**Review of personal identity**

*What does your view say about each of the following? Where it disagrees, this is a potential objection to your view that you have to respond to:*

* Common sense says that you were once a young child (who is different from you in most ways).
* Common sense says that, if you transplant a living brain from one body to another, personal identity transplants with the brain (and mental states), not with the body.
* Olson argues that you were once a fetus who had no psychological states.
* Brison has good evidence that trauma can prevent persistence and narration can restore someone’s identity.
* Schechter argues that the split-brain subject is a single person, but two thinkers.

**Group mental states**

*mental state*

*What are some examples of mental states?*

1. In 2010, there was a stampede at the Love Parade in Berlin. Thousands of people were jammed into a tunnel trying to enter a concert when panic broke out and people attempted to stampede out of the tunnel. 19 were killed and hundreds injured. For each person in the stampede (who was not harmed), their absence would have made no difference to how many were hurt.
2. Volkswagen built and sold millions of cars with systems designed to cheat emissions detections. Tens of thousands of people bought these cars who would not have bought these cars without this fraud. Tens of thousands of tons of pollution were released into the atmosphere that would not have been released otherwise, which caused dozens of deaths in the U.S. and likely more in Europe.[[1]](#footnote-1) This led to massive losses of money on the part of investors.

No single individual caused this fraud. The idea for the fraud came from many people in Volkswagen’s hierarchy, and had to be approved by many others in order to be implemented. Further, for the fraud to actually be put into practice, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people had to contribute, millions of dollars had to have been spent, and there had to be a massive infrastructure in place already.

1. No single individual caused the harms in either a or b.
2. There clearly is moral responsibility for the harms in b, but not in a.
3. 1 and 2 are best explained by saying that the Volkswagen corporation is responsible for the harms in b.
4. All things that can be morally responsible has mental states like desires and beliefs.
5. Thus, some corporations have some mental states.

**Another argument for group mental states**

1. People say that corporations have mental states.
2. [insert claim about epistemic justification here]
3. Thus, we are justified in believing that corporations have mental states [unless there are defeaters].

**Are corporate mental states just the mental states of corporate members?**

1. If a corporation has mental state M, then every member of the corporation has M.
2. If a corporation has mental state M, then [all/most/some] of the board of directors has M.
3. If a corporation has mental state M, then at least one member has M.

*interpretivism:* A has mental state M iff predicting and understanding A’s behavior involves ascribing M to A

**Two arguments for interpretivism (?)**

Brison: “The traumatic event is *experienced* as culturally embedded… is *remembered* as such… and is *shaped* and *reshaped* in memory over time according, at least in part, to how others in the survivor’s culture respond.”

Roediger & DeSoto: “remembering the past requires an attempt to reconstruct the events experienced previously.”

Self-perception theory: “Individuals come to ‘know’ their own attitudes, emotions, and other states partially by inferring them from observations of their own overt behavior and/or the circumstances in which this behavior occurs.” (Bem, 1972, Self-Perception Theory)

Maybe also Schechter?

1. The mental states we have depend on how others interpret us.
2. The mental states we have depend on how we interpret ourselves.
3. If the mental states we have depend on interpretation, then it is plausible that whether we have mental states at all depends on how we are interpreted.
4. [Certain?] mental states are [only?] important because they allow us to understand and predict behavior in a “characteristic way.” [maybe: they allow us to understand and predict *rational* behavior?]

* There’s a difference in how we understand and predict what objects do (e.g. understanding and predicting machine behavior) and what humans and animals do.

1. There is no/little reason for mental states to be anything more than whatever allows us to understand and predict behavior in that “characteristic way.”
2. Thus, any time we can understand and predict behavior in the “characteristic way,” there are mental states.

1. The NY Times estimates that this excess pollution caused over 100 deaths in the U.S. alone. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/29/upshot/how-many-deaths-did-volkswagens-deception-cause-in-us.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)