

HULK & BRUCE BANNER

Criteria for personal identity across time:

Candidate 1: Bodily identity

Banner *not* the Hulk

-Radically different bodies (Hulk's body has props not shared by Banner's, i.e. number of atoms)

But bodily identity isn't personal identity

All of our bodies change over time, but that doesn't mean that I'm not the same person as Toño 2006

Old Brando and young Brando are the same person, even though the former's body has many more atoms

So the bodily difference isn't enough to show that Banner isn't the same person as the Hulk

Candidate 1.5: *Some* bodily continuity required

Theseus case makes problems.

-If a patient receives most of my organs, he doesn't *become me*, even though his body is *more physically continuous* with mine than with his old body

Kinghorn concludes that this shows that personal identity has nothing to do with the continuity of physical particles over time.

-Is this right? The patient still has *some* continuity with his old body, after all.

Candidate 2: Mental identity

Locke: A person is a "thinking intelligent being, that has reasons and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places."

Memory allows me to reflect on earlier instances where I was aware of myself as myself.

Tricky for Hulk case: Hulk's mental capacities (esp in later portrayals) seem very different from those of Banner. He has no access to Banner's introspective experiences. So Hulk can't be the same person as Banner

Probs for mem theory:

1) I can't remember my seventh birthday, but I'm clearly the same person as seven year old Toño

2) Reid problem: Transitivity fails for mem theory—the general both is and isn't the same person as the young boy

Revise: Only *some* mental continuity needed

Prob: Suppose general has Alzheimers, remembers being the boy, but not the young man
Where's the continuity now?

3) Circularity problem: I *seem* to remember winning the NLCS in 1989 (because I'm delusional, let's say). But I only seem to. I don't *genuinely* remember, because it didn't really happen *to me*.

Prob: If memory is supposed to constitute my identity, then we can't define *genuine memory* as comprising events happening to the same person—the explanation becomes circular

Candidate 3: Causal account of identity

Old Brando and young Brando are the same because old Brando arises from young Brando via the appropriate causal mechanisms.

So maybe Banner *is* the Hulk, just *morphed* by rare causal factors

Probs: Suppose causal mechanisms cause Banner to split into two monstrous bodies. Both would be causally derived from Bruce, but they can't *both* be Bruce.

Parfit: Maybe there's just no such thing as identity. There's no answer to the question of whether the Hulk and Bruce are the same person.

I might *survive* brain bifurcation without being *the same* as either brain half.

Survival could be a matter of degree

Kinghorn: Just because it's *hard* to find a criterion for personal identity doesn't mean there isn't one there

Candidate 4: Relational identity: I am the same person in virtue of maintaining continuous relationships with other people

An odd suggestion because we have such *individualistic conceptions* of personhood

Q: Pick a person you know well, and describe them. What sorts of attributes come up?

Honest, caring, loving, etc.

-These are *interpersonal* characteristics

-No one is loyal in a vacuum

Marriages are “relationally constituted entities”. Why not persons, too?

“Perhaps, in a very deep way, individual personal identity is itself constituted and continued through time in virtue of one or more continuing relationships”

Possible objections: What if I move, or end my relationships with people in favor of new relationships. Do I become a *new person*?

Does a person on a deserted island have no identity at all?

Possible response: Here’s an unchanging relationship—a relationship with God.

-Forget whether god exists for a moment. Would this move save the relational account of personal identity?

(we don’t need to worry about the Banner into split monsters account, since God’s causal power is limited to what is logically possible)