



Assessor Relative Conativism

ABSTRACT: *According to conventionalist or conativist views about personal-identity, utterances of personal-identity sentences express propositions that are, in part, made true by the conative attitudes of relevant persons-stages. In this paper I introduce assessor relative conativism: the view that a personal-identity proposition can be true when evaluated at one person-stage's context and false when evaluated at another person-stage's context, because person-stages have different patterns of conative attitudes. I present several reasons to embrace assessor relative conativism over its more familiar realizer relative cousin.*

KEYWORDS: personal identity, conventionalism, relativism, conative attitudes, practical identity

Introduction

According to a certain class of views about personal identity, utterances of personal-identity sentences express propositions that are, in part, made true by the conative attitudes of relevant person-stages, where I take person-stages to be short-lived temporal parts of persons.

Here, I take personal-identity sentences to be the sorts of sentences that we all entertain and utter when thinking and talking about the conditions under which we persist and hence the sorts of events that we survive or fail to survive. Examples of sentences of this kind include (but are not exhausted by) the following and their negations.

1. I/You/He/She would survive event *E*
2. I/You/He/She did survive event *E*
3. I am/You are/He/She is the same person as *P*

According to this class of views, which, if any, continues a person-stage *P* has, is settled either by the conative attitudes of some individual person-stage—most usually *P* itself (private conativism, see, for instance, Kovacs [2016, 2020], Zimmerman [2012] Johnston [2010: ch. 5])—or by the conative attitudes of some community—most usually the community in which *P* is embedded (public conativism, see, for instance, Stephen White [1989] who defends such a view, as perhaps do Eli Hirsch [1982: ch. 10] and Alan Sidelle [1999] who endorse versions of public as opposed to private conativism) or by some combination of the aforementioned.

Views in this class are known as conventionalist (Kovacs 2016, 2020; Braddon-Mitchell and Miller 2004; Miller 2009; Longenecker, forthcoming;



Schechtman 2014) conativist (Braddon-Mitchell and Miller 2020a, 2020b), or practice-dependent (Braddon-Mitchell and West 2001 and West 1996) though these different usages reflect different terminology rather than marking out important differences between views. That is not to say there are not different views here, it is just to say that the differences in terminology do not neatly map onto these differences. In this paper I talk of personal-identity conativism. The class of views in question is one on which it is conative attitudes that, in part, settle whether an utterance of a personal-identity sentence is true. ‘Conativism’ nicely captures that idea. By contrast, ‘conventionalism’ tends to conjure up views on which whether such an utterance is true is in some way a matter of mere convention: something we consciously legislate that could easily have been different and, perhaps, where the choice of the convention is of little import. Since defenders of views in this class typically reject these connotations (see especially Braddon-Mitchell and Miller 2004), I will talk of conativism.

For instance, suppose person-stage P anticipates the experiences only of person-stages that are psychologically continuous with her; reasons prudentially only about person-stages that are psychologically continuous with her; cares, in a distinctively first-personal manner, only about person-stages that are psychologically continuous with her; only feels responsible for the past actions of person-stages that are psychologically continuous with her, and so on. Then I will say that P organizes her conative attitudes around the relation of psychological continuity. To be clear, the idea that person-stages organize their conative attitudes around some relation is not intended to suggest that they consciously choose to do so; a person-stage counts as organizing their attitudes around relation R just in case those attitudes are ‘centered around’ that relation.

Suppose that in P 's community, person-stages are held to be morally and legally responsible for the actions only of person-stages with whom they are psychologically continuous; bear the rights and responsibilities only of person-stages with whom they are psychologically continuous; are legally and socially recognized as being the continuer or descendent only of person-stages with whom they are psychologically continuous. Then I will say that P 's community organizes its conative attitudes around the relation of psychological continuity. *Mutatis mutandis* this applies for other relations around which an individual person-stage or community might organize their conative attitudes (such as, for instance, the relation of physical continuity or biological continuity or animalistic continuity or soul continuity or similarity or any combination of these).

According to conativists, which relation a person-stage or a community organizes its conative attitudes around can legitimately vary. (Though this does not mean that all conativists think that all ways of organizing one's conative attitudes are legitimate; see for instance Braddon-Mitchell and Miller [2020b and 2009] for discussion of these issues). Hence, conativism is often said to be a kind of relativism about personal identity. Suppose that both P and P 's community organize their conative attitudes around the relation of psychological continuity, while P^* and P^* 's community organize their conative attitudes around the relation of physical continuity. In a case in which the individual and community attitudes align, private and public conativists will agree that P has continuers iff there are future

person-stages that are psychologically continuous with P and that P^* has continuers iff there are future person-stages that are physically continuous with P^* . Thus, which relation is the personal-identity relation is relative insofar as it depends on the attitudes of relevant person-stage or stages.

In fact, there are two different ways in which conativists might be said to be relativists. I will call the kind of relativism just discussed *realizer relativism* because in effect it is the view that which relation realizes the person-identity relation can vary from person-stage to person-stage, community to community. I contrast this with *assessor relativism*, on which, roughly, whether a personal-identity proposition is true varies from context to context, that is, from person-stage to person-stage.

While conativists typically explicitly endorse something like realizer relativism, they have paid relatively little attention to assessor relativism. This paper aims to remedy that. To be clear up front, this paper is not a defense of personal-identity conativism; for such defenses see Kovacs (2016, 2020); Zimmerman (2012); Johnston (2010); White (1989); Hirsch (1982); Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2004, 2020a, 2020b), Miller (2009); Longenecker (forthcoming); Braddon-Mitchell and West (2001); West 1996. Rather, my aim is to distinguish two versions of conativism: one that accepts realizer relativism and one that accepts assessor relativism. I call the former *realizer relative conativism* and the latter *assessor relative conativism*. Both versions of conativism can be spelled out as either kinds of private or of public conativism.

To date, conativists have largely assumed some version of realizer relative conativism although some of what is said in Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2020a: 149 especially) regarding other-directed conations might be thought of as gesturing toward some kind of assessor relativism.¹ My aim is to draw attention to assessor relative conativism and to argue that several considerations militate in its favor.

I begin, in section 1, by further explicating the target—conativism—and distinguishing two ways in which one can be a relativist. In section 2 I motivate the idea that it is not only self-directed but also other-directed conations that matter, and I introduce four broad classes of conativist views, one of which is assessor relative conativism. Section 3 argues that assessor relative conativism does better at making sense of our various personal-identity practices than its competitors, and section 4 considers and responds to an objection.

1. Conativism

Conativists hold that which relation is the personal-identity relation can vary across person-stages or communities. One way to make sense of this is to think of

¹ Certainly, interpreting what they say there as a kind of assessor relativism might be the best interpretation of some of what they say. Having said that, those authors do not explicitly talk of personal-identity propositions taking different truth-values relative to different contexts of assessment, and thus it is certainly not a full-blooded defence of such a view (even if this is what they have in mind). Other conativists, such as Braddon-Mitchell and West (2001) also discuss the importance of other-regarding attitudes, whose accommodation is one of the central motivations, in this paper, for endorsing assessor relative conativism. Again, these authors do not mention the idea that we might want to relativize the truth-values of propositions in some manner.

conativism as a kind of analytic functionalism about personal identity. Conceived in this way, it is the view that it is a conceptual truth that what realizes the personal-identity relation relative to some person-stage is just whatever plays a certain functional role. We can put that as follows:

Conativist functionalism: What realizes the personal-identity relation relative to some person-stage, *P*, just is whichever relation plays functional role *F* for *P*.

Then conativists can be seen to disagree about which functional role is the relevant one. Private conativists, for instance, typically hold that the relevant role is that of organizing self-directed attitudes (see Braddon-Mitchell and West [2001] and Braddon-Mitchell and Miller [2020a]). What realizes the personal-identity relation relative to *P* is just whichever relation is the one around which *P* organizes its self-directed attitudes, where self-directed attitudes are conative attitudes that are distinctively first-personal. They include attitudes of anticipation, dread, excitement, hope, recollection, guilt, pride, regret, responsibility/ownership, and prudential care. When conativists talk about the relation around which individual person-stages organize their conative attitudes, it is typically these self-directed attitudes they have in mind.

Given this, we can spell out private conativism as follows:

Private conativism: What realizes the personal-identity relation relative to some person-stage *P* just is the relation *R* around which *P* organizes its (apt) self-directed attitudes.

Public conativists, by contrast, disagree with private conativists about how to spell out functional role *F*. They hold something more like the following:

Public conativism: What realizes the personal-identity relation relative to some person-stage *P* just is the relation *R* around which *P*'s community organizes its (apt) community-level attitudes.

Some clarifications are in order. First, I take community-level attitudes to be the sorts of attitudes that are enshrined in the various legal and social practices I mentioned earlier—legal responsibilities, social recognition, and so on. Second, these definitions mention the aptness of the attitudes in question. While some conativists hold that whichever attitudes a person-stage or community thereof has are apt, others are inclined to say that there are constraints on what makes such attitudes apt. For present purposes all that really matters is that all conativists agree that it can be apt for a person-stage or community to organize its attitudes around different relations, leaving open that there may be relations around which it is inapt to organize these attitudes.

Third, conativists hold that whether *x* is a continuer of *y* is entirely determined by (a) the facts about which nonidentity involving relations obtain between *x* and *y* (such as similarity, causal connectedness, and so on) and (b) facts about the (apt)

conative attitudes of the relevant person-stage(s). For instance, it is not the case that there is some independent metaphysical fact as to which relation really is the personal-identity relation such that those facts determine around which relation person-stages *should* organize their conative attitudes in order for them to be apt. Rather, it is the presence of the relevant attitudes that determines which relation is the personal-identity relation.

Thus understood, conativism is a form of realizer relativism because it entails that different relations can realize the personal-identity relation relative to different person-stages because different person-stages or communities thereof can differently (aptly) organize their conative attitudes.

In turn, this means that conativism can accommodate there being what I call *faultless differences*. I call these faultless differences rather than faultless disagreements because on most ways of thinking about what *P* and *P** say, there is no disagreement at all. That is because what *P* says (that *P* will survive teletransportation) and what *P** says (that *P** will not survive teletransportation) do not express incompatible propositions. Therefore, on at least one way of thinking about disagreement, this is not a disagreement and hence not a faultless one. The idea that there are faultless differences follows from the idea that there are different, but apt, ways for person-stages or communities thereof to organize their attitudes. To see this, suppose that *P* utters ‘I will survive teletransportation’, while *P** utters ‘I will not survive teletransportation’. Suppose *P* organizes her conative attitudes around psychological continuity and so does her community. Suppose *P** organizes his conative attitudes around the relation of physical continuity and so does his community. Then both private and public conativists will hold that each of *P*’s and *P**’s utterances are true. (Of course, matters will be more complicated for the public conativist in the case in which *P* or *P** organize their attitudes in a way that is different from the way in which the community in which they are embedded organizes its attitudes. In that event public conativists might either suppose that it is the community’s attitudes that matter in determining what *P* and *P** survive rather than the private attitudes of *P* and *P** themselves, or they might hold that it is indeterminate whether the person survives or not [see Longenecker, forthcoming].) That is because there are post-teletransportation stages that are psychologically continuous with *P*, and given the way *P* and her community organize their attitudes, it follows that *P* survives teletransportation. But there are no post-teletransportation stages that are physically continuous with *P**, and thus, given the way *P** and his community organize their attitudes, it follows that *P** does not survive teletransportation. Because what each of *P* and *P** asserts is true, there is a sort of faultless difference: which relation is the personal-identity relation can vary from person-stage to person-stage.

It is worth noting, however, that the sense in which conativists who embrace realizer relativism are relativists about personal identity is really no different from the sense in which analytic functionalists about the mind are relativists about mental states. Analytic functionalists say that some state counts as being a mental state of a certain sort just in case that state plays some particular functional role. They then note that different physical states can play the same role and that this is

why mental states are multiply realizable. In this sense functionalists are relativists because they hold that it is a relative matter which physical states are, or realize, particular mental states. Relative to one individual it can be that physical state S realizes pain while relative to another, physical state S^* realizes pain. Of course, no one is tempted to think it odd that different physical states can realize the same mental state. But nonconativists certainly take it to be controversial that different relations can realize the personal-identity relation.

Realizer relativism, though, is not the only kind of relativism that the conativist can adopt. To see this, consider the following sentences:

1. I/You/He/She would survive E
2. I/You/He/She did survive E
3. I am/You are/He/She is the same person as P

Take an instance of (1): I would survive E . Suppose that E is teletransportation. There is an obvious indexical here: 'I'. Suppose (1) is uttered by P (where ' P ' and ' P^* ' are names of person-stages). Accordingly, when person-stage P utters 'I will survive teletransportation', P is uttering a claim of the form $\langle P$ will survive teletransportation \rangle . Because P is itself a short-lived entity that will not exist post-teletransportation, I assume that this proposition is true just in case there is some continuer of P that exists post-teletransportation. One could instead suppose that an utterance of 'I will survive teletransportation' by P expresses a proposition of the form \langle Mary will survive teletransportation \rangle where 'Mary' is the name of a four-dimensional person of which P is a part. Then that proposition will be true just in case there are future person-stages that are temporal parts of Mary and those stages exist post-teletransportation.

The utterance in question, made by P , expresses the proposition $\langle P$ will survive teletransportation \rangle . Realizer relativist conativists hold that propositions such as $\langle P$ will survive teletransportation \rangle are true or false *simpliciter*. Their truth depends on (a) which relations obtain between P and post-teletransportation person-stages and (b) around which relation relevant stages organize their (apt) conative attitudes. Probably the most common version of realizer relativist conativism is one on which the truth of such propositions depends on (a) which relations obtain between P and post-teletransportation person-stages and (b) around which relation P organizes its (apt) conative attitudes. Hence while $\langle P$ will survive teletransportation \rangle is true *simpliciter*; $\langle P^*$ will survive teletransportation \rangle is false *simpliciter*.

Another way in which a conativist might embrace relativism is to endorse assessor relativism. On that view, very roughly, propositions such as $\langle P$ will survive teletransportation \rangle are not simply true or false *simpliciter*. Rather, they are true or false relative to a context of assessment. In what follows I take contexts of assessment to be centered worlds: that is, a triple of a time, world, and individual $\langle w, t, i \rangle$, where an individual at a time just is a person-stage. Then assessor relative conativists agree with realizer relative conativists that what determines the truth-value of such propositions are the (relevant) conative states of person-stages:

that is what makes the view conativist. But they think that person-identity propositions should always be assessed relative to a context of assessment and that it is relevant attitudes at that context that matter for determining its truth-value at that context.

Assessor relative conativism, then, embraces a relativist semantics of personal-identity propositions. On these views, context ‘gets into the picture’ twice over by allowing us to include not only features of the speaker’s *context of utterance*, but also features of an assessor’s *context of assessment*. For instance, suppose *P* utters ‘I will survive teletransportation’. Then, in the usual manner, the context of utterance determines which proposition is expressed by ‘filling in’ the indexical. In this case, the context determines that the proposition expressed is $\langle P$ will survive teletransportation \rangle . But according to the assessor relativist, that very proposition can be true when assessed at some contexts and can be false at others, depending on features of the context of assessment.

Assessor relative conativism, then, is the view that it is the relevant conations at the context of assessment that determine the truth-value of a personal-identity proposition assessed at that context. The assessor relative conativist will say that utterances of ‘I/you/she/he will survive teletransportation’ express propositions of the form $\langle X$ will survive teletransportation \rangle , where *X* is the name of some particular person-stage, such as *P*. Assessor relative conativism, then, is consistent with either public or private conativism. It might be that the relevant conations at a context of assessment are community-level attitudes. Then any such proposition is true when assessed at a context of assessment $\langle u, t, i \rangle$ iff the community-level attitudes at *i* (i.e., of *i*’s community) are organized around relation *R* and iff there will be post-teletransportation stages that are *R*-related to *X*. Alternatively, it might be that the relevant conations are private personal-level attitudes. Then any such proposition is true when assessed at a context of assessment $\langle u, t, i \rangle$ iff (a) *i* organizes its relevant attitudes around relation *R* and (b) there will be post-teletransportation stages that are *R*-related to *X*.

And indeed, as I will discuss in section 3, the assessor relative conativist might even say that there are two (or more) senses of personal identity, including perhaps a public and a private one, so that sometimes a personal-identity sentence expresses a proposition about a public notion, where such propositions are to be evaluated in the first way, and sometimes about a private notion, where such propositions are to be evaluated in the second way.

In what follows I motivate the idea that other-directed attitudes of a certain sort matter when it comes to personal-identity truths. The remainder of the paper will argue that the best way to make sense of our practices regarding these other-directed attitudes is to accept some version of assessor relative conativism. This will leave open certain questions about which version we should accept, and that is because one might hold that in addition to accommodating both self- and other-directed attitudes, one also needs to accommodate community-level attitudes. As I will note later, this might give us reason to accept some version of pluralistic assessor relative conativism. My primary focus, though, will be on the narrower task of accommodating other-directed attitudes.

3. Other-directed Attitudes Matter

Suppose P is a person-stage of Mary, and that P^* is a person-stage of Jeremy. Further, let us suppose that Mary and Jeremy are married (and so are P and P^*). In what follows to make for ease of comprehension I will rename P 'MARY' and P^* 'JEREMY', reserving Mary and Jeremy as names for the whole persons of which MARY and JEREMY are stages (and likewise I use this convention for stages of persons other than Jeremy and Mary).

Discussions of personal identity often focus predominantly on self-directed attitudes. But we do not only care about ourselves: we often care as much (or almost as much) about other selves, albeit in quite different ways from the ways we care about ourselves. The ways in which we care about others is captured, at least in part, by other-directed attitudes.

The other-directed attitudes I have in mind are those that a person-stage organizes around some relation or other such that they guide that stage's interactions with person-stages that are *not* stages of the same person as that stage. For instance, we treat certain future person-stages as continuers of our wives, daughters, friends, mortal enemies, tech support gurus, students, and so on. That we take them to be continuers of certain current person-stages structures our interactions with those person-stages. For instance, we plan the downfall of some future person-stage because we take it to be our mortal enemy, and we do that because we take it to be a continuer of some current person-stage that is our mortal enemy. We expect a future person-stage to deliver us chapter 5 of a PhD thesis because we take that stage to be continuer of a current person-stage whose PhD thesis we are supervising. And so on.

The structure of our interactions with such future person-stages is determined by the relation(s) around which we organize our other-directed attitudes. A person-stage organizes its other-directed attitudes around relation R when she treats only those future (and past) person-stages that are connected via R to some current stage P as being continuers (and ancestors) of P . For instance, MARY organizes her other-directed attitudes around R when she takes JEREMY to be responsible for the actions only of those earlier person-stages that are R -related to JEREMY; that is, she takes JEREMY to inherit the legal rights and responsibilities only of those earlier person-stages that are R -related to JEREMY; she takes future person-stage JEREMY* to inherit the legal rights and responsibilities of JEREMY only if JEREMY* is R -related to JEREMY, and so on.

Recall that MARY organizes her self-directed attitudes around the relation of psychological continuity, and JEREMY organizes his self-directed attitudes around the relation of physical continuity. What should we expect regarding the ways in which JEREMY, say, organizes his other-directed attitudes and, in particular, his other-directed attitudes toward MARY? Two possibilities suggest themselves. First, it could be that JEREMY organizes his other-directed attitudes toward MARY in such a way that they track the relation around which MARY organizes her self-directed attitudes, whatever relation that might be. Call this *other-deference*. If JEREMY other-defers, then his other-directed attitudes toward some person-stage P defer to P 's self-directed attitudes. That is, if P organizes its self-directed attitudes around

relation *R*, then JEREMY organizes his other-directed attitudes vis-à-vis *P* around *R*. If JEREMY other-defers, he will organize his other-directed attitudes vis-à-vis MARY around psychological continuity.

If JEREMY thinks that he and MARY faultlessly differ with respect to their attitudes, then when it comes to MARY's survival, he may well other-defer and bring his other-directed attitudes in line with her self-directed attitudes. This, however, is not the only way things might go. We can imagine that JEREMY organizes his other-directed attitudes around the same relation around which he organizes his self-directed attitudes. Call this *self-deference*. It is easy to see why a person-stage might self-defer. JEREMY has a set of (self-directed) attitudes, which both he and MARY agree are apt. JEREMY only cares, in a self-directed manner, about future person-stages that are physically continuous with him. It is not a stretch, then, to imagine that JEREMY might only care, in an other-directed manner, about future-person stages that are physically continuous with MARY. If JEREMY self-defers, then he will organize both his self-directed and other-directed attitudes around the relation of physical continuity. In that case he will hold not only that *he* would die were he to enter the machine and be teleported, but also that this is true of MARY.

Let us suppose that JEREMY self-defers. Then we should expect JEREMY to try to prevent MARY from entering the teletransporter machine. Indeed, one can imagine JEREMY saying to MARY 'MARY, you will not survive teletransportation' as he pleads with her not to enter the machine.

You, like me, might think that other-directed conations such as those of JEREMY matter in some way in determining the truths about personal-identity and survival. Our personal-identity practices are rich and textured. While we most certainly care about our continuers in a distinctive manner, we also care about other people's continuers. We have a rich set of interpersonal practices directed toward tracking others over time. Indeed, without such practices our interpersonal relationships would be all but impossible. In theorizing about personal-identity, then, we might think we should care about these practices when thinking about the conditions under which personal-identity propositions are true. (This leaves open that we should also care about other practices, such as community-level ones.)

How might we go about accommodating a role for other-directed practices in our account of personal identity? So far, I have talked as though there is a single view, realizer relative conativism (or perhaps two views: public and private realizer relative conativism). In fact, things are more complex; we can distinguish a variety of views.

In what follows I outline four classes of views. The first three are versions of realizer relative conativism. They share two claims: (a) that personal-identity propositions are true or false *simpliciter* and (b) that what makes those propositions true/false are the conations of relevant person-stages. The fourth is assessor relative conativism, on which (a) personal-identity propositions are always true or false relative to a context of assessment, and (b) what makes those propositions true/false at a context of assessment are the relevant conations at that context.

I will call the first class of views single-track realizer relative conativism. This is a version of realizer relative conativism on which it is a single kind of conation that

matters in determining for any person-stage what continuers, if any, it has. Suppose it is self-directed conations that matter. Whose self-directed conations? One version of the view is a version of private conativism, on which it is the self-directed conations of the stage in question that matter. Thus, MARY's conations determine whether she survives teletransportation, and JEREMY's conations determine whether he survives teletransportation. I will call this view self-directed private realizer relative conativism. Arguably this is the most popular version of conativism.

Another version of single-track realizer relativism holds that it is everyone's self-directed conations that matter. Jointly, these conations determine the personal-identity truths. This is a kind of public conativism, which I will call self-directed public conativism. In what follows I set this view aside. That is because insofar as we are drawn to public conativism, it seems undermotivated to restrict the conations that matter to self-directed conations.

Another version of single-track realizer relativism holds that it is other-directed conations that matter. Whose other-directed conations matter? One possibility is that everyone's other-directed conations, taken jointly, determine the personal-identity truths. This is a kind of other-directed public conativism. Again, I will set this view aside because it is hard to see why we would restrict the conations that matter exclusively to other-directed ones if we were drawn to public conativism.

The other possibility is that it is the other-directed conations of a single stage that matter. This would be a kind of other-directed private realizer relative conativism. How would this go? It could be that the other-directed conations of a particular stage—say JEREMY—determine *all* the personal-identity truths. JEREMY's other-directed conations determine whether <MARY will survive teletransportation> and also whether <FREDDIE will survive teletransportation> and so on. I will set this view aside too because it beggars belief that the personal-identity truths depend on the other-directed conations of a particular stage (be it JEREMY or not).

Alternatively, it could be that different stages determine different truths. For instance, it could be that JEREMY's other-directed conations determine what MARY will survive and that FREDDIE's other-directed conations determine what JASMINE will survive, and so on. Notice that since this is a version of realizer relativism and not assessor relativism, it cannot be that JEREMY's other-directed conations determine the truth of <MARY will survive teletransportation> at his context and that FREDDIE's other-directed conations determine the truth of that proposition at his context. Either they jointly determine its truth at *both* contexts, or one of them determines its truth at both contexts. The former is a version of other-directed public conativism, and the latter is deeply bizarre and is another view I will set aside. Thus, of the single-track versions of realizer relative conativism I will consider only self-directed private realizer relative conativism.

A second view is dual-track realizer relative conativism. On this view, both self-directed and other-directed conations play a role in determining the personal-identity truths. This view is a version of public conativism on which everyone's other-directed and self-directed conations *jointly* determine the personal-identity truths. On this view, the total set of conations of MARY's community (including her own) determine whether <MARY will survive teletransportation> is true. I will call this view public realizer relative conativism

though it is obviously not the only possible version of public realizer relative conativism; one could instead hold that it is community-level attitudes that matter and that these are not simply the joint product of the other-directed and self-directed attitudes of members of the community, or one could think that both of these sets of attitudes matter.

This brings me to a third class of views, which I will call personal-identity pluralism (or just pluralism for short). Pluralism is the view that there is more than one notion of personal identity and its correlates (such as ‘same person’, and ‘survives’, and so on). Pluralistic conativism is the view that there are multiple notions of personal identity that map onto different personal-identity relations, which are determined by different sets of conative attitudes. Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2020a) gesture toward a view like this. Pluralistic conativism can be spelled out as either a version of realizer relative conativism or of assessor relative conativism.

Let us begin by considering a class of views I will call pluralistic realizer relative conativism. According to such views, (a) there are multiple notions of personal identity and (b) sometimes personal-identity sentences express a proposition about one notion of personal identity and sometimes a proposition about another notion of personal identity and (c) propositions about the various notions of personal identity are true or false *simpliciter*, and they are made true (or false) by the (relevant) attitudes of person-stages or communities thereof.

There are various ways one might spell out such a view. For a start, we might hold that there is both a private and a public notion of personal identity. The former is the notion we use in personal and interpersonal settings. I take this to be the notion that is salient in the dispute between MARY and JEREMY regarding whether MARY will survive teletransportation. The other, public notion of personal identity is one we use in social or community settings in which we are interested in, say, property rights, legal responsibility, and so on. If so, it seems plausible that truths about the private notion will be determined by individual stages’ self-directed or other-directed attitudes, while truths about the public notion will be determined by community-level attitudes (which might in turn be determined in part or whole by the self-directed and other-directed attitudes of the members of the community). We can call the private notion person-identity_{PR} and the public notion person-identity_{PU}.

Then FREDDIE might utter ‘Mary will not survive teletransportation’ and assert the proposition $\langle \text{Mary will not survive}_{\text{PU}} \text{ teletransportation} \rangle$, and the truth of that proposition will be determined by the relevant community-level attitudes. By contrast, JEREMY might utter ‘MARY will not survive teletransportation’ and assert $\langle \text{MARY will not survive}_{\text{PR}} \text{ teletransportation} \rangle$, and the truth of that proposition will be determined by the relevant personal-level attitudes (for instance, MARY’s self-directed attitudes). Let us call this view public/private pluralism.

Another version of pluralism holds that there are two private notions of personal identity, an other-directed and a self-directed notion. On this view we should distinguish personal-identity_S from personal-identity_O, where the former is the relation that is determined by a person-stage’s self-directed attitudes and the latter by a person-stage’s other-directed attitudes. We can call this view self/other

pluralism. Then the idea of self/other pluralism is that when MARY utters 'I will survive teletransportation' and JEREMY utters 'MARY will not survive teletransportation', the proposition that MARY asserts is not the same proposition as the one that JEREMY denies. Rather, MARY asserts something like <MARY will survive_S teletransportation> while JEREMY asserts <MARY will not survive_O teletransportation>. These two pluralisms are, of course, consistent with one another. One might adopt a thoroughgoing pluralism that accepts both public/private pluralism and self/other pluralism.

Because I am particularly interested here in other-directed attitudes, it is worth pausing to think a bit about self/other pluralism. Remember that, for now, we are considering versions of pluralism that are realizer relative and not assessor relative. How should we make sense of self/other pluralism? It is easy to see how to understand the view when it comes to personal-identity_S. Whenever a stage utters a proposition about their own survival_S, it is that stage's self-directed attitudes that determine the truth *simpliciter* of that proposition. But what of propositions about survival_O? Suppose JEREMY and FREDDIE have different patterns of other-directed attitudes. Consider the proposition <MARY will not survive_O teletransportation>. If JEREMY'S other-directed attitudes determine that proposition's truth-value, then the proposition is true; if FREDDIE'S other-directed attitudes determine that truth-value, then the proposition is false. The realizer relativist cannot, of course, say that the proposition is true at JEREMY'S context and false at FREDDIE'S.

If we wanted to make sense of self/other pluralism in a realizer relative guise, we would need to say that there are many different notions of survival_O corresponding to different patterns of other-directed attitudes. Then we could say that JEREMY asserts <MARY will not survive_{O₁} teletransportation> while FREDDIE asserts <MARY will not survive_{O₂} teletransportation> and the former's truth is determined by JEREMY'S other-directed conations and the latter's by those of FREDDIE. I will call this view *extreme* self/other pluralism because it posits the existence of many different private notions of personal identity.

That brings us to the final view: assessor relative conativism. On that view personal-identity propositions are not true or false *simpliciter*. Instead, such propositions are always true or false relative to a context of assessment. Assessor relative versions of public conativism will hold that personal-identity propositions are to be assessed at contexts of assessment and that the attitudes that determine the truth of those propositions at those contexts are the community-level attitudes at those contexts. Thus, a proposition will take the same truth-value across contexts within a community, but it might take different values across communities. Assessor relative versions of private conativism will hold that personal-identity propositions are to be assessed at contexts of assessment and that the personal-level attitudes of the person-stage at that context determine the truth-value of the proposition at that context. Thus, the same proposition might be true at one context of assessment (even within a community) and false at another.

Assessor relative conativism is compatible with pluralism of various kinds. The assessor relative conativist could hold that there are two notions of personal identity, public and private, and that sometimes sentences express propositions

about a private notion and sometimes they do so about a public notion. In each case the proposition expressed should be evaluated at a context of assessment, but which attitudes determine the truth-value at that context will differ depending on whether the proposition is about a public or a private notion of personal identity (community-level attitudes versus personal-level attitudes). I think a view like this is quite attractive, and everything I say in the remainder of the paper is consistent with such a view. However, because the paper focuses on the role of other-directed attitudes, which are personal-level attitudes, I will largely focus on a private sense of personal identity, leaving open that there might also be a public sense.

The assessor relative conativist could also be a pluralist about a private notion of personal identity, holding that there is both a self-directed and an other-directed notion of personal identity. Indeed, if one is independently drawn to self/other pluralism, then there is good reason to endorse assessor relativism as well. For one can then say that FREDDIE and JEREMY express the same proposition about the other-directed sense of personal identity when they utter ‘MARY will not survive teletransportation’, but that proposition is false at FREDDIE’s context and true at JEREMY’s. Thus, the pluralist can jettison the need for multiple notions of personal-identity_O corresponding to various patterns of other-directed attitudes.

In what follows, though, I focus on a version of assessor relative conativism that is not pluralist about the private sense of personal identity. In this regard it denies self/other pluralism. I will call this view assessor relative conativism. In the next section I offer several reasons for endorsing this view over three of its rivals, those that are sufficiently plausible as to warrant further investigation: self-directed private realizer relative conativism, public realizer relative conativism, and extreme pluralism in its realizer relative incarnation.

4. Assessor Relativism and its Competitors

In what follows I articulate several reasons to prefer assessor relative conativism over its rivals.

4.1 Reason One

Assessor relative conativism makes sense of self-deference. Suppose JEREMY self-defers. He organizes his other-directed attitudes around physical continuity. JEREMY denies that <MARY will survive teletransportation> and pleads with MARY not to enter the machine. Let us begin by considering the only plausible single-track realizer relative view: self-directed private realizer relative conativism.

On this view, when JEREMY says <MARY will not survive teletransportation>, he says something false. That makes it difficult to make sense of JEREMY’s behavior (linguistic and otherwise). Imagine that JEREMY knows which attitudes MARY has and knows that <MARY will survive teletransportation> is true. Yet, we can imagine that he continues to assert <MARY will not survive teletransportation> and tries to prevent MARY from entering the machine. If self-directed private realizer relative conativism is true, then his behavior is puzzling.

The self-directed private realizer relative conativist might respond by noting that the mere fact that JEREMY knows that MARY will survive cannot be expected to change his attitudes automatically. We can, and do, have irrational attitudes. Learning that the rickety ladder is in fact completely safe does not always result in my changing my fearful attitudes toward climbing it. Learning that MARY will survive (by learning which attitudes she has) might not change JEREMY'S fearful attitudes, and this is what explains JEREMY'S behavior.

But if we take this avenue, we must say that JEREMY'S attitudes are not apt. After all, since <MARY will survive teletransportation> is true, it cannot be apt for JEREMY to be afraid of her entering the machine. Indeed, once JEREMY knows that <MARY will survive teletransportation> is true, he should recognize that his attitudes of fear regarding the machine (as it pertains to MARY) are inapt, and he should try to bring his other-directed attitudes in line with MARY'S self-directed attitudes.

This, however, is just to say that each person-stage should other-defer: that self-deference is inapt. But I see no reason to think this is so. Now, the self-directed private realizer relative conativist might respond that this is so because it is MARY'S own well-being that is at stake, and therefore it should be her attitudes that determine whether she survives. But clearly JEREMY'S well-being is also affected by MARY'S survival or lack thereof. We can even imagine that his well-being is affected as much as MARY'S. We might insist that her well-being is affected in a different way from JEREMY'S. But that would seem to amount to little more than foot stamping that it is MARY'S attitudes that matter, not JEREMY'S. At any rate, without serious further argument it seems open to us to think that both kinds of attitudes matter, and therefore self-deference is apt. But once we allow that self-deference is possible and that this pattern of attitudes can be apt, then we should conclude that self-directed private realizer relative conativism cannot accommodate this pattern of attitudes.

Next, consider public realizer relative conativism. Similar considerations hold here. To be sure, on this view JEREMY'S other-directed attitudes matter in determining whether MARY survives teletransportation insofar as they are a (small) part of the grounds that determine the truth-value of that proposition. But this view offers no better account of JEREMY'S linguistic and other behavior than does self-directed private realizer relative conativism. Suppose that, jointly, the self-directed and other-directed attitudes of the relevant community ground its being true that <MARY will survive teletransportation>. As before, even knowing this, JEREMY might continue to assert that she will not survive teletransportation and continue to implore her not to enter the machine.

Moreover, the way in which JEREMY'S other-directed attitudes are taken into account on such a view seems wrong. Insofar as JEREMY'S other-directed attitudes play a role in determining the personal-identity truths, it is because they play some very small role in determining the community's joint attitudes. But they do not play any special role with regard to what MARY will survive (and, indeed, neither do MARY'S self-directed attitudes). This does not do justice to the ways in which both MARY'S and JEREMY'S attitudes matter to themselves and to each other.

Extreme realizer relative pluralism might be thought to do somewhat better here because it can accommodate the idea that when JEREMY utters 'MARY will not survive

teletransportation', he expresses a true proposition. He asserts a proposition about other-directed personal identity, which is made true by his other-directed conations, while MARY asserts a proposition about self-directed personal identity, which is made true by her self-directed conations. This is why despite appearing to disagree, both assert truly.

Still, it is not obvious that this adequately explains JEREMY's behavior. Suppose JEREMY knows that pluralism is true. He sees that there are two (private) notions of personal identity: other-directed and self-directed. He sees that there is a true proposition he can assert, namely, <MARY will survive_S teletransportation>, which is true *simpliciter*. In light of this, it seems that JEREMY should be ambivalent about MARY's survival. In one sense she will not survive and in another sense she will. Yet, this fails to capture how things are for JEREMY, who passionately does not want MARY to enter the machine regardless of its being true, on this view, that <MARY will survive_S teletransportation>.

Perhaps another way to put the point is that according to extreme realizer relative pluralism, MARY and JEREMY are not really disagreeing at all: they are talking past one another. For the proposition JEREMY asserts is not the negation of the proposition MARY asserts. And yet, for all that, it seems very much as though they disagree and disagree about something very important. (And this, I think is a reason why the assessor relativist might want to reject self/other pluralism even if she embraces public/private pluralism.)

The assessor relative conativist is nicely able to make sense of JEREMY's behavior. Like the extreme realizer relative pluralist, she will hold that JEREMY asserts something true at his context when he asserts that MARY will not survive teletransportation and that MARY asserts something true at her context when she asserts that she will survive teletransportation. But there are two important differences between the two views. First, the assessor relative conativist will say that there is a single proposition whose truth-value the parties disagree about. And that seems better to capture the fact that they do seem to be disagreeing. Moreover, the assessor relative conativist will say that when JEREMY says 'what MARY says is false' he says something true at his context. This allows us to make better sense of the behavior of the two parties. It is not surprising that the parties continue to behave as they do. At JEREMY's context, it is true that MARY will not survive teletransportation. Assuming he cares about her survival, he should try to prevent her from entering the machine, and he should continue to assert <MARY will not survive teletransportation>. By contrast, at MARY's context it is true that she will survive, and so by MARY's lights she should use the machine as an effective and fast mode of transport. Hence, the self/other assessor relative conativist can make good sense of both MARY's and JEREMY's behaviors.

4.2 Reason Two

It seems intuitive to say that by his own lights what JEREMY says is true. The conativist thinks that all that matters in determining which relation is the personal-identity relation are facts about a person-stage's (apt) conative attitudes. There is no mysterious further fact about which relation really is the personal-identity relation

that outstrips these facts about conations. Given that both JEREMY'S and MARY'S attitudes are apt, it seems as right to say that by JEREMY'S lights what he says is true as it does to say that by MARY'S lights what she says is true. Neither self-directed private realizer relative conativism nor public realizer relative conativism allow us to vindicate any sense in which this is so. For they all say that at most, one of the parties speaks truly.

The extreme pluralist does better. She can say that JEREMY says something true when he says that MARY will not survive teletransportation. But this does not seem to capture adequately the sense in which by his own lights what he says is true and what MARY says is false. After all, according to the extreme realizer relative pluralist, what MARY says is in fact true, and it is true even at JEREMY'S context. She is asserting a proposition about private self-directed personal identity, and the proposition she asserts is true *simpliciter*.

By contrast the assessor relative conativist can accommodate the sense in which what JEREMY says is true by his own lights and what MARY says is true by hers, as well as the sense in which what MARY says is false by JEREMY'S lights and what JEREMY says is false by hers. The proposition MARY asserts is false at JEREMY'S context and vice versa.

4.3 Reason Three

Assessor relative conativism is a better interpretation of how a third-party would view the disagreement between MARY and JEREMY. Suppose that FREDDIE organizes his self-directed and other-directed attitudes around the relation of physical-cum-psychological continuity (that is, the relation that is satisfied between x and y just when y is both psychologically and physically continuous with x). Now suppose that FREDDIE is listening to MARY and JEREMY. JEREMY tells MARY that she will not survive teletransportation, while MARY responds that she will survive. How should FREDDIE evaluate their utterances?

According to self-directed private realizer relative conativism and public realizer relative conativism, the propositions they utter are true or false *simpliciter*. If what MARY says is true (and let us suppose it is), then FREDDIE should conclude that what MARY says is true and that what JEREMY says is false. But this seems wrong. It seems more natural for FREDDIE to conclude that <MARY will survive teletransportation> is false.

Given his own attitudes FREDDIE will agree with JEREMY. But he will not *always* agree with JEREMY. JEREMY holds that <MARY will survive brain death> is true. FREDDIE disagrees. The assessor relative conativist can say that <MARY will survive brain death> is true at JEREMY'S context and false at FREDDIE'S and that <MARY will survive teletransportation> is false at both their contexts (though true at MARY'S).

The extreme realizer relative pluralist will allow that the propositions that FREDDIE, MARY, and JEREMY assert are all true. But she achieves this result by holding that MARY is asserting a proposition about self-directed personal identity, and FREDDIE and JEREMY are asserting propositions about two different senses of other-directed personal identity (O₁ and O₂) that correspond to their different patterns of other-directed attitudes. That is, FREDDIE asserts that <Mary will

survive_{O₁} brain death> while Jeremy denies that <Mary will survive_{O₂} brain death>. Not only are FREDDIE and JEREMY talking past MARY, but they are also talking past one another. This seems a rather unwieldy view to take of the number of notions of personal identity at play and also seems to fail to capture a clear sense in which the parties are in fact disagreeing with one another.

4.4. Reason Four

Assessor relative conativism makes sense of our practices. Consider a young infant who does not yet have sufficiently rich self-directed attitudes that they are, determinately, organized around any particular relation. According to self-directed private realizer relative conativism, then, for some range of events, there will be no fact of the matter whether the infant will survive those events or not. Suppose that the infant is sick and must either (a) undergo a procedure in which there will be physical discontinuity but not psychological discontinuity or (b) undergo a procedure in which there will be psychological discontinuity but not physical discontinuity. Suppose that the infant's self-directed attitudes do not determine that the infant will or will not survive either (a) or (b).

The parents of the infant must make a choice about how to proceed. Both parents organize their other-directed practices around the psychological continuity relation. According to self-directed private realizer relative conativism, because there is no fact of the matter as to whether the infant will survive given option (a) or given option (b), the parents have no reason to choose one over the other. Or, somewhat better, they might have self-interested reasons to choose (a) over (b), but there are no such reasons arising from facts about personal identity. But that seems wrong. There seem to be reasons arising from personal identity itself to choose option (a).

Public realizer relative conativists and public/private pluralists do better with this case. Both can say that there is some public notion of personal identity and that there are facts about public personal identity that determine which of (a) or (b) is the right decision. Self/other pluralists can also say that even though the self-directed private notion of personal identity is indeterminate in this case, we can look to the private other-directed notion to give us guidance on what to do.

The assessor relative conativist can also accommodate this case. She can say that at each of the parents' contexts it is determinately true that the infant will survive procedure (a) and determinately true that the infant will fail to survive procedure (b), and that gives them decisive reason to choose (a) over (b).

In all, then, assessor relative conativism does better than its competitors at accommodating our practices when it comes to other-directed attitudes. And this gives us reason to endorse that view over these competitors. As I noted earlier, this leaves open that the assessor relative conativist might also want to endorse some kind of pluralism about personal identity, particularly about a private versus a public notion.

5. Relativism and Practical Decisions

One objection to assessor relative conativism is that it fails what some have thought of as a crucial desideratum of conativism: namely, that what matters to us in survival

goes hand in hand with the personal-identity relation. For defense of this idea see Braddon-Mitchell and Miller (2020a). A key motivation for conativism is that it is our conations that determine which relation is the personal-identity relation; hence, those conations cannot come apart from (that is, attach to something that is not or fail to attach to something that is) the personal-identity relation.

One might complain, however, that assessor relative conativism falls foul of this idea. That is because relative to JEREMY'S context, MARY does not survive teletransportation. But then the facts about MARY'S survival do come apart from what matters because they come apart from what matters to MARY.

There is something right and something wrong about this worry. It is wrong insofar as, according to the assessor relativist, facts about survival do not come apart from what matters; it is just that what matters is relative to contexts. The facts about MARY'S survival at JEREMY'S context do not come apart from what matters in survival to JEREMY nor do they come apart, at MARY'S context, from what matters to MARY. It is just that the mattering relation is itself context dependent. Still, there is a worry in the vicinity here, which I call the normative gap objection. According to the assessor relative conativist, the totality of true personal-identity propositions does not even partially fix the (relevant) normative facts about what we ought to do personally, interpersonally, socially, and legally. But the totality of true personal-identity propositions should partially fix those (relevant) normative facts. This is the respect in which what matters 'comes apart' from personal identity: the latter does not 'fix' the former.

Consider a case in which MARY is in a coma and JEREMY has to decide whether she will undergo a procedure: call it PROC. If MARY does not have PROC now, she cannot have it later. It seems that the truth of <MARY will survive PROC> coupled with facts about the expected utility to the relevant future person-stages of having PROC should fix the relevant normative facts about whether MARY should, prudentially, undergo PROC. Hence, it should fix the facts about what decision JEREMY should make on MARY'S behalf. But suppose that <MARY will survive PROC> is true at JEREMY'S context and false at MARY'S. Then the truth-value of that proposition fails to give us any guidance about what decision should be taken.

Notice that similar worries arise for the pluralist. Suppose there is both a public and private notion of personal identity and that it is true that MARY will survive given the public notion but not given the private one. What should JEREMY do? Likewise, suppose there are two private notions, an other-directed notion and a self-directed notion. Suppose that MARY will survive according to the other-directed sense, but not according to the self-directed sense. What should JEREMY do? It seems that the facts about the various notions of personal identity do not fix what choice JEREMY should make. These are difficult issues. In fact, I think these *should* be difficult issues, and it is no objection either to pluralism or to assessor relative conativism that both reveal this to be so.

The assessor relativist has a range of options (most of which can be amended for the purposes of the pluralist). She can say that when we make decisions for ourselves we can and should privilege our own contexts over those of anyone else. If MARY were conscious, she should decline the procedure because at her context it is true that she would not survive it. She can also say that when it comes to making

decisions on the part of others we should take *their* context to be the one that matters because we are, in effect, acting in their stead. Then JEREMY should decline the operation on MARY's behalf.

You might think there is obvious motivation for this latter idea. Consider the proposition <vegemite is tasty> and suppose this proposition takes different truth-values at different contexts of assessment. Suppose it is true at Jenny's context and false at Herbert's. It seems obvious that when the question arises as to whether Jenny should give Herbert vegemite for lunch, the context we should care about is Herbert's. The fact that <vegemite is tasty> is false at his context partially fixes the fact that Jenny should not serve it to him, regardless of that proposition being true at her context.

This is not to say that the assessor relative conativist must take this view. She might think that in making decisions for herself MARY should take into account the facts at JEREMY's context (given their relationship). And she might think that when JEREMY is making his decision about the procedure, he should also take into account the facts at his context. Exactly what 'taking into account' here would amount to is, of course, up for grabs. It may be that what ultimately goes on in such cases is a complicated negotiation between parties, where different truths obtain at those parties' contexts. Ultimately though, the assessor relativist will say that personal-identity truths do partially settle the normative facts: it is just that it is up for grabs *which* truths do the settling and how. That, however, seems to be the right thing to say.

6. Conclusion

I do not claim to have decisively shown that conativists should accept assessor relative conativism over its realizer relative competitors. Rather, I hope to have drawn attention to the former view and articulated some reasons why conativists might be attracted to it insofar as they want to make room for a role for other-directed attitudes. It may ultimately prove to be the case that assessor relativists also want to endorse some kind of pluralism, be it public/private pluralism or perhaps even self-other pluralism. But I leave these considerations for another day. Of course, some conativists might simply not be moved by the idea that other-directed attitudes should play a role in determining the personal-identity truths, and these conativists may well be drawn to some other realizer relative version of conativism. But for those who take other-directed attitudes seriously, I think there are good reasons to consider seriously some version of assessor relative conativism.

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