

# Second Philosophy

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Led by	Group Led
Title	Personal Identity
Date	09 July 2008

## INTRODUCTION

(Second Philosophy's first group meeting using the Oxford University Continuing Education Department material provided by Marianne Talbot at Open Habitat)

The subject we are going to be discussing is that of **personal identity**. In particular we shall be considering the question:

### **What it is that makes a particular past or future individual you?**

Motivation for this Question : I have chosen this topic because Second Life triggers, for me anyway, a lot of questions about personal identity: when 'I' am in Second Life, is my 'Avatar' me? (I considered using this question for the debate, but decided it would be too complicated. I should be happy if, in discussing personal identity, we were to discuss this though.) In particular it would be interesting for people to consider the traditional theories of personal identity in the light of this question.

Background : Traditional answers to this question include:

#### **a) the individual looks like me**

The problem with this one is that there is more to being you than looking like you. That this is true is obvious from the case of identical twins. This highlights the fact that *qualitative identity* differs from *numerical identity*. Two things are qualitatively identical if they have the same qualities. Two dresses for example can be identical in virtue of individual the same colour, size, shape.....But the dresses are still *two* in number.

Numerical identity requires that 'two' things be *the very same thing*. Hesperus, for example *is* Phosphorus, even though no-one knew this for years. In asking what it is that makes a past or future individual *you* we are asking about what makes that individual *numerically identical* to you, i.e. what makes it actually *you*.

That it *looks like you* is certainly not sufficient, and given that you are the same thing as the toddler in your dear mum's photographs, it isn't necessary either!

#### **b) the individual has the same body as I do**

Again we have to be careful because our bodies change constantly. Apparently over a seven year period no cell in your body will not have undergone change. This is characteristic of any living body. Nevertheless we have a grasp of the conditions necessary and sufficient for being the same (living) body, namely: the later (or earlier) body has taken a route through space-time that will bring it to, or that has brought it from, the very location in space-time that you currently occupy.

If you *are* your body, in the sense that anything with the same body must be you, then any individual that satisfies this condition must be you, and no individual that does not satisfy this condition can be you. One problem for such a view is that many people have thought they can imagine a situation in which *you* wake up in someone else's body. Locke, for example, imagined that a prince could awaken in the body of a cobbler. If this is possible then clearly the prince is not the very same individual as his body.

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You might ask yourself whether such a thought experiment is as straightforward as people have thought. Presumably if the Prince awakens in the cobbler's body then he also has the cobbler's brain. The only thing that has been transferred in other words is the Prince's *mind*.

Here we must distinguish logical from empirical possibility. It is clearly not empirically possible to transfer a mind without transferring a brain. But is this logically possible?

## c) the individual has the same memories I have

Locke believed that the thought experiment above showed that you could not possibly be identical to your body, but that you are identical rather to your mind. To be more precise, Locke believed that personal identity is determined by our memories. To Locke therefore any individual with the same memories as me *is* me.

This claim relies on memory being *factive*. A mental state is factive if possession of that state depends on the obtaining of certain extra-mental facts. Perception, for example, is factive (one cannot perceive a knife unless there is a knife to perceive, if there isn't then you may be hallucinating but you are not perceiving). Memory is factive in that if I remember P then P must have happened. (Remember you might *believe* you remember P when P never happened, but this is a belief, and a false one, it isn't a memory).

If you have all my memories, then in particular you can remember my winning a twisting competition at the age of 6. Given this you must have on the twisting competition at the age of 6. How could you *not* be me?

But how can we tell whether you remember this, or merely believe – falsely – that you remember it? Note that we have to be careful about allowing overlapping memories to be the criterion of identity, not a static set. I can remember being 6 and the 6 year old can remember being 5. This continuity is what makes me identical (numerically) to the 5 year old.

One problem for this view is the 'transporter problem' where you are asked to imagine entering, on a far away planet a 'teletransporter' which works by destroying all your cells whilst simultaneously re-creating a new being with exactly the same physical structure back on Earth. This new being has all your memories. But is he you?

**Activity** : During the discussion you are asked to work together to consider these possibilities and decide which, as a group, you'd go for. If you don't like any of them, try to come up with an alternative that works (which might take you into the mind-body problem, another one that has intriguing Second Life connections....)

*Marianne Talbot (May 2008)*

## QUESTION:

1. Is the relationship between you and your avatar one of identity? Remember 'identity' here means numerical and not qualitative identity.

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## DISCUSSION:

**Elfed:** my avatar is not me, but it is at the same time (to answer the question on the board)

**Sojourna:** aha, it is and it isn't

**Elfed:** because I drive it and without me it would not exist; but it isn't physically me of course

**Sojourna:** unless I steal your SL password and play with your avatar

**Marya:** do you think it is perhaps a representation of some part of you or do you think it is a completely alien thing to you?

**Elfed:** indeed. Not sure about that one. It serves the same function as moodle

**Oswy:** I am pretty much sure the avatars are part of us. In the same way that our Personal Identity is part of the wider world

**Elfed:** part of what we are in the world, in terms of what we contribute or our influence in the world?

**Elfed:** hmm - took a bit of effort to control myself then!! Sitting in the right place that is

**Oswy:** Well I don't like the idea that we are just an internal psychological network I think what we are has a connection with the external world and the external world modifies what our PI is?

**Elfed:** yes, as I just discovered there are forces that govern whether I can even sit where I want

**Marya:** lol yes, so you have to adapt and learn new ways of communicating and presenting yourself in a new environment

**Elfed:** true, I wonder if there is a script somewhere - dated in prehistory - that says that I would be represented as an avatar at this time,

**Oswy:** Yes I think that's it. What the avatar can do in this virtual world as part of us is physically very clumsy when we start although given we have to type our words our intellectual capacity is the same.

**Elfed:** because if there is no free will and everything is predetermined, how other things are or determined will affect the outcome for me too

**Marya:** 'if' there is no free will is the salient point; I would say no, there is no script. We could rather view it in the way that we view evolution - there is no script as such

**Elfed:** but even if there is, there isn't, because whatever we do even from free will, will determine what happens next

**Marya:** yes, more like evolution :)

**Elfed:** same with evolution - if we had a computer powerful enough we could look at present species and environment and predict exactly what will be in the future

**Marya:** I should think there are far too many variables - I expect that would take some remarkable sort of computer

**Elfed:** too many variables for what?

**Sojourna:** Sorry for being quiet, was trying to get a video recording going

**Elfed:** are we on telly?

**Marya:** too many variables as in too many possibilities

**Sojourna:** I'm not sure yet! Haven't done this in a while :)

**Marya:** too many possible outcomes and too many potential influences on outcome

**Oswy:** It would, I don't see the purpose because the act of prediction is determined anyway. I'm a determinist but I don't worry about it I just enjoy the surf ride on the deterministic wave.

**Elfed:** but not if we had perfect information; you go with the flow Oswy

**Marya:** I am not certain that it is possible to have perfect information - we are imperfect creatures after all

**Sojourna:** I was wondering also if we could get to Oswy's questions, because they were very interesting (unless you are already there while I was busy being technical)

**Elfed:** yes but other creatures may have perfect info - a god perhaps

**Elfed:** we did start talking about me and my avatar, mmm, but that's another argument methinks :)

**Elfed:** indeed it is Maria

**Marya:** Soj, I think Oswy is sorting that out at the moment

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**Sojourna:** Ah, cool.

**Oswy:** No the purpose of the session was to discuss PI and the three questions were a way of leading into to that. Do you want me to start with my response to question 1, Elfed did you get a chance to see the questions not the ones on the board?

**Elfed:** nope

**Sojourna:** Just to add one more comment on the avatar issue, I think the more an avatar and human being live together and begin to share memories and experience the more the identity becomes linked and continuous.

**Oswy:** The first question concerned our old friend the teleporting machine. I wondered if an exact replica of you was teleported would it in some sense be you.

**Marya:** that's very interesting Soj

**Sojourna:** Oswy, how would you like us to go about answering? In some order?

**Elfed:** yes it would, but not numerically

**Marya:** but Elfed, what if the original was destroyed at the same time?

**Elfed:** I was thinking that

**Oswy:** And would it make any difference if you were destroyed in the process or not? My response is to say that the replica would not be you in either case. At the moment of its creation no matter what the consequences for the real you it could never be more than just you mark 2 as it were.

**Elfed:** in that case it would be the closest thing to me

**Marya:** so it would be like you but not the same you that stepped into the machine?

**Oswy:** Sojourna I think we need to go round in turn to see what each thinks

**Elfed:** perhaps these days cloning would take the place of a teleportation machine in thought experiments

**Sojourna:** I would also say no in both cases, because being replicated on a different planet would mean that the two yous would live different lives on different planets

**Oswy:** Start with you Maria?

**Sojourna:** ok Oswy, oops

**Marya:** no, that's okay - Elf and Soj have posted so I'll just go next :)

**Marya:** Would the replica be me - yes and no. If there was only one replica made and the original destroyed then it would be me - if more than one is created then no. When I say me, I mean that which I identify as being me

**Elfed:** works for me

**Oswy:** Elfed would you like to respond?

**Elfed:** yes, I just said that works for me

**Marya:** but perhaps this raises the question of - what is that 'me'

**Elfed:** I agree with Maria; that 'me' is the molecules configured in space exactly as I was at that moment in time

**Oswy:** One thing I want to introduce here is the idea of temporality. The idea that there is an original and copies. It doesn't matter if the copy has your characteristics it must always remain a copy.

**Sojourna:** Would the replica have a memory of the original being destroyed?

**Oswy:** Yes let's imagine it would have your memories.

**Elfed:** why must it always remain a copy?

**Sojourna:** It would then know that it was a copy of the original.

**Oswy:** But you made the point which I think is correct that once it is created it makes its own unique memories in a new physical context.

**Elfed:** in that case the only thing that differentiates the original and the copy is the history they've experienced

**Marya:** I was thinking, that since we are changing all the time anyway, and there is never an identical you outside of the space and time you are in, that it wouldn't matter whether you stepped into a teleporter - you would still be non-identical, so yes, the only thing that binds one identity to another, is the psychological history

**Elfed:** That makes some sense to me Maria - for the same reason we can say we are not the same person at different times

**Sojourna:** though even brain cells would be replicated and skin and limbs

**Elfed:** it seems to be the time element that is important then, experiencing a history over time

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**Marya:** time is a very important aspect, yep

**Oswy:** I think the argument is, is that there is enough psychological unity for the thing to be called you. But to go back to Elfed. It must remain a copy because of the time sequence. The original is first then the copy and you can't get around that in physical terms.

**Sojourna:** though the teleportation could go wrong and the replica experience a bad case of amnesia

**Marya:** that's an interesting twist Soj :)

**Sojourna:** hmm!

**Elfed:** what if the memories were ok in the replica but the process resulted in the original suffering Alzheimer's disease?

**Marya:** in that case, would the person on the other side be you or not - and what if your memory never returns

**Elfed:** the replica would then be more you than the original

**Oswy:** Surely Sojourna the amnesia is part of its unique new history the slate is swept clean and it then goes on to establish a continuous set of new memories. It's still a copy.

**Marya:** I would say that it is a different person - at least from its own perspective because it would not have the psychological continuity from the original person

**Oswy:** I would say whether the replica had a full set of memories, amnesia or a brain disease it would still be an experiment in the real you who was left in the teleporter as a real person or a pile ash

**Elfed:** even if was an exact replica Marya

**Marya:** it would be like the original only in appearance and some physiology, but I wouldn't say it would be the same person

**Elfed:** we are all made from molecules that originated from the stars, so whether a particular molecule was present or not is irrelevant

**Sojourna:** but what would the replica say?

**Marya:** that's what I think; the replica would say it is not the same person since it cannot relate to the original - no connection

**Elfed:** but it might think it is

**Marya:** It might - but that would depend on the way their particular brain works

**Elfed:** it might dream

**Oswy:** Perhaps we should move on to the second question which I think we have already begun to answer. This concerns cloning. What if several clones of you are created without your knowledge perhaps. Which is the real you. I would still to my guns and say there is only one you ie Mark 1 and the rest are mark2 3 etc in sequence.

**Marya:** but that would only be in the sense of having some sort of fear of not knowing who he is and therefore looking for something to relate to

**Sojourna:** I wonder if each clone would claim to be the real me!

**Marya:** this is where it gets sticky for me Oswy

**Sojourna:** If they were actual clones they should!

**Marya:** I think they would indeed all claim to be you

**Elfed:** I was going to say it is like the chap who dreamt he was a butterfly, then woke up to find he was a man

**Elfed:** but then maybe he was a butterfly dreaming he was a man. I think that was just before we moved on to clones though. A clone is different because there is a definite time lapse

**Oswy:** So suppose each didn't realize it was a clone and they all turned up at their house the same evening. The only way to sort this out would be to say well I was here first ie the original source and the rest of you must go off and make a new life.

**Marya:** but they would only claim to be you initially, I think it is a matter of perspective - if you were separated from your clones, they would continue on to develop themselves and, depending on outside influences, could go on to be quite different to the original you; but how would anyone prove they are the original :) no doubt all would claim to be

**Elfed:** like identical twins Marya, they become different over time

**Sojourna:** oh, good point Elfed - Oswy are these clones cloned with all memories intact or just physical clones?

**Marya:** something like that yes

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**Oswy:** They have memory intact via a scan of the original.

**Elfed:** then they gain different memories

**Sojourna:** so they don't know they are clones?

**Elfed:** like when my avatar can only sit in one place and have one viewpoint

**Marya:** yes that's right; the sequence of psychological events essentially splits

**Oswy:** They are total clones physical and mental. The only way to sort them out is via the records of the cloning if they are destroyed then you are in a fix unless you can carbon date a bit of them Ha ha

**Marya:** lol Oswy

**Sojourna:** What can I say, that's a scary scenario.

**Marya:** I have a theory that could potentially interfere, just a theory though

**Elfed:** so if a clone is new life, different from the original, so is a teleported replica

**Oswy:** Well I think we agree at least that they are all different after a very short period of time so we are dealing with different personalities when they arrive home?

**Marya:** I see it this way - I think the cloning process has to be done in a very specific way - the life of the original person must be maintained during the process of replication - so the process of scanning and destroying the original must be simultaneous to the recreation on the other side in order to maintain the stream of consciousness

**Sojourna:** well the clones are the same; it's just that there are many of them (!)

**Marya:** so, essentially, the idea is that multiple clones can't exist

**Elfed:** ah but the clones arise from one cell; each of those cells are different; no memories

**Sojourna:** oh

**Elfed:** only of their particular role

**Marya:** if the clones are made from a single cell then of course the person will be different

**Marya:** I meant in relation to the transporter machine

**Elfed:** a clone would not be made from a whole person, so it is better to be teleported than to be cloned

**Marya:** in the case of a clone being made from a single cell - I think there is no question about whether that clone is a different person - it absolutely would be

**Elfed:** Marya is right

**Oswy:** The clone would be grown from a single cell and then when fully grown as the original its memory scan would be implanted it would pick up its clothes and set off for home all of them arrive together.

**Marya:** dang Oswy - way to throw a spanner in the works lol!

**Sojourna:** haha!

**Elfed:** but we have to talk about other memory elements too

**Marya:** No, I would still maintain they are different because they would have been exposed to different environments - they would not be sharing the same space and time

**Elfed:** like the memory in different parts of the body

**Marya:** and let us not forget that memories can be inaccurate as well

**Elfed:** maternal RNA for example

**Elfed:** your heart muscle retains 'memory' of things to do with itself

**Oswy:** I think you are in a fix with this one the only way to sort them out is to hope there is some external record to show the sequence of their creation. They the original gets the house and the family. The rest just have to push off and get by as best they can.

**Marya:** think about it this way - if a person has grown up in a test tube they are more likely to be in a far better physical condition than the original, so the clones may have a far better memory; so I would say the one who can't remember as much is more likely to be the original

**Sojourna:** haha

**Elfed:** the clones may be sick because their bits haven't adapted like the original. As in Dolly the sheep

**Oswy:** Suppose there is a very rapid cloning process so the clone is in just the same shape as the original they are physically and mentally identical. You have to find some external way of identifying them.

**Elfed:** hmm...actually I take that back

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**Marya:** Oswy! Then I would say nope, no real way to tell without the records :)

**Elfed:** they would be standing in different places; one of them lying down post-cloning :-)

**Sojourna:** Oh, hi Dimitrios!!

**Marya:** Hello Dimitrios - come and sit down and join in :)

**Oswy:** I come back to my original idea that what our PI consists in is more than something internal we are related to the external world. So bodies matter as well as psychology and sequences of time are very important ie who is first and who comes next. You need an external observer for that?

**Sojourna:** Dimitrios we are discussing the second question that Keith/Oswy posed in his notes.

**Marya:** I should think so yes Oswy

**Dimitrios:** Ok, here I am, sorry for coming late!!

**Marya:** It's okay Dimitrios - I will send you a transcript of the discussion so far if you would like to see it

**Oswy:** My last message seems to have vanished. I will push on to the last question. Someone is coned at age 45 say his mental scan is put into the new clone aged 20. The original is quietly and painlessly destroyed. This sequence is then repeated ad infinitum. Do you then live forever? My reaction again is no because the original is destroyed. But what do you think?

**Dimitrios:** Thanks!! Please go on, I will join your discussion

**Oswy:** Hello Dimitrios sorry to charge on

**Dimitrios:** You mean in real life? If we still exist after our death?

**Sojourna:** Oswy, I say yes, yes, yes to this one.

**Marya:** I think 'you' would indeed live forever

**Oswy:** You could say you do live forever and get wiser and wiser and eventually are able to run the National Health Service Haha

**Elfed:** I'd like to be put into a 20 year old body TODAY!

**Sojourna:** Because memory and sense of self would be continuous, and even if cells differed, well, they do anyway...over time for us.

**Marya:** I have one problem with this scenario Oswy

**Dimitrios:** I wish I could have my today's mind when I was 20, now I am 41

**Elfed:** Soj, whether it is technically still me or not, I'd be happy

**Marya:** and that is, the body of the 20 year old would mean you would have the brain of the 20 year old, so your brain function would be different

**Sojourna:** haha me too Elfed! Immortality today!

**Elfed:** 20 yr old brains have more cells than 40 year olds

**Marya:** unless you were able to clone the brain exactly - I expect the brain would deteriorate otherwise :)

**Dimitrios:** but they are not mature...

**Elfed:** so we would not only live longer, we would have increasing capacity over time!

**Marya:** No they are not mature :)

**Elfed:** Mature - meaning they have fewer connections?

**Marya:** yes that's what I mean Elf

**Elfed:** but the cloning process would ensure that they were

**Dimitrios:** no, mature in my sense means that they get wiser decisions

**Elfed:** all your neural connections would be copied too, but wiser decisions arise from neural connections

**Marya:** yes, but then your brain state and neural connections and the state of deterioration of your brain would have to be identical

**Elfed:** not if you had extra capacity, which you would have if you had more brain cells

**Marya:** and if that is the case - then your brain may well continue to deteriorate over time and the youth of your body would not mean anything :)

**Oswy:** I am imagining that your brain power would be cumulative you would get the mental abilities added to the 20 year old body you would then accumulate more knowledge and go on there would be no physical limit to you at all.

**Elfed:** I agree Oswy

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**Marya:** I think that would only be possible Oswy, if you believe that the 'mind' or that which makes you who you are, can be separated from the state of your brain. I do not think it can be so this is why I have a little trouble with the concept :)

**Oswy:** The real question is, is it you that lives forever?

**Dimitrios:** I have to say that the brain deteriorates over time... But then how you explain that in our youth we make silly things?

**Marya:** because in our youth we are still learning by making more mistakes Dimitrios :)

**Elfed:** it deteriorates, but in a new brain that is not a problem

**Marya:** yes, but if you had a new brain it would not work in the same way as the old brain

**Elfed:** we have the vitality of youth and the wisdom gathered over time

**Oswy:** Remember we are trying to establish what PI consists in and can it continue over time?

**Dimitrios:** Oswy, what do you mean by (You)? My body? My soul? My brain? What finally is ME?

**Elfed:** it would work better Marya

**Marya:** it would work differently Elfed - that is what I'm trying to get at :)

**Marya:** Yes Dimitrios - this is the big question - what is me

**Elfed:** ok

**Sojourna:** ok so what does stay constant over time?

**Dimitrios:** In that sense we should ask, do we still live after our physical death? Inside another man's body?

**Oswy:** Dimitrios I wish I knew clearly but i think that I am a combination of mental processes and a body. The two go together. I also believe that if a copy of me is created however exact there is something about the original body with its mental processes that is the real me compared to the copies? Does that make any sense?

**Oswy:** Is that me or the real me Maria? Ha Ha

**Marya:** lol Oswy

**Dimitrios:** Ok Oswy... Your answer is clear

**Sojourna:** Oswy - I have something for you. With the whole cloning thing - can the clones be the same person but not the same human?

**Dimitrios:** In fact this is something that makes me not to be scared by death,

**Oswy:** I also think that what I am is connected to the world. I can only be a certain thing in a certain kind of world. I think this is called externalism. So the me is much more complex than saying I am just my memories.

**Dimitrios:** We all are a part of the world in a certain tiny moment Oswy

**Oswy:** Sojourna. I think I think the exact opposite the clone can be the same human but not the same person.

**Sojourna:** Oh?

**Marya:** I take another view - they are neither the same person nor the same human :)

**Dimitrios:** Interesting!! I think that our souls, our way of feeling cannot be cloned

**Sojourna:** ok why!?

**Marya:** I think they can't be cloned either Dimitrios because I think our feelings are determined by everything around us and everything that influences us - but I do not believe there is a soul; but the biology behind all of this can be cloned

**Dimitrios:** I agree... Perhaps the word "soul" is more or less a theoretical construction,

**Oswy:** Dimitrios I think that also raises another issue that Maria raised before about how long a PI can be counted for if we are changing all the time. You then seem to get into a Hume like situation which says there is no real you just a bundle of ever changing mental and physical phenomena. Even if that is the case \I still think the you the person is linked to the world.

**Marya:** I understand what you mean Dimitrios

**Dimitrios:** I don't know how we can carry a PI, a name, or a number,

**Sojourna:** I can relate to Hume and Parfit

**Marya:** I think we have to do that Dimitrios - but only so that we can function in the world

**Dimitrios:** it characterizes the time, the place that we live in a certain way

**Sojourna:** Good point, Marya.

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**Oswy:** But in this thought experiment which by the way is based on the film The Sixth Day one of Arnie's greatest the thought processes can be scanned they are not our souls but our psychological features.

**Dimitrios:** But a different PI carries us in a different period, place, way of living... I'm absolutely sure that our biological features can be cloned, I'm afraid that cloned people can live around us without even knowing it,

**Marya:** yes, those psychological features (I think) could be cloned but the clone would immediately then be a different person and start adapting to its new environment and the new information it is taking in

**Sojourna:** Yes, I agree

**Dimitrios:** Human brain is so complex, it's impossible for the moment to be cloned

**Oswy:** Its coming up to 8-30 as Moderator I am supposed to sum up. Should I do that?

**Marya:** the thing to keep in mind that no matter how many clones there would be, they would not occupy the same space in time as each other and would therefore be exposed to different inputs - which would then change them

**Sojourna:** Yes, please, Oswy!

**Marya:** sure Oswy :D

**Dimitrios:** Of course!

**Oswy:** This does not mean we can't go on with the discussion.

**Dimitrios:** Ok... Do you believe that today there are clones with human features?

**Marya:** clones of who Dimitrios?

**Dimitrios:** Good question... Of someone who died, I can't think of anything more specific...

**Marya:** I don't think we have developed the technology well enough to do that and have a fully grown clone - but I think it is possible that there are young clones :]

**Dimitrios:** A bit horrifying...

**Marya:** yes it is

**Dimitrios:** Anyway, to answer to Oswy's question, I don't think that these young clones are the same as the prototypes...

**Oswy:** I think that what the debate shows is that the issue of PI involves a complex field of considerations. We have to consider the psychological elements the bodily elements and some would argue the world or environment itself. Cloning seems to be a particular problematic issue since if it were even possible to clone mentally as well as physically or biologically then there seems to be no way of distinguishing the original from the replica. Unless you do it by some external means of measurement. Anybody like to add as I am sure I have left a lot out but my brain is beginning to hurt?

**Marya:** lol Oswy

**Sojourna:** haha Oswy :)

**Sojourna:** I'm just thinking though that in terms of identity does it really matter whether the original and the replica are distinguishable so long as they both claim to have an identity they call "I"; surely in practical, familial, forensic, or external circumstances, but the individual can always claim their "I" and who are were to tell them they are not

**Dimitrios:** But even this "I" distinguishes them,

**Oswy:** As far as the debate is concerned this was a small but significant beginning. We got off to a rather disorganised start but I think that once we got going on the questions well done Sojourna then some structure began to emerge and the debate seemed fairly coherent. There is still a problem of a lot of views at once I wonder how we would have coped with more people? Anyway plenty to think about. its difficult to get informality and structure at the same time?

**Sojourna:** I'm not sure it does Dimitrios, I mean my concept of "I" is my own and you cannot know how I feel that "I".

**Marya:** yes indeed - I think it will always be a little difficult and we will always need to deal with some sort of chaos; but I think starting with taking turns and then going for it afterwards is as good a start as any

**Sojourna:** Oswy, one other possible solution to the organisation is to have a neutral moderator, so that the theme-picker can focus on responding and sticking the discussion and the neutral moderator can just help things along. (maybe)

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**Oswy:** Yes perhaps if we lay down that it goes in turns for say three rounds to start and then open season but following the questions and leave it to the moderator to judge when to move along?

**Sojourna:** yes and maybe just have a note before hand that explains how things will work.

**Marya:** I think the idea of a neutral mod is good Soj, but we are a small group at the moment so we probably don't need to do that just yet

**Sojourna:** yes, I think we all have experience of these types of discussions and as soon as someone says, ok guys let's get to question one, we kind of fall into place intuitively

**Dimitrios:** Each one of us have as centre of the universe ourselves, sometimes I feel that people around me are orbits of me,

**Oswy:** Yes that may be essential if we get more than say half a dozen people, I like the idea of the note Queensbury rules at the start but at least everyone knows where they are.

**Sojourna:** nice image, Dimitrios

**Dimitrios:** but soon I understand that I'm not so important as I told you earlier, I believe that in our present status we are an unimportant tiny part of the world,

**Marya:** yes, I think this is true :)

**Sojourna:** yes

**Dimitrios:** but I'm not able to answer the question, if we are just certain people that live forever, if we meet again somewhere in the world after 100-200 years discussing the same things

**Oswy:** I think it would help the world considerably if we all realized we were all just very small ripples in the deterministic flow.

**Marya:** yes indeed Os, if only

**Sojourna:** indeed

**Dimitrios:** You are right... But this very small can grow; can be just "small"...

