

# Personal-identity non-cognitivism\*

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## Abstract

In this paper, I outline and defend a new approach to personal-identity—personal-identity non-cognitivism—and argue that it has several advantages over its cognitivist rivals. On this view utterances of personal-identity sentences express a non-cognitive attitude towards relevant person-stages. The resulting view offers a pleasingly nuanced picture of what we are doing when we utter such sentences.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

*Personal-identity sentences* are sentences that we all use when thinking and talking about the conditions under which we persist. Though there are many such sentences, in what follows I focus on two broad kinds. I call the first *survival sentences*. Where E is some token event (or type of event),<sup>1</sup> the following are schematic survival sentences<sup>2</sup>:

1. I would survive E
2. You would survive E
3. He/she<sup>3</sup> would survive E
4. I did survive E

\*With thanks to [blinded] for feedback on earlier versions of this paper.

<sup>1</sup>For instance, a particular instance of having one's head removed in a token beheading; frequently we are more interested in types of events, such as beheadings, which include all such tokens.

<sup>2</sup>This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

<sup>3</sup>This is shorthand for whichever third-person singular pronouns there are, or should be.

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5. You did survive E
6. He/she did survive E

When the referent of the indexical is plugged into the schema, as is a value for E, we have a particular *instance* of a survival sentence. For instance, when (1) is uttered by Freddie, and E is the event of eating salmon, the sentence is ‘Freddie would survive eating salmon’.

Instances of (1)—(3) are *prospective* survival sentences; instances of (4)—(6) are *retrospective* survival sentences. Instances of (1) and (4) are *first-person* survival sentences, instances of (2) and (5) are *second-person* survival sentences and instances of (3) and (6) are *third-person* survival sentences.

In addition to survival sentences are *same-person sentences*. Schematic sentences of this kind include:

7. I am the same person as P;
8. You are the same person as P;
9. He/she is the same person as P;
10. P\* is the same person as P.

Instances of (7) are *first-person* same-person sentences, instances of (8) are *second-person* same-person sentences and instances of (9), and quite likely (10), are *third-person* same-person sentences. (7)—(10) can be retrospective or prospective.

Then *personal-identity cognitivism* is the view that combines two claims: first, that personal-identity sentences express propositions and are hence apt to take a truth-value and, second, that in uttering these sentences we assert the content of those propositions.

**PI Cognitivism**=df: (i) personal-identity sentences express propositions and (ii) utterances of personal-identity sentences assert the propositional contents of those sentences.

So, for example, when Freddie utters ‘I would survive eating salmon’, according to cognitivists, Freddie asserts a truth-apt proposition, namely <Freddie would survive eating salmon>.

Personal-identity cognitivism is the orthodox view. As such, philosophical theorising focuses on explicating the conditions under which personal-identity sentences (and utterances thereof) are true.

Call the relation that obtains between person-phases<sup>4</sup>  $p_1$ , and  $p_2$ , such that in ordinary English it's true that  $p_2$  is the same person as  $p_1$ , the *same-person relation*. Then the same-person relation might be numerical identity, so that  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  are the same enduring person: they are, literally, *phases* of a single object. Or it might be that  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  are distinct short-lived objects—*person-stages*—and the same-person relation is a continuity relation that obtains between them, in virtue of which  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  are both parts of some larger temporally extended perduring person. In what follows I will talk of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  as person-stages, though for the most part, nothing hangs on this choice.

*Cognitivist non-reductionists* or *simple theorists*, hold either that there is no informative, non-trivial account of the same-person relation, or that there is such an account, but it appeals to facts

<sup>4</sup>‘Person-phase’ as neutral between an enduring person-at-a-time and a person-stage of a perduring person.

that are not reducible to facts about the psychological or physical properties of, and relations between, person-stages.<sup>5</sup> *Cognitivist reductionists*<sup>6</sup> hold that the obtaining of the same-person relation reduces to facts about the psychological or physical properties of, and relations between, person-stages. Psychological continuity theorists think that the same-person relation is the relation of psychological continuity<sup>7</sup>; animalists think it is the relation of being-the-same-animal-as,<sup>8</sup> (and so on).

Even ‘non-standard’ views of personal-identity presuppose cognitivism. For instance, Sider (2001) argues that the world fails to determinately make some personal-identity sentences true or false.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, these sentences express truth-apt propositions; it is just that some of those propositions are neither determinately true nor determinately false. Likewise, so-called conativists, or conventionalists, hold that non-cognitive attitudes directly determine *which* proposition is expressed by a personal-identity utterance<sup>10</sup> or determine *whether* what is asserted is true.<sup>11</sup> In either case, though, the assumption is that personal-identity sentences assert the propositional content of those sentences express propositions, and utterances of these assert those propositional contents.

By contrast, *personal-identity non-cognitivism* combines two claims: first, that personal-identity sentences do not express propositions, and, second, that when we utter those sentences we do not assert any such propositional contents (since there are none). So in uttering such sentences, we do not report truth-apt beliefs, we instead express a non-cognitive attitude.<sup>12</sup>

**PI Non-Cognitivism**=df: (i) personal-identity sentences do not express propositions and (ii) utterances of personal-identity sentences express non-cognitive attitudes.

So when Freddie utters ‘I would survive eating salmon,’ he expresses some non-cognitive attitude (more, shortly, on what that attitude might be) towards some object (more, shortly, on what that object might be).

This paper aims both to articulate and motivate personal-identity non-cognitivism. Still, I hope the paper will be of interest even to cognitivists. Although cognitivists are committed to holding that utterances of personal-identity sentences assert propositions, and thereby (typically) report cognitive attitudes (i.e. beliefs) they need not deny that in making such utterances we often, or even always, express certain non-cognitive attitudes. Indeed, I think this is a natural thing to think whether one is a cognitivist or a non-cognitivist. To date, however, cognitivists have focussed on explicating

<sup>5</sup>See Chisholm (1976); Lowe (1996); Merricks (1998 and 1999) and Shoemaker and Swinburne (1984).

<sup>6</sup>Parfit (1984, p. 210).

<sup>7</sup>Shoemaker (1984), Noonan (2003), Perry (1972), Baker (2000).

<sup>8</sup>Snowdon (1990), Snowdon (2014), van Inwagen (1990) and Olson (1997).

<sup>9</sup>In part because there is no one, correct, way to carve nature at its joints when it comes to personal-identity, and hence different candidate personal-identity relations can be equally eligible candidates to make true our assertions.

<sup>10</sup>See Kovacs (2016).

<sup>11</sup>Conventionalist/conativist views of this kind include those of Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2020b); Whiting (1986); Kovacs (2016, 2020); Longenecker (2022) Braddon-Mitchell & Miller, 2004; Miller (2009); West (1996); Braddon-Mitchell and West (2001). For views in this vicinity see also Johnston (1989) and White (1989).

<sup>12</sup>There’s a version of personal-identity non-cognitivism according to which although personal-identity sentences express propositions and hence are themselves truth-apt, what you and I *do* when we utter those sentences is not assert that content, but express a non-cognitive attitude towards that content. This latter view is not what I have in mind.

substantive (i.e. non-minimalist) truth-conditions for the propositions thus uttered, and as a result, have often given little consideration to which non-cognitive attitudes might also be expressed by those utterances.<sup>13</sup> So if, when all is said and done, you are not convinced that non-cognitivism is true, I hope that there is still value in the discussion of the connection between certain non-cognitive attitudes and utterances of personal-identity sentences.

That said, this paper argues for non-cognitivism about personal-identity. In Section 2 I consider which non-cognitive attitudes are expressed by personal-identity utterances. In Section 3 I consider to what object those attitudes are directed, and offer the beginnings of a non-cognitivist analysis of some first-person personal-identity sentences. In Section 4 I consider second- and third-person personal-identity sentences. Finally, in Section 5 I outline four considerations that motivate non-cognitivism over its cognitivist rival.

## 2 | WHICH ATTITUDES?

### 2.1 | Before we begin, a few preliminaries are in order

First, personal-identity non-cognitivism could be either a hermeneutic thesis or a revisionary thesis. It could be the view that the best interpretation of what we are in fact doing when we utter personal-identity sentences, is expressing certain non-cognitive attitudes; or it could be the thesis that this is what we should be doing when we utter such sentences. I intend the former of these; having said that, much of what I say could be brought to bear as a reason to endorse the revisionary thesis even if the hermeneutic thesis is false.

Second, there are perfectly general objections to non-cognitivism about *any* domain of discourse. I will not attempt to respond to these objections. I take there to be a variety of responses to such problems and assume that these can be translated over to the case of personal-identity.

It is worth noting, though, that some of these approaches might involve amendments to the view as I outline it. For instance, I develop the view as one on which utterances of personal-identity sentences fail to assert propositions. Some responses to the so-called embedding problems of non-cognitivism are ones on which the relevant sentences are *minimally* truth-apt: there are no substantive truth-conditions to be offered for those sentences, but there is nevertheless minimal truth, which is exhausted by the T-schema.<sup>14</sup> Then the non-cognitivist will say that the *primary* function of such utterances is to express non-cognitive attitudes but that, secondarily, they assert minimal truths. At this stage of investigation, I don't want to take a stand on these issues, so I will spell out personal-identity non-cognitivism as the view that these utterances do not assert propositions and hence are not truth-apt. But I have no dog in this particular fight. One can view what I say as arguing for the claim that the primary function of such utterances is to express non-cognitive attitudes, rather than to assert what minimal content they have, if one finds that more amenable.

With that in mind, let's begin by considering the sorts of non-cognitive attitudes to which the non-cognitivist might appeal in analysing first-, second- and third-person personal-identity sentences.

<sup>13</sup>This is not to say that cognitivists have had nothing to say about non-cognitive attitudes. See for instance Schechtman (2014), Whiting (1986), Shoemaker (2007), Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2020b); West (1996); Braddon-Mitchell and West (2001) and White (1989).

<sup>14</sup>For discussion see Dreier (2004) and Dunaway (2010).

I'll begin by focussing on first-person personal-identity sentences:

- (1) I would survive E
- (4) I did survive E
- (7) I am the same person as P

The personal-identity non-cognitivist holds that utterances of these sentences express non-cognitive attitudes. But which attitudes do they express, and towards what do they express them? To get a feel for the kind of answer the non-cognitivist might provide, consider the case of moral sentences such as:

(M) Eating human babies is wrong.

Moral cognitivists hold that (M) expresses a proposition that predicates a property, *wrongfulness*, to an act, *eating a human baby*, and that utterances of (M) assert that proposition. Such assertions are true just in case eating human babies does have the property of wrongfulness. Moral non-cognitivists instead maintain that (M) has no propositional content and that utterances of (M) express some non-cognitive attitude towards the object of the sentence, namely eating human babies.<sup>15</sup>

The personal-identity non-cognitivist, then, will want to do two things. First, she will want to identify which non-cognitive attitudes are the ones expressed by utterances of personal-identity sentences. Second, she will want to identify the object of those attitudes: the things towards which the attitude is being held.

Let's set aside the second issue for now, and focus on the first.

Looking at (1), (4) and (7) it seems clear that the non-cognitivist should distinguish at least two kinds of relevant non-cognitive attitudes: *prospective* and *retrospective*.

Prospective and retrospective attitudes are occurrent attitudes that are directed towards objects,<sup>16</sup> at least some of which are non-present. Prospective attitudes are occurrent attitudes that are directed, in part, towards future objects, and retrospective attitudes are occurrent attitudes that are directed, in part, towards past objects.<sup>17</sup> So, for instance, regret is a paradigmatic retrospective attitude. A person-phase feels regret occurrently, but the object of that attitude is, at least in part, some past object. By contrast, anticipation is a paradigmatic prospective attitude: it is an attitude that person-phases have occurrently, where the object of that attitude is, at least in part, some future object.

In what follows I will advance a relatively simple version of non-cognitivism (with a view to getting the view on the table, as it were) on which utterances of first-person personal-identity sentences express either a retrospective or prospective non-cognitive attitude, where that attitude is the conjunction of two further attitudes: *ownership* and *prudential care*. Utterances of second- and third-personal personal identity sentences express retrospective or prospective analogues of these attitudes, which are also conjunctions of two further attitudes: *imputation* and *other-care*.

Let's begin by considering *ownership*. I have an attitude of ownership towards some experiences when I take those experiences to be *mine*. This is not simply a matter of believing that I will have, or have had, those experiences (though perhaps often I do also have that belief). Rather, it consists of owning those experiences. Consider the difference between uttering: 'I believe that is

<sup>15</sup>See Blackburn (2006); Gibbard (1990); Ridge (2006); Schroeder (2010).

<sup>16</sup>Here I intend 'object' very broadly, to include events and states of affairs.

<sup>17</sup>Time travel will of course raise problems for this characterization, but I trust the rough idea is clear enough.

mine' and 'I claim that as mine'. The former plausibly asserts a truth-apt proposition, while the latter does not. It is this latter sort of mental state that I have in mind. As such, *prospective* ownership involves a kind of *anticipation*. That anticipation might then be accompanied by some more specific nuanced kinds of attitudes such as *dread*, *excitement* or *hope*. *Retrospective* ownership is also sometimes accompanied by more specific nuance kinds of attitudes such as *pride*, *regret* or *guilt*, for the experiences that we own.

A second attitude is *prudential care*.<sup>18</sup> Prospective prudential care is familiar. We not only anticipate the experiences of person-stages, but we care about the quality of those experiences in a distinctively first-personal manner and we often take steps to intervene in the quality of those experiences. We plan to buy a birthday cake from the best cake shop so that our future experiences are of good-quality cake; we save money for our retirement; we make sacrifices now, in the hope that these sacrifices will benefit our future-selves; we deliberate about whether a 4-star ANCAP safety rating in a potential car purchase is sufficient, and so on. And while I can deliberate about whether *you* would be better off being an astronaut or a dog walker, and while I can care whether or not you become an astronaut or a dog walker, any such deliberations, and care, are distinctly second-personal in nature. I am not deliberating about whether or not to become an astronaut or a dog walker, I am deliberating about whether or not to facilitate you becoming an astronaut or a dog walker. It is this distinctively first-personal kind of care that I have in mind when I speak of prudential care.

Less familiar is retrospective prudential care. I care about some past person-stages in a particular sort of way; I can advance, or retard, their wellbeing in at least the sense that I can satisfy their desires (or not); I can advance their projects (or not) and I can do so even when their desires are desires to have certain experiences (or certain quality of experiences). I can advance or retard their well-being in ways that no one else can. I am motivated to pursue certain projects or activities *because* of caring in a certain sort of way for these past person-stages and, as a result, desiring to advance their projects and satisfy their desires. This is retrospective prudential care.

These attitudes are *self-directed*. I will call the conjunction of a prospective attitude of ownership and of prudential care, a *prospective self-directed attitude*, and the conjunction of a retrospective attitude of ownership and of prudential care, a *retrospective self-directed attitude*. It is these two attitudes that will be important in providing an analysis of first-personal personal-identity sentences, though it is important to note that more complicated versions of non-cognitivism might appeal to additional attitudes.

In what follows I will suppose that we are psychologically such that prospective/retrospective attitudes of ownership 'go together' with prospective/retrospective attitudes of prudential care. That is, I suppose that people direct prospective/retrospective ownership towards the experiences of person-stages when and only when they prospectively/retrospectively prudentially care about those person-stages. The idea is this. What it is to direct an attitude of ownership towards the experiences of some person-stage is to own them. If those experiences are past, then the fact that one owns them gives one retrospective prudential care. If one owns experiences of desiring P, this gives one (some) reason (and motivation) to satisfy P. (Of course, that reason/motivation might be countervailed; the fact that one owns an experience of having been hungry will not motivate one to eat now, conditional on one just having eaten a huge meal). But having such reason/motivation just is prudentially caring about the past

<sup>18</sup>In what follows I simply assume that these are noncognitive attitudes.

person-stages whose experiences these are. If those experiences are future, then the fact that one takes them as one's own gives one reason/motivation to care about the quality of those experiences. But this just is to care prudentially about the person-stage whose experiences they will be.

This assumption is important. I will offer an account on which utterances of first-personal PI sentences express either a self-directed retrospective or self-directed prospective non-cognitive attitude towards certain person-stages. If sometimes attitudes of ownership come apart from attitudes of prudential care, then one might wonder if sometimes such utterances express just one of these attitudes, and sometimes express the other. If so, then some utterances of PI sentence S express one attitude, and sometimes an utterance of the very same sentence expresses some other attitude. By supposing that ownership and prudential attitudes go together, I get to say that two utterances of the same first-personal personal-identity sentence always express the *same* non-cognitive attitude.

Now, one might worry that sometimes these attitudes *will* come apart; that some person-stages will have one, but not the other, kind of attitude. If this is the case, then a more complicated version of non-cognitivism will be needed. That, in turn, might require new solutions to the embedding problem. While I am not averse to this more complex account, for now, I want to keep things simple, and so I assume that these attitudes do go together.

So let us move on.

Discussions of personal-identity often focus on self-directed attitudes. But we don't just care about our selves: we often care as much (or almost as much) about other selves, albeit that we care about them in quite different *ways* from the ways we care about ourselves.

We can distinguish two broad kinds of other-directed attitudes, each of which is an analogue of the two self-directed attitudes just articulated. The first I call *imputation attitudes*. These are the other-directed analogue of ownership attitudes. Just as I can take some experience to be mine, so too I can take some experience (or action or whatever else) to be yours. I can impute that experience/action to you. (And, again, we can distinguish between my believing that some experience is yours, and my imputing that experience to you, where only the latter is a non-cognitive state). Then there are prospective and retrospective attitudes of imputation (which again are other-directed analogues of prospective and retrospective attitudes of ownership). Imputation occurs when one person-stage imputes, to another, an experience that was had, or will be had, by some third person-stage, as for instance when P\* imputes to P, experience/action (etc.) E had by P#.

To get a handle on the idea, notice that attitudes of imputation are often accompanied by further more nuanced non-cognitive attitudes such as *resentment*, *grief*, *hope*, and so on. For instance, Freddie-at-t might resent Annie-at-t because he imputes to Annie-at-t, the action of stealing a job that was rightfully his, an action that was undertaken by Annie-at-t\*. Likewise, Freddie-at-t might empathise with Annie-at-t because he imputes to Annie-at-t certain experiences, had by Annie-at-t\*. Or, in the case of prospective imputation, Freddie-at-t might be hopeful that Annie-at-t\* gets a promotion, because he takes the experiences of Annie-at-t\* to be experiences of Annie-at-t (and he cares about Annie-at-t in a particular sort of way).

Then imputation is a two-place relation. P\* imputes, to P#, the experiences, actions (and so on) of P.

The second kind of other-directed attitude is the analogue of the self-directed attitude of prudential care. I call it *other-care*. Often we care about some person-stages in virtue of caring about other person-stages. I care about Freddie-at-t at least in part in virtue of caring about earlier person-stages of a certain sort. We typically care about current person-stages of loved ones at

least in part because we cared about (some) earlier stages. I might also care about earlier person-stages by virtue of caring about Freddie-at-t. (For instance, we might care what happened to earlier stages because we care about some current stage.) This is *retrospective* other-care. I also care about certain future person-stages in a certain way in virtue of caring about Freddie-at-t. This is *prospective* other-care. This is the kind of care with which we are all familiar. We care about certain future stages of persons because we take them to be stages of our friends, family, enemies, and so on. (Notice that other-care need not be ‘care’ in the positive sense: I can other-care about some current person-stage in a certain way because I ‘care’ about some earlier person-stages whom I take to be my mortal enemy.)

Then other-care takes the following form. P\* other-cares about P# in virtue of caring (in some way or other) about P. Other-care, then, involves a kind of ‘baton-passing’ of care between person-stages.

I will say that, loosely speaking, a person-stage has a (retrospective or prospective) *other-directed attitude* when she has an attitude that is the conjunction of an imputation attitude and an other-care attitude. (Here, again, I assume that imputation and other-care go together). More carefully, I will talk of P\* directing an other-directed attitude towards P via P#. P\* directs an other-directed attitude towards P via P# just in case P\* imputes the experiences (actions, etc.) of P# to P, and P\* other-cares about P in virtue of other-caring about P#, or other-cares about P# in virtue of other-caring about P (or both).

Next, I outline a non-cognitivist proposal for modelling what it is that we express when we utter first-, second- and third-personal personal-identity sentences before I move on to motivate personal-identity non-cognitivism.

### 3 | FIRST-PERSONAL PERSONAL-IDENTITY SENTENCES

- (1) I would survive E
- (4) I did survive E
- (7) I am the same person as P

Suppose that Freddie-at-t\* utters ‘I am the same person as P’, where P exists later than t\*. Then, I think it is natural for the non-cognitivist to say that in uttering that sentence, Freddie-at-t\* expresses a prospective self-directed attitude towards P. Quite generally, the non-cognitivist can hold that utterances of the above express self-directed attitudes towards person-stages, and that (1) and (4) express prospective attitudes while (7) might express either a prospective or a retrospective attitude (depending on the temporal location of P).

The non-cognitivist can say the following:

FIRST-PERSON SAME-PERSON SENTENCE: An utterance of ‘I am the same person as P’ made by P\*, where P exists at an earlier time than P\*, expresses P\*'s retrospective self-directed attitude towards P, and where P exists at a later time than P\*, expresses P\*'s prospective self-directed attitude towards P.

Call the negation of (7), (7\*). Then the non-cognitivist can say that an utterance of (7\*) expresses the *absence* of certain self-directed attitudes towards P:



**NEGATION OF FIRST-PERSON SAME-PERSON SENTENCE:** An utterance of 'I am not the same person as P' made by P\*, where P exists at an earlier time than P\*, expresses P\*'s absence of a retrospective self-directed attitude towards P, and where P exists a later time than P\*, expresses P\*'s absence of a prospective self-directed attitude towards P.

Now consider (4): I did survive E. The non-cognitivist can hold that when P\* utters (4), she expresses a retrospective self-directed attitude towards one or more post-E person-stages:

**FIRST-PERSON SURVIVAL SENTENCE:** An utterance of 'I did survive E' made by P\*, expresses P\*'s retrospective self-directed attitude towards some pre-E person-stage(s).

Call the negated version of (4) 'I did not survive E,' (4\*). This is, presumably, a less common sort of utterance to make. After all, P\* can only utter (4\*) if P\* exists, so one might think that this means that it's trivially the case that P\* survived E. But of course that is not so, since it is at least possible for P\* to regard himself as being a different person from the pre-E person who existed. Then, by parity with (7\*), the non-cognitivist will say that an utterance of (4\*) expresses the absence of certain attitudes towards pre-E person-stages.

That brings us to (1): I would survive E.

I assume that (1) is a counterfactual rather than an indicative conditional, and hence is to be interpreted as 'were I to encounter E, I would survive'. If instead, (1) is to be read as the indicative conditional 'if I encounter E, then I survive' it is straightforward to analyse. We can simply say that an utterance of the indicative conditional expresses a prospective attitude towards some post-E person-stage or stages. Assuming that (1) is a counterfactual, however, matters are more complicated, since there are no actual post-E stages towards which the speaker can direct any attitude. I suggest the non-cognitivist hold that utterances of (1) express non-cognitive attitudinal dispositions. They express that the speaker would direct a certain non-cognitive attitude towards certain person-stages, were those stages to exist. For instance, suppose Freddie-at-t\* utters 'I would survive teletransportation'. Then his utterance expresses that he has a certain dispositional attitude: he is disposed to direct a prospective self-directed attitude towards post-teletransportation stages.

**FIRST-PERSON SURVIVAL SENTENCE:** An utterance of 'I would survive E' made by P\*, expresses P\*'s disposition to have a prospective self-directed attitude towards post-E person-stage(s).

The non-cognitivist can then say that the negation of (1) expresses an *absence* of such a disposition.

## 4 | SECOND- AND THIRD-PERSON PERSONAL-IDENTITY SENTENCES

Next, consider second- and third-person personal-identity sentences. I will only spell out second-personal sentences since the non-cognitivist can provide analogous analyses of third-personal sentences by replacing the second-personal indexical 'you' with the third-person indexical 'he' or 'she'.

Unsurprisingly, I'll suggest that the non-cognitivist analyse the relevant sentences in terms of the expression of certain other-directed attitudes.

In doing so, I will take it that the primary function of utterances of these sentences is to express other-directed attitudes. It is this primary expressive function that all utterances of the same sentence have in common. In addition to this primary function, I will suggest that there is a secondary function that some utterances of these sentences also have: to make certain recommendations. I take this latter to be an interesting and important function, and that recognising this adds to the richness of the account offered. That some utterances have this secondary function is not intended to detract from the fact that two utterances of the same sentence have the same primary function and that this is what is in common as regards what those utterances express.

Let's start with survival sentences.

- (2) You would survive E
- (5) You did survive E
- (3) He/she would survive
- (6) He/she did survive E

Consider an utterance of (5). Suppose that Freddie-at-t utters, to Annie-at-t 'you survived teletransportation'. The non-cognitivist will say that this utterance expresses Freddie-at-t's other-directed attitudes.

SECOND-PERSON SURVIVAL SENTENCE: An utterance of 'you survived E', made by P\*, where P is the referent of 'you', expresses an other-directed attitude towards some pre-E stage(s).

Now turn to (2) 'You would survive E'. Again, I assume this is a counterfactual conditional. So when Freddie-at-t utters 'you would survive teletransportation' to Annie-at-t, he is expressing a disposition to have certain other-directed attitudes. In particular, the non-cognitivist can say:

SECOND-PERSON SURVIVAL SENTENCE: An utterance of 'you will survive E', made by P\*, where P is the referent of 'you', expresses P\*'s disposition to direct other-directed attitudes towards some post-E person-stage(s) via P.

That leaves us with second- and third-personal same-person sentences:

- (7) You are the same person as P
- (8) He/she is the same person as P
- (10) P1 is the same person as P.

Again, I will focus only on the second-personal variant (i.e. (7)). The non-cognitivist can say the following:

SECOND-PERSON SAME-PERSON SENTENCE: An utterance of 'you are the same person as P' made by P\*, where P\* is the referent of 'you' expresses P\*'s other-directed attitude towards P\* via P, or P via P\*.

These are analyses of these sentences. But the fact that utterances of these sentences primarily express other-directed attitudes does not mean that those utterances do not sometimes (or perhaps even often) also express other attitudes. I think one such notable attitude is *recommendation*.

Noting that some of our utterances sometimes have this additional expressive function captures some of the richness of our personal-identity discourse.

To see this, suppose Freddie-at-t has a normative attitude regarding which self-directed attitudes Annie-at-t should have. Then in uttering to Annie-at-t ‘you survived teletransportation’ Freddie-at-t might not only be expressing certain other-directed attitudes, he might also be expressing this normative attitude. If so, I will say he is *making a recommendation* to Annie-at-t. Recommendations, then, are utterances that express the normative attitudes of the speaker.

Then an utterance of a second- (and perhaps third-) personal personal-identity sentence can express a positive recommendation that P or a negative recommendation that P. So an utterance of ‘you survived E’ made by P\*, where P is the referent of ‘you’, can express P\*’s recommendation that P has a retrospective self-directed attitude towards some pre-E person-stage(s). An utterance of ‘you will not survive E’ made by P\*, where P is the referent of ‘you’, can express P\*’s recommendation that P *not* have a retrospective self-directed attitude towards some pre-E person-stage(s). Similarly, an utterance of ‘you will survive E’, made by P\*, where P is the referent of ‘you’, can express P\*’s recommendation that P be disposed to have prospective self-directed attitudes towards post-E person-stage(s). And so on for other such cases. As we will see, the idea that there is this secondary function to these utterances will help the non-cognitivist to explain certain aspects of disagreement.

Next, I turn to motivating non-cognitivism,

## 5 | WHY BE A NON-COGNITIVIST?

It is plausible that utterances of personal-identity sentences are at the very least *accompanied* by non-cognitive attitudes. For instance, when I utter ‘I will survive teletransportation’ or, ‘I will not survive brain death’ I may be reporting a belief, but if I am, it is not a disinterested sort of belief. It is a belief that is, at least typically, and perhaps inextricably, connected to a whole host of my non-cognitive attitudes, motivations and behaviours. Of course, cognitivists need not deny this. They will only deny that this is the primary, or only, function of such utterances. In what follows I try to show that by taking the expressive role of these utterances as primary we can solve, or dissolve, a number of problems as well as provide a rich account of what we are doing with those utterances. To that end, I offer four general sorts of reasons to be attracted to non-cognitivism.

### 5.1 | There are no (deep) facts about personal-identity

There undoubtedly exist person-stages with psychological and physical properties, and there obtain various relations of similarity and causal connectedness between those stages. The problem is that many find it hard to see what kind of deep metaphysical fact could render it the case that some set of these relations, jointly, constitutes the same-person relation. For instance, even if one thinks that the same-person relation must be related to the psychological properties of, and relations between, stages, since similarity and psychological connectedness come in degree it is not clear that there could be a sharp cut-off between when the obtaining of these relations to some degree constitutes there obtaining the same-person relation, and when it does not.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Parfit (1984) makes this point, as does Schechtman (1996). See also Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2020b) who defend the view that the same-person relation itself comes in degrees on the basis of these kinds of consideration.

The problem is writ even larger when one considers that it is also not obvious what deep metaphysical fact could make it the case that the same-person relation should be identified with a psychological continuity relation as opposed to, say, a bodily continuity or animalistic continuity relation.<sup>20,21</sup>

Yet, one might think, if our utterances of personal-identity sentences assert propositions about the same-person relation obtaining, then they assert propositions that are true only if there are deep metaphysical facts. That is because whether we survive some event cannot be a matter of some stipulation regarding where, along a continuum of connectedness, we arbitrarily draw the line between continuity obtaining, and failing to obtain. Something *more* is required. But if some deep metaphysical facts are required then our utterances will be systematically false, since there are no deep metaphysical facts. Then error theory about personal-identity threatens. That seems deeply problematic.

Noncognitivists can respond to this worry by noting that there is no need for any deep metaphysical facts. We are not asserting propositions about the presence of such facts, and so our utterances are not rendered false by there failing to be such facts. The primary function of our utterances is to express certain non-cognitive attitudes. So error theory is no threat.

## 5.2 | The normative and descriptive

Going back at least to Locke (1689)<sup>22</sup> who thought of personal-identity as a forensic notion, it has usually been thought that there is some important connection between the obtaining of the same-person relation and various normative truths. It has seemed, to many, as though prudence is importantly connected to the obtaining of the same-person relation. One should have self-interested (that is, prudential) concern for the wellbeing of all and only those person-stages that are the same-person as oneself. As Schechtman (1996) puts it, self-interested concern is an emotion that is appropriately felt only toward *my own self* (Schechtman, 1996: p. 52). Similarly, there is often thought to be a tight connection between our moral practices of holding people responsible for actions, and the obtaining of the same-person relation. It is necessary (and perhaps also sufficient) to hold person-stage P responsible for the actions of person-stage P\*, that the same-person relation obtains between P and P\*.<sup>23</sup>

Then two sorts of problems arise for personal-identity cognitivists.

First: the *justification* problem. Suppose that P and P\* are related by the same-person relation, and that P feels self-concern for the wellbeing of P\*. What it is about the same-person relation that justifies that self-concern? Reductionist about personal-identity, in particular, are often criticised for failing to provide an account that can justify self-concern.<sup>24</sup> Mutatis mutandis for responsibility (etc.).

<sup>20</sup>See for instance Kovacs (2016, 2020) Zimmerman (2012) Johnston (2010, ch. 5), Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2004, 2020a) Miller (2009), Schechtman (2014) Longenecker (2022); Braddon-Mitchell and West (2001).

<sup>21</sup>Some have thought that there is also nothing in our concept of 'same person' that can do this work for us. See Sider (2001).

<sup>22</sup>See chapter 27.

<sup>23</sup>For discussion of this view see Shoemaker (2012, p. 109) and Khoury and Matheson (2018, p. 207) though none of these authors endorse this claim.

<sup>24</sup>Sentiments such as this go back at least as far as Butler (1736), and known as the extreme claim (Parfit, 1984: p. 307). It has been discussed by Schechtman (1996), Schechtman (2005) and Schechtman (2014) and defended by Butler (1736) Madell (1981) and Langsam (2001).

Second: *the mismatch problem*. Suppose P and P\* are related by the same-person relation and that P does not feel self-concern for P\*, but does feel self-concern for some person-stage P\*\* to whom P does not bear the same-person relation. Those who endorse views such as animalism obviously face the mismatch problem, since if animalism were true many of us would fail to have self-concern for person-stages that bear the same-person relation to our current stage (and perhaps would also show self-concern for some that do not).<sup>25</sup> But in fact, the mismatch problem is everyone's problem. It is surely possible for different communities of persons to have differently directed attitudes of self-concern: for some communities to be such that person-stages direct those attitudes only towards other person-stages with which they are animalistically continuous, and for other communities to be such that person-stages direct those attitudes only towards person-stages with which they are psychologically continuous. Assuming that the same-person relation is either animalistic continuity or psychological continuity (but not both) then one community's attitudes will fail to match, or map onto, the obtaining of the same-person relation between person-stages. But then if prudence should accompany the obtaining of the same-person relation, then one community is filled with prudentially irrational person-stages. Some have thought that even this kind of mismatch is unpalatable because, in some sense or other, people cannot be so systematically mistaken about to what they should direct their attitudes of self-concern.<sup>26</sup>

One response to the justification and mismatch problems is to close the gap by maintaining that the relevant normative practices fix the facts about the same-person relation: which relation is the same-person relation varies from person-stage to person-stage (or community to community) depending on the attitudes of said person-stages/communities thereof. Hence there can be no mismatch. Nor is there any justification problem since the direction of explanation is effectively reversed: it is the presence of the relevant attitudes that determine which relation is the same-person relation, rather than the presence of the same-person relation justifying the having the attitudes.<sup>27</sup> This kind of view, however, is controversial, to say the least.

A second approach is to distinguish between a metaphysical sense of personal persistence and a practical sense that is relevant to the normative domain.<sup>28</sup> Several aspects of this proposal are, however, unconvincing. It is perhaps not difficult to see why one might hold that moral claims about responsibility (and so on) might fail to track the metaphysical facts about personal persistence, and instead track some other normatively relevant facts. But it is a little more peculiar to think that the metaphysical facts about personal persistence come apart from the facts about prudence. The idea that I should have self-concern for something that is not, metaphysically me, or fail to have self-concern for something that is, metaphysically me, strikes me as a little odd. Indeed, I am inclined to wonder what 'metaphysical persistence' is, if it's not something that accompanies self-concern. So I do not find this route very amenable (though I return to it shortly).

<sup>25</sup>Animalists include Olson (1997), Snowdon (2014) and DeGrazia (2005).

<sup>26</sup>See for instance Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2020b); Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2004); Miller (2009); West (1996); Braddon-Mitchell and West (2001).

<sup>27</sup>See in particular White (1989); Whiting (1986); Kovacs (2016, 2020), Longenecker (2022) Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2020b); Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2004); Miller (2009); West (1996); Braddon-Mitchell and West (2001). Strawson (2007) has also defended what he calls the emotional priority thesis, which also reverses the order of priority, though the resulting view is somewhat different to those defended by the other authors listed here.

<sup>28</sup>Schechtman (1996) Olson (1997) and DeGrazia (2005) all have views in this vicinity.

The non-cognitivist has no need to endorse either of these responses to the justification and mismatch problems. She will dissolve the justification and mismatch problems by noting that there is no work to be done (justificatory or otherwise) linking what makes personal-identity sentences true (i.e. the obtaining of the same-person relation) to our normative attitudes. No justificatory connection is required, so the justification problem is dissolved, and no necessary connection is required to avoid a mismatch between the two, and so the mismatch problem is dissolved. This solution is quite different from ones that reverse the direction of priority, taking it to go from the attitudes in question to facts about the same-person relation. The non-cognitivist makes no such claim about priority. She simply says that facts about the same-person relation (if there are any such facts (see 5.1)) are irrelevant in making sense of our personal-identity utterances.

At this point, though, it is worth noting that those who are attracted to a view that splits metaphysical personal persistence from practical persistence could still appeal to the kind of non-cognitivism I have advanced here, as an account of practical persistence. Rather than supposing that practical persistence consists in the obtaining of some practical-identity relation, which will in turn open up *further* justification and mismatch problems of its own, they can say that practical identity sentences express non-cognitive attitudes, even if metaphysical persistence sentences do not.

At this point, though, one might wonder whether the non-cognitivist faces some other kinds of problem. To be sure, she doesn't have to show that the presence of a same-person relation justifies our attitudes. But surely she needs to say *something* about the conditions under which our attitudes are fitting. Relatedly, one might worry that the having of the sorts of attitudes to which the non-cognitivist appeals in fact *depends on* the existence of the same-person relation, or at least, on beliefs about that relation. But if people have such beliefs, and the non-cognitive attitudes in question depend on those beliefs in some way, it is not a stretch to conclude that utterances of personal-identity sentences probably assert those beliefs rather than express those attitudes. I turn to these two concerns next.

### 5.2.1 | Fittingness and the same-person relation

Let's start with the idea that the non-cognitive attitudes to which the non-cognitivist appeals depend on beliefs about the same-person relation. For instance, one might think that to have the ownership attitude that *that* experience is mine, one first needs to believe that one existed at that past time and had that experience.

There is no scope, here, to defend the idea that is not so; this is something that the non-cognitivist would need to pursue in more detail. But it is certainly far from clear that in general, non-cognitive states depend on cognitive states. Moreover, it seems intuitive (though this too would require argument) that many kinds of creatures have at least some of the non-cognitive attitudes in question. It is not at all obvious that to have such attitudes, these creatures first need to have beliefs about their own persistence. At the very least, I think the objector would need to say more to make this objection stick.

Second, what can the non-cognitivist say about the fittingness of our various attitudes, given that she cannot say that they are fitting just when the same-person relation obtains, and not otherwise. There are various options here. One is to anchor the fittingness of our attitudes to descriptive facts about what the relevant person-stage, or community of person-stages, take to be important in determining fittingness. Then a person-stage's attitudes are fitting in

the conditions in which that stage, or community of stages, thinks that her attitudes would be fitting, and are not fitting otherwise. For instance, a person-stage, or community thereof, might hold that attitudes are fitting when they are formed in the usual manner on the basis of relevant information. Relevant information will certainly include facts about the physical and psychological properties of the relevant stages, alongside facts about the relations between stages. Thus when person-stages have false beliefs about, say, the connections between person-stages or the psychological properties of those stages, it will turn out that their attitudes are not fitting.

Now, if the conditions that a person-stage, or community thereof, takes to be fitting varies, then different attitudes will turn out to be fitting (or not) relative to different person-stages or communities. The non-cognitivist might not like this result, and so might offer a different account of fittingness. I have no dog in this fight; choose whichever account of fittingness you like. It's worth noting, though, that even if the non-cognitivist says that the same attitude can be fitting relative to one person-stage and not another, this does not undermine the idea that two utterances of the same personal-identity sentences *express the very same attitude*. What varies, between those stages, is not what is expressed, but rather, *whether the attitude expressed in fitting or not*.

Once the non-cognitivist has an account of fittingness under her belt she can say that some utterances of personal-identity sentences are not felicitous. For instance, if Jemima utters 'I will be a double bed' that utterance will turn out not to be felicitous if Jemima either doesn't have the relevant attitudes, or if she has attitudes that are not fitting.

### 5.3 | Explaining disagreement

Noncognitivism also has an advantage over (reductionist) cognitivism in making better sense of disagreements about personal persistence.

Consider two person-stages: Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t. Freddie-at-t says things like 'you will survive teletransportation', and Annie-at-t says things like 'I will not survive teletransportation'. Let's suppose that Freddie-at-t and Annie-at-t both know all of the relevant facts about the physical and psychological properties of, and relations between, themselves and various post-transportation person-stages. Despite this, Freddie-at-t continues to utter 'you will survive teletransportation' and Annie-at-t continues to utter 'I will not survive teletransportation'.

Cognitivists typically suppose that, at most, one of Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t can be right,<sup>29</sup> and hence suppose that the two parties are disagreeing. But it's hard to see what Freddie-at-t and Annie-at-t are disagreeing about given that they agree about all of the facts that, according to the reductionist, ground the obtaining (or not) of the same-person relation. It is hard to see what kind of thing would make it the case that one is correct, and the other not, where that kind of thing is something about which the parties do and should care in the appropriate way: a way that, when the parties learn it, the mistaken party is, and should be, motivated to change their non-cognitive attitudes.

Of course, in asking what would make one party correct, we might be asking several different questions. We might be asking a semantic question about the meaning of 'same-person' in some public language. Construed this way, what makes one party correct are facts about the meaning

<sup>29</sup>Exceptions include various conventionalist/conativist views such as those of Kovacs (2016, 2020), Longenecker (2022) Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2020a); Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2004) Miller (2009); West (1996); Braddon-Mitchell and West (2001).

of 'same person' in public language. But that does not seem to be a fact about which the parties do and should care in the appropriate way. Suppose there is a semantic fact that uniquely determines<sup>30</sup> that the meaning of 'same-person' is given by a psychological continuity account. Should learning this fact persuade Annie-at-t that she should no longer be afraid to enter the teletransporter? No.

Then perhaps in asking what would make one party correct, we are asking what makes it the case that a particular account is the correct account of what it is for two stages to be stages of the same person. Frankly, once we've specified all the facts about the physical and psychological relations between the stages, it's hard to see what *could* make one, rather than another, the correct account. That suggests that perhaps there is nothing substantive that can be said about why one party is correct and the other is not. Rather, it might be a primitive metaphysical fact which party is correct, because it is a primitive metaphysical fact that, say, two stages are stages of the same person if they are psychologically continuous. But learning that there is a metaphysical fact about which person-stages bear the same-person relation to one another does not change Annie-at-t's beliefs about the nature and quality of the relations between the relevant person-stages. Yet it is the nature and quality of these relations that Annie-at-t cares about. The fact that one is now somewhat mysteriously singled out as the 'same-person' relation does not seem to afford Annie-at-t a reason to change what she cares about in survival, rather than, instead, to come to see that what she cares about in survival is not, after all, the obtaining of the same-person relation.

To reiterate, the problem is that it is not clear what sort of thing the two parties could be disagreeing about, such that coming to know that thing would, and should, result in (at least one) party altering what they care about in survival. A good account of what we are doing when we make such utterances will explain this puzzling state of affairs. It will explain why Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t (a) continue to have the attitudes they do, (b) continue to utter the sentences they do, despite these discoveries and (c) continue to engage in their disagreement.

The non-cognitivist can straightforwardly answer (a). According to her, both sets of attitudes can be fitting, and it should be no surprise that the parties continue to utter the sentences they do since those sentences express the attitudes they have.

In what sense, though, are Freddie-at-t and Annie-at-t disagreeing, and why do they continue to engage in the disagreement?

### 5.3.1 | Noncognitivist disagreement

Say that attitudes are *incompatible* just in case it is (psychologically) impossible for an instantaneous (or appropriately short-lived) person-stage to direct both sets of attitudes towards the same object.<sup>31</sup> Then the non-cognitivist might be tempted to say that two parties disagree just in case they express incompatible attitudes.

That cannot be quite right. That two attitudes are incompatible is neither necessary nor sufficient for the expressions of those attitudes to constitute a disagreement. Here is why they are not sufficient. Case 1: Annie-at-t utters 'I will survive teletransportation' and Freddie-at-t

<sup>30</sup>It has been argued that the semantic acts fail uniquely to determine that just one account is the correct one (Sider, 2001 argues for such a view). Then at least sometimes, there is no fact of the matter which of Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t's utterance is true, and which false.

<sup>31</sup>Though a sufficiently temporally lengthy person-stage can direct incompatible attitudes towards some object, by having sub-parts each of which direct those attitudes.



utters 'you will survive teletransportation'. It seems clear that Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t agree. But while Freddie-at-t and Annie-at-t direct their respective attitudes toward the same person-stages, Annie-at-t's is a self-directed attitude while Freddie-at-t's is an other-directed attitude. On the assumption that no person-stage can direct both an other-directed and a self-directed attitude towards the same object<sup>32</sup> they express incompatible attitudes by their utterances. So expressing incompatible attitudes is not sufficient for disagreement. Case 2: Freddie-at-t utters 'you will survive teletransportation' and Annie-at-t utters 'I will not survive teletransportation' Freddie-at-t expresses an other-directed attitude to certain person-stages, and Annie-at-t expresses that she *fails* to direct a self-directed attitude towards those self-same person-stages. But a single person-stage can both direct an other-directed attitude towards a certain person-stage, and fail to direct a self-directed attitude towards that stage, so these utterances fail to express incompatible attitudes. Thus expressing incompatible attitudes is not necessary for disagreement.

What is important about case 1 is that the attitudes expressed are in some good sense *analogues* of one another and that those expressed in case 2 are not, they are instead *dis-analogues* of one another. An other-directed attitude is an analogue of a self-directed attitude only if the object of the attitude is the same, (say person-stage P), and the content is the same (say ownership/imputation or prudential concern/other-care) but the mode of the attitude is different (self-directed vs other-directed) and is disanalogous otherwise.

In Case 1, Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t agree because the attitudes each expresses are analogous. In case 2, Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t disagree because the attitudes each expresses are disanalogous. Then the non-cognitivist can say that personal-identity disagreements consist in the expression of disanalogous attitudes, while personal-identity agreements consist in the expression of analogous attitudes.

### 5.3.2 | Attitudinal alignment

What is the purpose of such disagreements? Sometimes these disagreements are factual disagreements about the relations that obtain between person-stages. Perhaps some people don't understand how teletransportation works. Perhaps some people have false views about the psychological properties of fetuses, or individuals in a vegetative state. Sometimes disagreements about personal-identity are straightforwardly disagreements about these matters of fact. Sometimes they are not.

Why do Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t continue to utter personal-identity sentences when both know that the *other* party knows all those relevant facts? The non-cognitivist says that the primary purpose of making those utterances in those circumstances is *attitude coordination*: the goal of getting attitudes to align.

Since it will be difficult to have legal and other social institutions that function well if the community consists of people with misaligned attitudes, there will be social pressure to coordinate attitudes, at least insofar as those attitudes are relevant to various social norms, institutions, and practices. But we can probably see the goal of coordinating attitudes most starkly in the sphere of interpersonal relationships.

<sup>32</sup>At least, under the same guise: perhaps a stage can do so when it is unaware that the attitudes are directed towards the same object because it represents that object in two different ways.

Suppose that Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t are friends. Freddie-at-t wants to use a teletransporter to travel with Annie-at-t. It's a quick and painless way to get to one's destination, or so says Freddie-at-t, who cares about certain post-teletransportation stages in the same way he cares about Annie-at-t. Annie-at-t thinks this is a mistake, and wishes that he would not direct those attitudes towards those post-teletransportation stages. Freddie-at-t feels particularly uncomfortable about this mismatch of attitudes. He *does* direct his other-directed attitudes towards certain post-transportation stages. Yet he feels odd about directing those attitudes towards those stages when Annie-at-t explicitly fails to direct self-directed attitudes towards them. It's a bit like failing to take into account someone's wishes when you are organising their funeral. Freddie-at-t can't help but feel that his other-directed attitudes ought be sensitive to Annie-at-t's own self-directed attitudes, even though they are not.

The misalignment of their attitudes raises all sorts of difficulties for Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t's relationship. So each is motivated to try and bring their attitudes into alignment.

What is true for Annie-at-t and Freddie-at-t is true for all of us. Wherever we have close relationships we will be motivated to align our non-cognitive attitudes. The reason person-stages continue to utter personal-identity sentences despite both parties knowing all the relevant facts can be explained as an attempt at attitudinal convergence.

How does the expression of disanalogous attitudes result in attitudinal change? I noted earlier that sometimes utterances of personal-identity sentences express recommendations to have certain attitudes. It is straightforward to see why, in such cases, the expression of these attitudes might result in attitudinal change. We might take these recommendations to be reasons to change our attitudes. But even if we don't, they might at least be causally efficacious in bringing it about that we change our attitudes.

Even where there is no recommendation expressed by such an utterance, the expression of a disanalogous attitude can play a role (via reason or causation) in changing our attitudes. That is because we are motivated to coordinate our attitudes. If Jemima knows that Brendan generally has excellent taste, and she learns the Brendan really likes the curtains in the sunroom, then this might lead her to try and inculcate a more positive attitude towards the curtains. That attempt might result in her attending to features of the curtains she missed previously, and, as a result, to coming to appreciate them aesthetically. Similarly, Annie-at-t cares about Freddie-at-t's attitudes. The fact that he has certain other-directed attitudes towards post-transportation stages gives her reason to examine her own attitudes, and, perhaps, reason to change them: even if it doesn't give her reason to change them, it might cause her to do so. Perhaps, after reflection, she will attempt to inculcate new attitudes that are closer to Freddie-at-t's, by focussing on certain features of the situation—say the psychological continuity between her and the post-transportation stages.

Hence the non-cognitivist can neatly explain certain aspects of our practice that seem puzzling given cognitivism: namely our tendency to continue to engage in disputes about personal-identity when there does not appear to be anything we could discover, which we care about in the appropriate manner, which would resolve the dispute.

## 5.4 | Motivation

Another nice-making feature of non-cognitivism is that it provides a straightforward account of why it is that when a person-stage felicitously utters 'I will not survive teletransportation' that person-stage typically has a certain sort of motivational profile. Typically, that person-stage will

be motivated not to enter the machine,<sup>33</sup> to give away her possessions and say her goodbyes if she knows she must enter the machine, and so on. The non-cognitivist has an easy explanation for this. Namely, it is constitutive of having the non-cognitive attitudinal states that are expressed by utterances of ‘I will not survive teletransportation’, that, conditional on having various other mental states, the speaker has certain motivational states. For instance, conditional on *believing* that one is being put into a teletransporter, and conditional on *desiring* to persist, then given that one has certain self-directed attitudes, one will be motivated to avoid getting into the machine. For part of what it is to have those self-directed attitudes *is to be thus unmotivated*, conditional on having those other mental states.

By contrast, the cognitivist will need to explain the tight connection between our beliefs, non-cognitive attitudes, and motivational states, rather differently. She will say that a person-stage first has beliefs about the same-person relation, which are reported in utterances such as ‘I will not survive teletransportation’. These beliefs then lead that person-stage to have certain non-cognitive states and a certain motivational profile, conditional on their other beliefs and desires. Why, though, is having those beliefs connected to having those non-cognitive states? Providing such an answer is non-trivial. It is not obvious that there are necessary connections between the having of a certain belief and the having of any non-cognitive mental state. The fact that I believe there is chocolate in the pantry does not necessitate that I have any particular attitude towards that chocolate. It certainly does not necessitate that there is a normative connection between my having that belief, and my having some particular non-cognitive attitude. Yet, one might be inclined to say that having certain beliefs about the same-person relation ought lead one to have certain attitudes: if I believe that person-stage P bears the same-person relation to my current stage, then I ought to anticipate the experiences of P, and I ought to prudentially care about the interests of P, and so on. But why should this be? The non-cognitivist has an easy answer; the cognitivist does not.

## 6 | CONCLUSION

I have argued that non-cognitivism is an interesting view of personal identity and is well worth considering. This might be seen as raising the question of whether, *if* in the end, we should be non-cognitivists about personal identity, we should be non-cognitivists about persistence more generally. While I certainly think this would be an interesting terrain to explore, on the face of it this more general claim has, I take it, less to recommend it. Many of the motivations behind personal identity non-cognitivism do not, or do not obviously, seem to apply to claims about persistence in other arenas. We do not tend to think that disagreement about the persistence of, say, bacteria, cars, or trees, is (often) faultless. We do not tend to think that claims about the persistence of these things are, and should, invariably be accompanied by certain conative states. And while we have the intuition that ‘person’ is a forensic, or quasi-normative term, that same intuition does not hold, I suspect, for terms like ‘toaster’ or ‘tree’. Jointly, this suggests that even if non-cognitivism about personal identity is right, it *likely* does not generalise to non-cognitivism about persistence more generally; or at least, more work would need to be done to motivate this more general view of non-cognitivism about persistence.

<sup>33</sup>Holding fixed that the individual has other conative states: that is, she wants to have the relevant post-teletransportation experiences.

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