

be risky: that there is room for the notion of a *risk* here is itself a major feature of the problem.

NOTES

1. *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1963), pp. 23 seq.
2. This of course does not have to be the crucial question, but it seems one fair way of taking up the present objection.
3. For a more detailed treatment of issues related to this, see "Imagination and the Self," pp. 38 seq.

KEY TERM

Hedonistic utilitarianism

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why does Williams say that describing his case as a case of exchanging bodies is question-begging?
2. Do you agree that Williams's thought-experiment supports the conclusion that after they emerge from the machine, *B* is to be identified with the *A*-body-person and *A* is to be identified with the *B*-body-person?
3. Williams thinks that when the case is redescribed from the perspective of one of the participants, the participant will still fear the torture. Do you think that he's right about this? If you were told that you would lose your memories and then gain someone else's memories, would you still fear torture to the body you have now?
4. Where do you think we ought to draw the line in Williams's six-step series? What reasons are there in favor of drawing the line there?

Personal Identity¹

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WE can, I think, describe cases in which, though we know the answer to every other question, we have no idea how to answer a question about personal identity. These cases are not covered by the criteria of personal identity that we actually use.

Do they present a problem?

It might be thought that they do not, because they could never occur. I suspect that some of them could. (Some, for instance, might become scientifically

possible.) But I shall claim that even if they did they would present no problem.

My targets are two beliefs: one about the nature of personal identity, the other about its importance.

The first is that in these cases the question about identity must have an answer.

No one thinks this about, say, nations or machines. Our criteria for the identity of these do not cover certain cases. No one thinks that in these cases the questions "Is it the same nation?" or "Is it the same machine?" must have answers.

Some people believe that in this respect they are different. They agree that our criteria of personal identity do not cover certain cases, but they believe

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