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Personal Identity

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Personal Identity

Abstract

What is the definition of what it means to be a person, what it means to be a human, and the differentiation between the two? Through deductive and inductive reasoning, the argument is made that there is only one universal person who is identical inside all of us and that it is actually our human qualities which make us unique. Similarities and differences are highlighted between the author's person and the established philosophical views of personhood, including Buddhist, David Hume, Cartesian and Hindu philosophies on personal identity. The author suggests that the nature of human hood and the nature of personhood and the differences between the two indicate purpose for the life of the functional human.

Cover Page Footnote

The Faculty Mentor for this project was Dawn Gale, Philosophy.

The closer we look at things the more similar they are – everything can be deduced down to energy, which cannot be observed because it has no mass. It is not our right as philosophers to claim that matter exists because the closer we look at matter it literally disappears before our eyes. The smallest particles literally flicker in and out of existence. Therefore, it is not possible to be a dualist or a materialist. So, not only is there a constant, eternal flowing thing through each and every person on this earth, it is the same constant and eternal thing that constitutes everything including our physical bodies. To use Buddha's famous river example, the water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen atoms with many solutes floating around in them, which are as well, made up of hydrogen atoms, which are combined with some other types of atoms, which are all made up of quarks and leptons, which are the same mysterious particles that the atoms of the mud of banks of the shore consist of, which, altogether are only forms of energy that come from one original form of energy, which has no mass and therefore cannot be observed.

Now this doesn't help us at all when trying to describe identity, kind of like Hume and Buddha said. However, the philosophical advantage of an idea should have nothing do with how or why we arrive at the answers we get. This idea is opposed to what Hume and Buddha and Locke said about personal identity because it does point to a constant thing that cannot be destroyed inside all of us. Beyond its existence, which is all that matters to my philosophy on personal identity, because if it is all that exists, it is all we could possibly be and is truly all that we are, our personal identity included. I will now agree with Hume and Buddha and say that we cannot really understand anything for sure about this constant and eternal force that is who we are because we cannot observe it.

However, when we open our eyes, we can see matter, and we can feel it with our hands. So, for all intensive and philosophical reasons, and according to Hume and Buddha, we must

distinguish matter from energy. We can assume that Hume and Buddha would agree because they spoke, and they said that the unobservable could never explain anything and, therefore, essentially, is not worth speaking on. If Hume and Buddha really followed this rule of their own, they never would have spoken at all, because we can deduce from observing the “observable” up close that nothing can be observed.

I believe that energy takes the form of matter, or nature as we may call it, in order to tell us something about itself, the very unobservable thing that Buddha and Hume said that we should not speak on but that they spoke on extensively. What can matter tell us about energy? What does the natural world tell us about the thing that we cannot see? Well, if we consider nature, or matter, worthy enough to distinguish from energy for practical and philosophical purposes, then it can tell us a lot. But if we throw it out altogether, then we should simply shut our mouths because beyond its existence, which changes everything, which is everything, I agree with Hume when he says, “as if unobservable, immaterial objects . . . could ever explain anything!” Therefore, in order to speak philosophically we must turn to matter and consider it real for purposes of discussion.

Now, when we are trying to define the identity of the human it is not ridiculous to say that the human consists of two essential parts, matter (the physical body), and energy – the moving force within the body. To demonstrate with clarity that the human consists of two “things” we can image an intact corpse shortly after its death. It is possible and happens occasionally that all the physical mass of a body remains intact and only the energy that ran through that body, that made that body human, is missing, meaning - that the human is dead but not by any destruction to their physical body. For example, a person could be suffocated by a pillow and die. Immediately after death there it is likely that their corpse would look the same

and consist of the exact same, intact parts that made up the person physically before death. But if you asked someone who knew them, or anyone at all, they would not say that this lifeless heap was anything like the Andy they knew when he was alive. His physical body is no longer able to function because it is no longer able to contain that mysterious moving force within it. In this way (of course only for philosophical purposes) we can separate the human into two parts, the physical and the energy, which are both necessary to constitute a human.

Now that we have two parts to the human, I will go on to argue that there are two distinctly different kinds of observable traits in humans. With two different types of traits and two different “things” to put them in, we can then attribute one set of characteristics to the physical body and the other set of characteristics to the energy that runs through the physical body and constitutes the person. For, it would not seem likely, especially concerning the nature of these traits, that both should go in the body or that both should go in the energy. And it would be even sillier to assume the existence a “third” unobservable thing without any evidence to do so. In my attempt to describe personal identity, I will go further and claim that, while both energy and physical body make us human, the energy that flows through our bodies is what makes us a person and is, in itself, the essence of personhood. Then, if we can recognize and describe one type of traits and, by its nature, attribute it to the physical body, then we can, by process of elimination and considering its nature, attribute the other set of traits to energy, and by describing this set of traits, even if only vaguely, we will have successfully, even if only vaguely, described personal identity.

To further illustrate the identity of the human, which will help us describe the physical traits of the body, we can think of the human as a jac-o-lantern with a candle inside, consisting of two parts. One part is the carved pumpkin; the other part is the light inside. Imagine two jac-o-

lanterns in a completely dark room. Each of them has characteristics that are unique. Their mouths and strange teeth are shaped differently, one has eyebrows . . . one looks in shock, the other looks scary, but the flames inside each of them emit the same light. Of course, the comparison to the human is that the light inside the pumpkin represents the energy (the person) and the carved pumpkin represent the physical body, the mass.

In this dark room, without that light, it would be impossible to see the jac-o-lanterns at all, especially their individual characteristics. If only observed with the eyes, the pumpkins along with the room, would cease to exist. But if the physical part of the jac-o-lantern was altered it would likely still resemble a jac-o-lantern, at least you could still tell there was something there. And if the carved pumpkin part was completely eliminated there would still remain the light, and by the light you could see the room. Again, if the light were eliminated, nothing at all, including the pumpkin, candle and room could be seen. This is to show that the more essential part of the jac-o-lantern's two-part existence is the light that shines from within them. In this sense we could call the physical traits, the carved pumpkin part "dependent" on the light part.

We can also see from this example that the carved pumpkin, the physical body, limits the light from the candle. While we can see that it is these characteristics that make the jac-o-lanterns unique and make them distinguishable as jac-o-lanterns, the pumpkin part actually inhibits the more essential part of their existence, the light. The light, would have instead been more "free" if they had no carved pumpkin part at all; it probably would have made the whole room light in fact. In this way we can refer to the physical traits as "limiting characteristics" that limit the more essential part of our existence.

The human body, the physical mass that makes up our body, these limiting qualities, are extremely complicated, obviously far more complicated than a carved pumpkin. In every way,

the characteristics of the body are possibly beautiful (possibly in that it can be observed and looked at like a machine). Even though we may never fully understand the human body and its complex abilities, it is possible to. Just like we may never fully understand the depths of the ocean, but it would be possible to with a certain amount of time and a large amount of resources. A good example of this possible beauty is eyesight, a process that, when considered, may seem like an apparent miracle but today is very closely understood by scientists and doctors alike. Still, the complexities of this machine blow my mind. Nearly every day I experience an extreme feeling of gratitude at the beautiful image before me and, somehow, at the same time, in my mind, thanks to my eyes. But someone can be blind from birth and never see a thing. This is because something is wrong with their eyes, because something is wrong with their physical body. Following this logic, I would tend to put eyesight into the human body and not attribute it to the person itself. Other physical traits that are obviously tied to the human body, like nose shape, physical beauty, size of foot, I would also put in the body. Beyond these apparent bodily characteristics, I continue further and attribute several mental characteristics to the body as well assuming, but not completely confident, that they take place mostly in the brain, like intelligence, personality, willpower and virtue.

All of these limiting characteristics in the body could also be considered “limited qualities” in the sense that each human was born with a slightly different set of these characteristics that they are stuck with. For example, each person was born with a certain capacity for intelligence, and each person is limited throughout their life by this capacity. However, while these qualities of the body are limited, we still have power to control and alter them within a certain amount. For example, we can alter the width of our arm by lifting weights, but even the amount of muscle growth we are able to attain is limited by biology. For, no man

can gain a thousand pounds in muscle, and one man might be able to gain more muscle mass relative to his weight than another man could, and, perhaps these two men would gain their muscle at different rates; anyone has the power to change their physical appearance in several relatively limited ways. It is the same with the distinctive qualities of the mind, like intelligence. We are born with a certain predetermined set of mental qualities and have control over and can exercise to become even more individualize in the ways that we chose. However, the amounts that we are able to vary these mental characteristics that make us unique are also limited, like the physical body. No human can become infinitely intelligent or virtuous.

It is worth noting that, because of the limited nature of the physical characteristics, that these are the traits that make up unique and distinguishable from each other as humans. Although it may be tempting to do so, we cannot call ourselves as humans all the same. It is obvious that we look different on the outside, but even at a mental level we are all different. For example, a mentally challenged person, while they have the ability to become smarter in their life time, will never possibly be able to attain the level of intelligence that Einstein did. In this way we can called the physical traits of the body, “unique,” or “distinct.”

In an attempt to describe the traits of the person, I tried to recognize and define traits in the human that are essentially different from these “dependent,” “limiting,” “limited,” and “unique” traits of the body, and, in doing so, I realized that I must proceed very carefully trying to define these traits. For, the traits of the person are not directly observable like the traits of the body, and therefore cannot possibly be understood like the complex but plausible physical trait of eyesight. So, instead of aiming to define these traits, I determined to be satisfied with only vague descriptions or hints of personal identity out of the awareness that I was trying to describe something unobservable and beyond my full comprehension. And again, the idea that - all matter

is energy and therefore all we consist of - is all that is necessary to my idea on personal identity. For this in itself proves that we are an constant unobservable being that exists outside of the laws of nature. Now, as I aim to separate and describe the two parts of the human, I am simply proceeding for entertainment and out of curiosity to see if the philosophical matter can tell us anything more about ourself as a person.

The first trait I will try to attribute to the person is consciousness. And to do this I will first aim to define my idea of consciousness as clearly as possible. A loose definition of my idea of consciousness is simply “the ability to experience,” or “the ability to perceive,” or maybe even “the ability to feel,” or maybe even “feeling” itself.

I would argue that we are conscious in this basic sense even during blackout periods or periods of “unconsciousness,” such as sleep without dreaming. Some would point to periods of black out or unconsciousness to represent a time when we perceive nothing as living humans. But, if we look at these periods of unconsciousness closer and the events leading up to them, we may come to find that we were actually conscious the whole time. For example, I sometimes, in the morning find myself in a state in between sleeping and being awake. And during this time, I am both aware of the reality of waking up, and the dream I was having when I was fully asleep, and, sometimes, as I come into awakesness, the dream I was having and the memory of the dream completely slip away from me, and if it was a pleasant dream that I wanted to recall later, I would not be able to. Now fully awake and attempting to recall the dream I was just having a minute ago, I can remember nothing, and, thinking back, it appears that this was a period of unconsciousness. If I didn’t have the memory of that brief period in between dream and awakesness, I surely would not have a clue that only a moment before I was in another world in my mind, in a dream.

I wonder what else I have experienced during the times I am only able to recall nothing. I think that, instead of consciousness turning off and back on, we are simply unable to recall certain periods during which we were conscious.

When John Locke tries to define consciousness as “the ability to consider itself as itself as the same thinking thing in different times and places.” I believe he goes way, way too far. I even think Des Cartes goes too far when he considers himself as a person as, “a thinking being.” For myself, I consider “thinking” to be the articulation of feelings, or experiences into language, and that language is only possible in beings with senses similar to the five sense that humans experience. How could someone, or a being possibly come to learn a language without smelling, hearing, seeing, feeling, or tasting? Therefore I would put “thinking” into the physical body and separate it from consciousness which constitutes personal identity. So that, theoretically, it would be possible to be conscious without being able to articulate an experience or a feeling from the experience into language, which would constitute thought, and by this we are able to separate consciousness from thinking, and boil it down to a more basic concept.

With this more basic idea of consciousness I claim that animals without the ability to articulate their feelings into language and, likewise, infants who are unable to comprehend and produce words are also conscious. To claim that consciousness is something more specific that turns on at a certain age I find unfounded.

David Hume in his piece on personal identity argues that we as people are nothing more than the individual perceptions that we experience, that that these perceptions are separate from each other, and that there is no observable personal characteristic that we can point to as lasting or ongoing. To illustrate this, Hume gives the analogy of a theater show. He argues that we are merely the individual performances on the stage and that we fill in the gaps between

performances with recollections of past experiences. I disagree with Hume and would assert that whether we are the audience watching the show or the show itself, that perception and experience never stop. We are constantly taking in new experiences, and there are no separate experiences. Imagine yourself at a carnival, playing games to win stuffed animals. There are separate games at separate booths. After you land the ping pong ball inside the fish bowl and claim your prize, and before you head to the impossible-basketball-shot to win an even bigger prize, you perceive a million different experiences along the way. You may have only played two games, but in between you smelt cotton candy, observed an elderly gentleman in a tank top with a piercing, and heard a child scream on the ride above you, over your right shoulder. And, if we look further into these smaller experiences we will see that they too are connected by even smaller experiences and, in the end, that there is no differentiation between one experience and another at all, and, in turn, that consciousness is never interrupted. In this sense, I would argue that consciousness is an observable human characteristic that we can point to as on-going and uninterrupted.

When are we not experiencing? Even inside the body of a comatose hospital patient that appears totally inactive and unconscious, complex chemical reactions are taking place that monitor and balance things like PH and the production of insulin. Any kind of reaction is direct evidence of some kind of experience. How would these complex biological processes be possible if the person was not, in some way, capable of perceiving, or experiencing something? This is to illustrate that while we are alive we are always conscious in some way, and instead of us being conscious only of separate perceptions, the ability to experience never turns off while we are alive.

The ability to experience, consciousness does not require the brain or the five senses. This can be illustrated by looking up close at a more basic form of life. For an example we might turn to a single cell protozoan, one of the smallest and most basic units of life. In my biology class we viewed protozoans through a 400x microscope. Up close through the microscope these organisms, which only consist of a single cell, appear to resemble small sea creatures. They move around quickly, though without much apparent direction. They are searching for the food that the researchers intentionally placed in their watery environment. Although these tiny organisms don't have eyes, or even a brain, they are able to sense vaguely the areas in the water with the highest concentration of food. As they swim around underneath the microscope lenses, it is hard to tell if they are eating or not, but, by their movements, you can easily see that they are looking for something. In such a basic unit of life, it is hard to process how they are able to show so much intention without having a brain, which is necessary to the use of the five senses. With my broader definition of consciousness, I would say that these brainless, single celled organisms are conscious because of their apparent ability to perceive and react to experiences. This also goes to show that consciousness goes far beyond the limits of the five senses and the brain.

In response to the blackout periods during which I claim we are conscious, someone might ask, "If we are really conscious during these blackout times, what is playing out in the mind? What does consciousness look like?" To that I would respond that it is impossible to know. It is impossible to prove what is happening without any recollection of that time period. It is simply like the tree falling in the forest analogy. No one can ever give an for sure answer to these types of questions. While it would be wrong for me to say with certainty what is playing out in the mind during these blackout periods, it would be equally unethical to assert that nothing

takes during these times, as Hume and John Locke did. We can only say for certain that no one will ever know if the tree made a noise without a witness.

But, looking at the trend and direction of the happenings leading up to a mysterious event can often shed light on the mystery itself. Regarding consciousness, it seems that periods of unconsciousness always come when experience is at a high. For example, when an experience is too much to take, sometimes humans faint. Looking at the timing of when people faint, it almost appears that experience becomes so intense that the person's physical traits, like recollection, cannot keep up and fail them over these blackout periods of time. Why then, considering the trend in experience, would we assume that, during the few seconds that the person is blacked-out, nothing, that no perception is taking place in the mind? To me it would seem more likely that people are actually experiencing more inside their minds during these times than when they are in full power of their physical traits such as the five senses and recollection. The same trend and direction can be seen in the blackout periods of dreamless sleep at the end of a long day. The person is exhausted from an overload of experience and they slip into a blackout state, which they are unable to recall later. The same trend can be again seen in periods of "unconsciousness" due to drunkenness, when a person's experience peaks from an intake of alcohol, recollection starts to fail them. Even though they can't remember it, they were still able to experience things as they walked around drunk. It seems then that consciousness and recollection are directly related and opposed to each other, that once experience reaches a certain level, recollection fails us.

Do not our most free thoughts often take place in our dreams, which we can often not remember? Neuroscience has proven that people who claim they don't have dreams are often among the most active dreamers. It is almost as if consciousness/perception at a certain point

becomes too much for the senses inside the physical body to hold, so that the physical body shuts down, including recollection. And as we have stated, it is impossible to determine what happens during a period of which there is no recollection. So, instead of asserting that nothing whatsoever is taking place during these times we should assume that consciousness continues and that recollection and the physical body are what shut down and the reason we are not able to recall our experiences during these periods.

Using consciousness as an example, we can go on to describe the nature of the personal traits, which will further distinguish them from the physical traits of the body. Because consciousness at this most basic level is constant and never interrupted, we as humans are subject to it at all times. We have no power over it. There is no way to turn the ability to experience off, and all around us we can see people attempting in vain to try to control it with medication and illegal drugs. We see people trying to reason with it in yoga classes and through meditation, but even then they are only accepting this fact by recognizing that they have no control over consciousness and are, in a sense, worshiping it. Others give up the battle and enter into the mystery beyond human life in hopes that consciousness does not follow them there. But even that they do not know for sure. In this way consciousness reigns free in the human and therefore could be called a “free” trait.

In addition to being called a “free” trait, consciousness, along with all the other traits outside of the physical body could be referred to as “perfect,” in the sense that it is non-distinct. At its most basic level, everyone is subject to, and, at the same time, constituted of consciousness or the ability to experience, in the same way. No one is more conscious than another. Even though people may have different levels of the physical traits that we discussed before, like personality, virtue, recollection, will power, that altogether make up their personality, or outward

appearance to others, humans are all subject to a constant and uninterrupted ability to experience equally. In this sense consciousness could be called “perfect,” or “non-distinct.”

Along with consciousness, another nondistinct, personal trait that I will try to attribute to energy is memory. When we separate memory from recollection it is easier to see the perfect nature of memory. Also, when we considered memory as a personal trait we must not consider it necessarily separate from consciousness, for as we are trying to describe something out of the natural order we cannot quite contain it with our limited vocabulary. Memory might be part of consciousness or it might be separate from it or it may even be indicative of some kind of greater trait that we are not as humans capable of understanding.

When arguing for memory as a personal trait, I argue again that it is rather the failure of physical traits in the body that make it seem as though memory itself is faulty, in this case recollection. We can see this play out consistently in our everyday lives. How often does our recollection fail us regarding something we doubtlessly have stored somewhere in our memory? Or how often do we recall something from the past that we had no clue we remembered? This displays the characteristic faultiness of recollection and is indicative of the extreme power of memory.

Another way to demonstrate the apparent perfectness of memory is to try to consider all the things that you have stored in your mind right now but are not currently recalling. Think of the amount of memories in there that you are not recalling! It would be impossible. They are too numerous. If memory is capable of containing all that . . . and recollection is so prone to failure how can we set limits on memory? I believe that the memory is constantly working and that we never forget even the most insignificant perception. It is silly to me to think that your memory

starts and stops, that it picks and chooses only certain things to capture along the way and nothing else in between.

Along with memory and consciousness another trait that I attribute to the person is moral. For I simply think that our use of the terms “good” and “bad” are directly indicative of a universal sense of good and bad. For it seems that a universal sense of right and wrong innately comes along with the action of judgement. How could we judge and punish someone for something if there was no common sense of right and wrong? (I need to work on my argument for moral here but I swear that I believe it).

Another aspect of these personal traits that is different from the physical traits is that all the traits that make us a person, all the traits that can be attributed to energy, are inactive, or not capable of action. It is almost as if we are subject to our personhood in this sense. With our energy alone we cannot affect anything, we cannot act, we cannot change the world around us or make a decision. Therefore, freewill cannot possibly exist in the person, and instead exists in the body, or the physical self, which leads us to an interesting perspective on freewill. If freewill is in the body, and therefore a limited and limiting characteristic, then the idea of freewill is an oxymoron, the opposite of free, which, I think, when we consider the nature of the common understanding of freewill, makes perfect sense. Is not freewill commonly understood as the ability to make a decision? For a decision to mean anything do not the consequences of that decision have to differ from each other? If the consequences of a decision are exactly the same then it is not a decision by definition. But if the consequences of a decision differ from each other, and, potentially, in the end, one choice is better for the decider than the other, does not along with the very idea of decision come a certain burden, or stress? And is this not contrary to the common idea of the word “free” and, indeed, the idea of freewill? But it all makes sense

practically. Many humans have looked at dogs and other less capable beings and thought, “if only I had that ease of life as a dog, if only I was not subject to the constant burden of decision.” Freewill is a burden and inhibits personal freedom, just as all physical traits inhibit the free and constant traits of the person.

This inverse relationship between personal and bodily traits can be more clearly illustrated I believe by considering an object. Imagine the cable that is used to connect a DVD player or a video game consul to a television. Where the cable plugs into the gaming consul there is only one possible connection. But, on the other end, where the cable connects to the TV, there are three separate holes to connect the wire to the TV. Also, these wires must be placed according to their color, in the right hole out of the three, or else the consul will not work properly in connection with the television. If the sound connection gets placed in the wrong hole the game will display no sound, but possibly, if the other cords are place in the correct places, there might be a black and white image, or at least some kind of static on the screen. In this case, although the game is not working properly, it is still functioning.

Now, imagine a pair of scissors in close proximity to this wire. And imagine that the energy running through that cable, which is completely essential to not only the consul, but also to the sound, color, and image displayed on the screen, as representative of our person, the energy that runs through all of us. Now, it is only because of advanced human technology and science in relatively recent years that we have been able to restrain the incredible power that is electricity and control it for our intended purposes. In this sense, we can understand electricity, the energy that is essential to the gaming consul and the television to have been more “free” and unrestrained before the invention of functional electricity. With this idea of “free” in mind, would the electricity flowing through the cable be more free if someone took the scissors and cut

the single strand of cable that attaches to the consul, or if the scissors cut one of the three strands that attach to the TV? Surely, if only the sound cable is cut that connects to the TV, the energy within the remaining two cables is still being restricted and directed into the image and color connections. So that the energy within the cable would be more free if it were cut at the single stand consul end. Of course, in this case though, neither the sound image or color would work. Now if this example is applied to humans, we can see that the more free we are personally, the less functional we are as humans, and vice versa.

I believe from this we can draw some very surprising, at least interesting, conclusions about our nature as humans. Obviously, if this is true, then the disabled are more personally free than the fully capable human. This would also mean that a child at its earliest stages is more free as a person than the lucid adult. This would also imply that trees and other plant-life are more personally free than humans. And if we further extend this theory into the impossible, beyond life and death where we are uninhibited by the bodily traits, it would seem that we are more personally free here than any time while we are alive. However, again, this is not for us to say with certainty one way or another. It is the tree in the forest analogy.

But perhaps more importantly, I believe, is that if our functionality as humans restricts our free personal traits, then this implicates a burden and hardship upon the fully capable human. It is then, in some sense, a curse to be “functional.” And, I believe that this makes total sense and aligns with reality. As humans do we not become restless during extended periods of idleness? Are we not constantly subject to the feeling that we could and should be doing more? Is there not something that drives us when we are sitting still into action? And if we fight this guilty feeling and remain idle is there not some essential feeling of remorse accompanying this decision? Can anyone possibly escape this inevitable burden? Yet at the same time, do not we long to remain in

control of making our own choices? Do we not cling to life so that only we can make one more decision for ourselves?

If the creator of that original singular energy which matter is composed of is in anyway just or good or fair, he would not inflict this innate burden upon the fully functional human if not for some greater good or purpose, and, I believe that this very burden which arises out of the inverse relationship between the bodily and personal traits indicates just that, purpose. For it would be cruel to create a functional being who is burdened by their very functionality if there were not a purpose for that functionality.

Now this leads to one essential point where I disagree with Buddhist philosophy. Basically, I believe that Buddha, before his enlightenment was experiencing suffering, not necessarily because of his grasping or wishing to be a permanent being (which he is), but rather because he was grasping at the wrong thing, he was assuming the wrong purpose. It is documented that Buddha, before his enlightenment pursued pleasure in the physical world, through material and indulgence, and from this he experienced suffering. While I do agree that Buddha's grasping for these things was the cause of his suffering, I do not believe the grasping itself was the cause of his suffering, and, instead, I would assert that his grasping for the wrong thing – pleasure in a world of purpose - was the cause of his suffering. Therefore, I disagree with Buddha's reaction of stifling his desire and wish for lasting identity. To me that would be like if someone without extensive knowledge of auto-mechanics was faced with the problem of repairing a broken engine, and, in order to avoid the frustration they were experiencing at their inability to fix the problem, simply gave up and put the tool down (the tool is our physical bodies). Without a doubt, if this person suppressed their desire to fix the engine and get back on the road - and stopped attempting to fix the problem, they would avoid some potential suffering

in the future. But they would also be avoiding and ignoring the observable qualities of the tool that clearly indicate it was made for a purpose, made to do something, and in turn they would be wasting a thing that was created to help them and, in turn, the ability to drive.

In a stark contrast between my feelings about Buddhist philosophy on personal identity, I came to find throughout this project that my ideas on personal identity are almost identical to those of Hindu philosophy. Even though I arrived at my person and human independently of Hindu philosophy, they are completely compatible at all the key points. Because of this similarity I have become extremely interested in the Hindu religion and philosophy and feel a special attachment to the people of that religion.

To summarize, physical mass and energy make us human. The physical traits of the body are “possible” “distinct” or “unique” and “limited” and “limiting” and “dependent.” Energy is what we consist of as a person, and energy is, in itself, conscious with perfect memory and moral, and all these traits of energy are “free” traits, “nondistinct” or “perfect” traits, “inactive” traits and “constant” traits and differ essentially from the traits of the physical body. Because these personal traits are non-distinct that means that we are all one person, indistinguishable from each other, and because energy runs through plants and animals, they are the person too, and because all matter is made of energy, matter is conscious with perfect moral and memory too, which leads us back to the start.