

How Persons Persist in Time
Eunice Belgum Memorial Lecture #2
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I. First-Person Persistence Conditions—conditions under which an entity would or would not continue to exist.

- A. Primary Kind determines persistence conditions
- B. *Person* as Primary Kind: Has first-person perspective (rudimentary or robust) essentially.
- C. *Person* is only kind with first-person persistence conditions and only kind to develop robust first-person perspective.

II. Personal Identity over Time

- A. A person is a being with a first-person perspective essentially, who persists as long as her first-person perspective is exemplified.
- B. Account is distinctive: Persons as basic, irreducible entities; ineliminably first-personal; no immaterial parts.

III. Primitive Persistence: A Simple View

- A. Identity over time is unanalyzable, with no informative sufficient conditions (Simple View)
- B. Metaphysical indeterminacy of entities – dependent on determinacy

IV. Objections

A. Absence of Informative Condition of Personal Identity Over Time

- 1. Condition is circular and uninformative; price for nonreduction of persons, price for taking personhood to be a basic property.
- 2. Reply to Peter van Inwagen

B. Coherence of Primitive Persistence

1. Michael Della Rocca and “Parfit’s Plausible Principle:”

(PPP) In a case in which there are objects, A , B , and C , $B \neq C$, B and C are equally and significantly causally and qualitatively continuous with A , and there is no other object besides A which exists at the same time as A and which is such that B and C are as causally and qualitatively continuous with it as they are with A , then it cannot be the case that $A = B$ and $A \neq C$ and it cannot be the case that $A \neq B$ and $A = C$.

2. Another formulation of my primitive-persistence view:

(FPP) If x and y are persons who exist at t_1 and t_2 , respectively, then $x = y$ if and only if x ’s exemplifying a first-person perspective at t_1 is the same state of affairs as y ’s exemplifying a first-person perspective at t_2 .

3. Primitive Persistence (FPP) incompatible with PPP.

- a. “Arbitrariness” objection to primitive persistence is epistemic and not to the point of PPP, which is metaphysical and not epistemic.
- b. Advantages of epistemic principle over PPP

C. Upshot: There are irreducibly first-person properties exemplified in the world, and thus reality fundamentally has a first-person aspect.