

The Self

- **Ontology:**

- Study of existence
- The nature of “being”
- Study of what there “is”
 - Personal Identity – questions about ourselves

- **IDENTITY:**

- What a person identifies with *or* thinks of themselves as
- What it is to *be* a person
- What makes things *exactly similar* – not identical [Could have 2+]
- Numerical Identity – one and the same
 - ***NUMERICAL IDENTITY [SAMENESS] THROUGH TIME**

- **Significant Questions:**

- Should we base ‘identity’ on description alone?
- What questions ***should*** we be asking?
 1. What makes X the same person as Y?
 2. How can we tell that X is the same person as Y?
 3. What determines whether X survives through time and change?

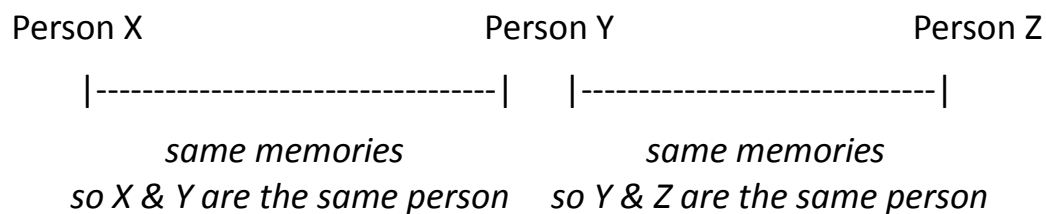
- **Conditions for Sameness:**

- X is the same person as Y if and only if...
- **Three traditional approaches:**
 1. **Soul:** X has the same *soul* as Y.
 - A person is not identical to the soul
 - But your soul is a condition for being a person
 2. **Body:** X has the same *body* as Y.
 - A person is not identical to the body
 - But if the body is different, then they are not the same person

3. **Psychological make-up/memory:** *Y remembers* having X's experiences.

- Y is later in time than X
- Psychological continuity is a necessary condition for being that same person
- **Testing Conditions:**
 - Test each account against our *intuitions* of “sameness”
 - YES the same
 - NOT the same
- **John Locke:**
 - Conditions of sameness = CONSCIOUSNESS
 - NOT Personality
 - NOT Character
 - MEMORY
 - Personal identity consists in "the sameness of a rational being [consciousness]." (p. 275)
- **NOT BODY:**
 - Personal identity ≠ Substance (p. 276)
 - Consciousness can be extended to the distant past
 - Even though the substances which produced those memories may have changed
 - Consciousness could take on DIFFERENT *bodily* forms and still preserve the SAME identity
 - Ex: It is possible for a prince to switch bodies with a cobbler, yet the prince would still be the prince
- **NOT SOUL:**
 - Personal identity ≠ Immaterial SOUL (p. 277)
 - Then animals, who have selves, would have souls
 - Imagine the substance had changed: A → B
 - Without memories, it would be no different than if the soul was brand new

- Prince & Cobbler (p. 278)
 - Same MAN = Body and Soul
 - Same PERSON = Consciousness
- **Psychological Continuity:**
 - WHAT IS THE SELF?
 - A conscious thinking thing
 - Sensible to pleasure and pain
 - Capable of happiness and misery
 - Is concerned for itself so long as it is conscious
 - Can join with a body
 - WHY CONSCIOUSNESS?
 - Personal identity entails *moral responsibility* (p. 279)



- By the law of transitivity then, X & Z are the same person
 - $X \rightarrow Y$ $Y \rightarrow Z$ $\therefore X \rightarrow Z$
- **Considerations:**
 - Loss of Memory?
 - Multiple Personality?
 - Recovered Memory?
- **Possible Objections:**
 - **Circularity:**
 - If you *do* remember as opposed to only *seeming* to remember
 - Then you are already presupposing sameness of person

- **Transitivity Problem:** $X = Y$ $Y = Z$ But $X \neq Z$

- The 3rd stage does not remember the 1st stage

- Therefore, they are not the same person

- **Locke's Response:**

- If any two experiences are linked by a memory, then they are the same person

- Even though it is not a direct memory

- Z remembers Y

- But Z does not remember X

- But Y remembers X

- Therefore, they are ALL the same person

- **David Hume: We Have No Substantial Self with Which We Are Identical**

- A person does not have a self

- Learning comes from sensory impressions, and there does not seem to be a separate impression of the self that we experience. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that we have a self

- The most we can identify ourselves with is our consciousness, and that constantly changes

- There is no separate, permanent self that endures over time; personal identity is a fiction