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 long 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, forwards 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
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?