

Can one give adequate criteria for the identity of a person over time? Illustrate your answer with thought experiments describing 'problem cases' of personal identity.

When I'm young, I am skinny, short and don't have the Computer Science knowledge in my brain. But now I'm in middle age, fatter and have much more knowledge and experience in me. Why such a different state in these two persons? Me in a young person version and me in a middle age version. How can I be sure if these two are the same person? How do I know whether, at age 25 I have not been kidnapped by some crazy devil who did some magic thing to me that makes me a different person from before.

If I talk with my wife about the above question, She laughs at me and tells me 'Can't you just understand such an easy thing as this? You should stop studying philosophy because it makes you dumber. It is Just the same person because they have the same body, they have the same face, or check their citizen id card'. Well, by thinking about it in a physical way can I answer the question? I'm not so sure about that. My watch that I bought ten years ago: it looks new, shiny and impressive when I first have it, but now it looks pretty old, not bright anymore. How do I know if my two watches, that both exist in a different space and time, are the same watch. Well, maybe because of its physical body? But what if it's broken, and I have to take it to the technician to fix? If it has to be separated piece by piece for the purpose of fixing it and then the technician will put it back together again? The question is, is it still my same watch? What happens in the fixing process with the technician? By accident it has some new part put on my watch. Is it still my watch as before or it is going to become another watch that does not belong to me? If someone cut my hand from my body, can someone say "Poor Worapol already left us"? No, of course not. To lose my hand, my whole arm or my leg does not make me lose my own identity. It's still me who lay or sat there. But what about if someone swaps my brain with Mr. A? So the brain of Mr.A is going to be put in my body. Is this body still me? I'm not sure about that., Maybe not. So the physical brain is the key to a person's identity? I think it is my main belief, at least for now.

As John Locke says, our long connection memory should be our identity. This is a very convincing argument for me. What is it that makes my wife be my wife? How do I identify her as my wife? How do I know, she isn't a clone or her secret twin, instead of my beloved wife who shared decades of experience with me? Maybe I will start to realize when I have been spending time with her. I may start to doubt her identity when I find a lack of the same experience that my real wife had with me in the past. If this person is not the same person who was with me for the last ten years, since our first date at the cafe, then she can't be my wife. To be my real wife she should have the same, continuing memory. What about if my wife disappears from my life tomorrow and I never meet her again? If in the next ten years on the street, I meet a strange woman who tells me she is my wife and surprisingly she has the whole of my wife's memory? She knows everything, correctly, about our experience. Is it possible that she is my wife who already passed away and reincarnated to this new physical body? Or maybe God transferred my wife's brain to this stranger's brain. Can I identify her as my wife? If I follow Locke's argument, the answer should be "Yes" even though her physical body is not my wife's body at all.

But I think again about the personal identity problem. I swap my character with my friend's by magic. I suddenly realize that my skin is white; I have a big nose and am shorter than before. Amazingly I'm in my friend's body and over there is my body looking at me with a

doubting face as well. That's my friend in my body. both of us hang out at the club until 3 o'clock;, that night we are on the street. A group of thieves stops us, and a gun is in their hands. They already took all our money from us, but they still want to kill one of us too. The thieves' boss says "I will give you a chance to choose which of you is going to die?" Well, at the end, I would probably prefer my friend to die instead of myself (me in my friend's body). Why do I not choose my friend's body to die instead since it is not my physical body at all? I think because me, Mr. Worapol is now in this body (my friend's body). I don't care if my real physical body is going to be destroyed. What I want to protect is the body that I have or use right now. I think that explains to me that my identity mainly belongs to my personality, not my physical body.