

Why should we care about identity?

-It's hard to explain why our future selves matter to us without identity (but we do care)

-Without identity, it's hard to say how or whether I'm responsible for things "I" have done in the past

MEMENTO:

Locke: Personal identity is comprised of conscious memories

A person is always conscious of what he thinks

-If I can't retrieve an idea consciously, then that idea is no longer a part of me

To defend his view, Locke attacks alternatives: No body or soul needed for identity

Past lives:

-If I can remember eating breakfast in Ancient Greece, then I am the person who did so—the memory is a part of me

One body shared by two souls:

-Bodily identity isn't personal identity if we can imagine the same body occupied by multiple persons

Prob for Locke: Reid's challenge from transitivity

Suggestion: Fine—this shows that personal identity is intransitive

-Is this a good move? A necessary one? Can we reply Reid in some other way?

Prob 2: False memories lead to circularity (see Hulk paper)

Probs from the movie: Leonard (on one reading) seems to be an amalgam of two series of memories—so who is he?

The film is confusing in 2 ways

- 1) Non-linear narrative (backwards color sequences, frontwards b/w sequences)
 - a. 2 kinds of flashbacks—the kind that are inconsistent with one another, and the kind that are *internally* inconsistent (like the one where he has an "I did it" tattoo while lying with his wife)
 - 2) 2 possible plotlines based on whether you believe Teddy/Gammell
 - a. Catherine died, and Leonard (1) is still looking for her killer
 - b. Catherine survived, Leonard (2) accidentally killed her, was institutionalized, and has fused his memories with the life of Sammy Jankis
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Q: Is Leonard Shelby the same person post-incident that he was pre-incident?

Len (1) has linear memories with one gap (the gap after the injury)
-the same person returns every 5 minutes, and we have a continuous set of memories every time

Len (2) is the problem case.
-*Someone* survives the assault, but who? A mix of two persons? A set of fused memories and false memories suggest this may be so

Suggestion: "Survival itself can have degrees"
-There is no personal identity with the three characteristics we want: transitivity, true memories, and _____

-We're all just partial survivors of the persons we were a moment ago

Len (2) is worrisome precisely because *we* are amalgams of false memories and fused stories.

-Q: describe an experience where you told a story so many times that you're actually not sure about the details anymore

Our memories are unreliable, just like Leonard says. We're not *as* bad off as he is, but our situation is relevantly similar.

Conclusions and consequences:

- 1) We count on not becoming fused persons. We think we have rational concerns for our future selves.
 - a. If I thought I would become a fused person, it would be irrational to care about the person who survives me
 - b. But I *do* become a fused person. So what becomes of my concerns for my future self?
 - i. Suggestion: *some* of my experiences will be common to this future self, and maybe that justifies my concern.
 1. Does this work?
- 2) Responsibility: Do we assign *partial* responsibility proportional to the extent that we are fused?