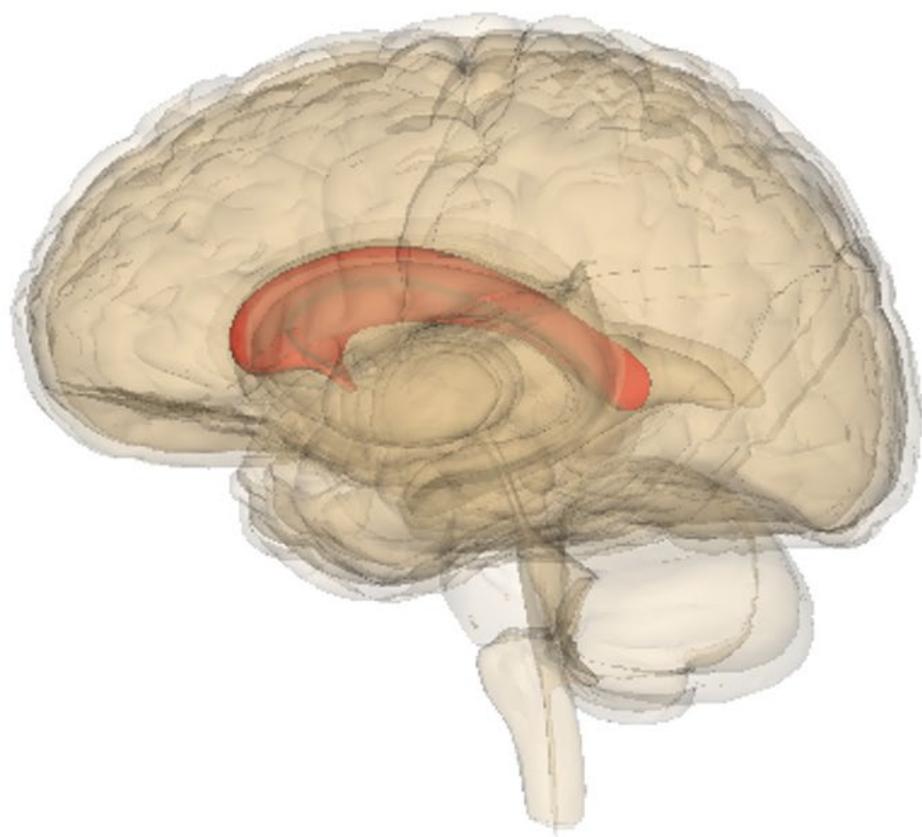
Psychological continuity theory

- ▶ A past person is numerically identical to the future person, if any, who has that past person's *memories, character traits, etc.*

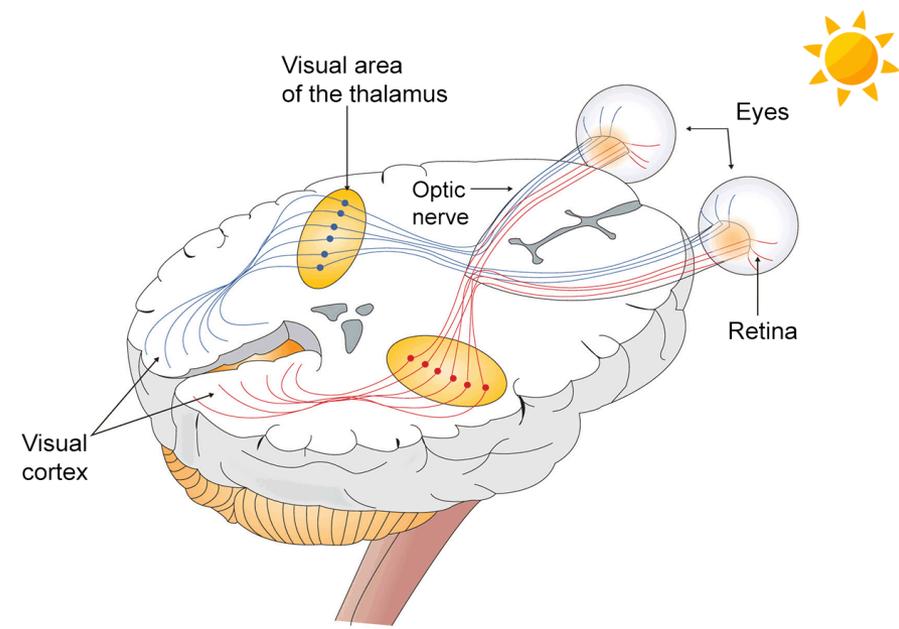
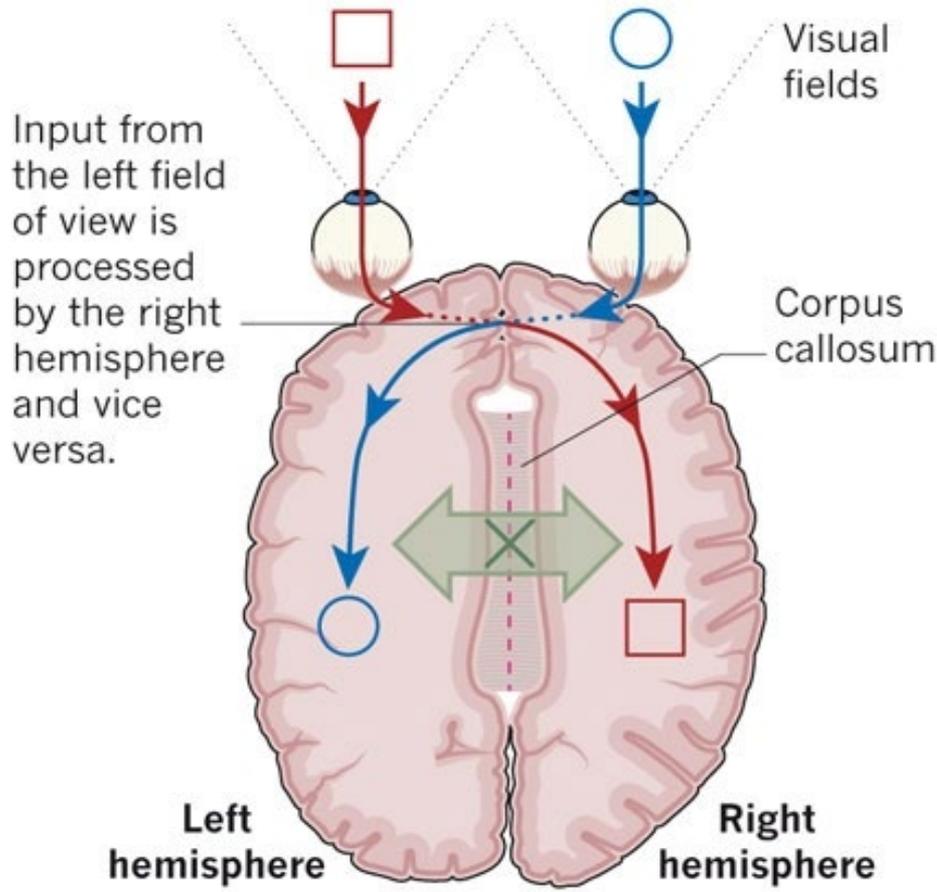
▶ The duplication problem

- ▶ It is possible to *duplicate* psychological properties.
- ▶ Sider's case:
 - ▶ p_1 = you;
 - ▶ p_{2a} = your left hemisphere;
 - ▶ p_{2b} = your right hemisphere.





Left and right brain hemispheres



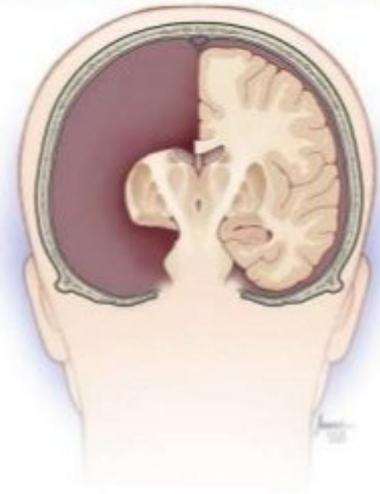
Nonbranching continuity theory

- ▶ Personal identity is continuity (either spatiotemporal or psychological), except when continuity *branches*.

- ▶ **Problem:**

- ▶ Imagine that, before the operation, you learn:
 - ▶ The left-hemisphere person will survive the hemispherectomy.
- ▶ The theory then entails:
 - ▶ If the right-hemisphere person survives too, you will not survive.

Anatomic Hemispherectomy



Two “radical solutions”

- ▶ 1) Parfit’s theory
 - ▶ Personal identity is *not* important.
 - ▶ It does not matter whether some future person is you.
 - ▶ Psychological continuity *is* important.
 - ▶ It matters that the future has things that are psychologically continuous with you.

- ▶ 2) Personal identity is not numerical identity, so rethink ‘identity’?



Discussion

- ▶ What is the most plausible theory of personal identity and why?
 - ▶ Same matter theory
 - ▶ Soul theory
 - ▶ Spatiotemporal continuity theory
 - ▶ Psychological continuity theory
 - ▶ Nonbranching continuity theory
 - ▶ Parfit's theory
 - ▶ Rethink 'identity'
 - ▶ Something else?