

Interpersonal-Telepresence and Personal Identity

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Suppose there are two persons, who are observationally identified as Adam (A) and Bob (B), and in whose necks the first type of connection is kept intact so each circulation system works as usual, but the second type of connection is re-arranged through a wireless telecommunication mechanism as follows. A's information channel in his neck is cut and thus disconnected, but the appearance of the neck as the connection between the head and other parts of the body does not change significantly. Each end of the cut will be respectively connected to a radio transmitter-receiver. Consequently, all information that should originally go to A's brain is now intercepted and broadcasted and thus does not reach A's brain. B's neck has undergone a similar treatment with similar radio devices. Furthermore, A's brain will receive information from B's non-head part of body plus the information from A's own head with all sense organs (eyes, ears, etc.) as usual. B's brain's connection to his own head and to A's body is of the same symmetrical type. From the other direction, A's lower-than-neck part of the body receives commands from B's brain, and B's from A's. Let us call such a setup between A and B a "Cross-Communication Situation" or CCS for short. In such a situation, A and B will each see, with the eyes sending information to the brain without telecommunication, his original body connected as before. But they are only able to feel and control one another's, instead of one's own, lower-than-neck parts of the body. On the basis of CCS, we add a helmet. It is similar to the helmet used in the regular virtual reality technology, just with a minor modification. Let the two small video screens and two earphones receive signals wirelessly from other broadcasters. Outside the helmet, on the spots of the two eyes are mounted two video cameras and on the spots of the two ears, two microphones, which will pick up sounds from outside and the person's voice. The picture and the sounds they pick up will be, of course, broadcasted for other receivers. In addition, we need to attach to the helmet a speaker that will be activated by signals from the other party. Furthermore, the cross-communication now includes the information that controls the head movement from one to the other. In such a setting, we have an interpersonal-telepresence situation between any broadcaster and receiver. If such a setting is extended from two persons to a whole group of persons among whom connections can be freely switched, we will have a Community of Interpersonal-Telepresence. In such a situation, each person's self-identity is always unified without confusion, but our identity of other persons will become fundamentally ambiguous. In this paper, how such a discrepancy between self-identity and mutual identity

is analyzed. It will show how the first-person perspective cannot be reduced to the third-person one. I will conclude as follows: The splintered spatial locality-identity in CCS can be compensated by, without transportation of any part of the body across a distance, a simultaneous cross-communication of sensory information that results in a re-established unity of self-perception; as a shifted center of observing acts, the self-identified person always maintains an unambiguous unity. Such a space compensation leads to the insight that one's alleged first-person locality-identity is not the same as identifying one's personhood in a locality in the space. The person as self-identified unity does not occupy a position in the space.