

UNITED WISDOM

What Makes Me Me: Personal Identity and Continuity over Time

Human Nature and Inner World

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I02 · EN

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What Makes Me Me: Personal Identity and Continuity over Time

> *“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”*
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> *— Paul the Apostle, First Epistle to the Corinthians 13:11. King James Version (1611). Project Gutenberg #10*

What this article is about

Over a lifetime almost everything about a person changes: the body, habits, opinions, the circle of people close to them. And yet we point at the child in an old video and say “that’s me,” and of something done twenty years ago we say “I did that.” What does this recognition rest on? Memory, the body, character, relationships with people who know us, the story we tell about ourselves? Philosophers have argued about it at least since Locke and Hume, and Plutarch was already reporting a dispute about the ship of Theseus in antiquity. This article does not promise to settle the argument. It separates two questions that are easy to run together — what makes a person the same, and what lets a person feel the same — and tests each criterion for strength: what it explains and where it stops working. Philosophical and religious answers are attributed to their own texts, and psychological findings to particular studies, with their samples and limits.

I. Two questions under one “I”

When someone says “I’m not the same person,” they may mean two different things. The first is a question of identity: what makes a person the same as the one they were twenty years ago, and what would have to disappear for that to become false. The second is a question of experience: what allows us to live our past as our own and to connect the present to it. The answers to these two questions need not coincide.

John Locke, in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, begins with a definition. A person, for him, is “a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places” (Book II, ch. XXVII, § 11 in the numbering of the Project Gutenberg edition). Psychologists describe the other side of the matter. Emily Hong, Constantine Sedikides and Tim Wildschut study global self-continuity; in their questionnaires it was measured by having people list important aspects of their identity

and rate how far each one made them feel a link between their own past, present and future (2022).

The first question is metaphysical: it is answered with arguments and thought experiments. The second is psychological: it is studied with surveys and experiments. A study can show that a person feels the same, but it cannot prove that an unchanging essence lies beneath the feeling. Conversely, a philosophical criterion does not by itself describe how a person experiences their life.

Below we go through the main candidates — the body, memory, character, links with the past, the story — and ask of each whether it survives change. The story we tell about ourselves is only one of the grounds here; how it is built and how to test it is the subject of article I03. How consciousness arises in the first place we do not discuss: that is a separate question.

II. The ship of Theseus: what remains when the parts are replaced

The problem of identity is easiest to begin not with a person but with a thing. Plutarch, in his Life of Theseus (ch. XXIII), relates that the Athenians preserved the thirty-oared vessel on which Theseus had sailed out with the young people and returned unharmed, keeping it until the days of Demetrius of Phalerum. “They constantly removed the decayed part of her timbers, and renewed them with sound wood, so that the ship became an illustration to philosophers of the doctrine of growth and change, as some argued that it remained the same, and others, that it did not remain the same” (tr. Aubrey Stewart and George Long). Plutarch does not settle the dispute; he records it.

The dispute shows that the words “the same” have at least two senses. If identity means the same material, the ship at some point ceased to be itself. If identity means the same form, the same purpose and an unbroken history of replacements, the ship remained itself, because it was never replaced all at once. This is our reading of the example, not Plutarch’s words.

A conditional example. You are watching a video of yourself at ten. The voice, the height, the face, the vocabulary, the enthusiasms — almost nothing matches. Yet you say without hesitation: “that’s me.” What exactly do you recognise? Not the matter, and not your present views. Rather, an unbroken history: the child on the screen was not at some moment replaced by you; the child gradually became you.

A person, however, is not a ship. A ship does not remember its voyages and does not answer for them, while a person remembers and answers. So for personal identity the dispute about the ship is only a beginning. The sections that follow test criteria that a person has and a thing lacks: memory, character and a felt connection with oneself.

III. The body: “the same man” and “the same person”

The most everyday criterion is the body: we recognise people we know by face, voice and gait. Locke does not discard this criterion but gives it a place of its own. He distinguishes “the same man” from “the same person.” To be the same man, on Locke’s view, also takes a body that is replaced gradually rather than all at once (§ 10 in the PG numbering). To be the same person takes a consciousness able to own past thoughts and actions (§ 11).

Locke shows the difference with a thought experiment (§ 17 in the PG numbering). Imagine that a prince’s soul, with all its awareness of the prince’s past life, passed into a cobbler’s body. Everyone would see, Locke holds, that as a person this is the prince, answerable for the prince’s deeds alone. Yet who would call him the same man? To all but himself he would still be the cobbler.

The thought experiment does not prove that such a transfer is possible. It tests our intuitions, and Locke’s intuition ties the person to inner life rather than to the stuff of the body. Present-day lay views, at least in one sample, tie the “true self” to the brain. In surveys by Diego Fernandez-Duque and Barry Schwartz, residents of the United States judged that the “central self” depends on the brain more than the peripheral self does, and the authors conclude that in present-day American society people readily recognise the brain’s contribution to the central self (2016; paraphrase). These are data about the beliefs of one country, gathered in online surveys, not an answer to the question of what a person is. How the brain relates to consciousness is a separate subject, and we leave it aside.

The bodily criterion works well for recognition from outside and poorly for explaining why the past is lived as one’s own. That is why the next section is about memory. In § 11 Locke speaks of consciousness directed to past actions and thoughts; “memory” is our name for this criterion.

IV. The memory criterion: Locke, and Hume’s objection

Locke’s central argument runs: “as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now it was then” (§ 11). The criterion has a strong side: it explains why we count as ours the actions we remember. Locke himself treats the person as a legal, forensic notion: it assigns actions and their merit to someone, and through consciousness the person comes to care about its past and to answer for it (§ 28 in the PG numbering; paraphrase).

The weak side is obvious at once: most of what we have lived through we do not remember. David Hume, in A Treatise of Human Nature, asks whether anyone could recall what they thought and did on 1 January 1715, 11 March 1719 or 3 August 1733 — and whether, having

wholly forgotten those days, they would claim that their present self is a different person from the self of that time (Book I, Part IV, Sect. VI; paraphrase). Hume does not deny memory a role: only memory makes us aware of how long and how far the succession of perceptions extends, and mainly for that reason, he writes, it should be regarded as the source of personal identity; without it we would not even have the idea of a chain of causes. In this view, he writes, “memory does not so much produce as discover personal identity, by shewing us the relation of cause and effect among our different perceptions.” And he asks those who hold that memory produces identity entirely (he does not name Locke here) to explain why we extend it beyond memory. We extend the chain of causes beyond memory and count even forgotten days as our own.

Hume draws a stronger conclusion as well: the fine points of personal identity, he says, can never be settled, and they are better seen as difficulties of grammar than of philosophy (same section; paraphrase). For our subject something smaller is enough. Memory is a way of discovering one’s continuity, but not its only ground. On Hume’s view, someone who has forgotten a whole year does not thereby become a different person, though no inner thread of recollection ties them to that year.

V. Severe memory loss: what research shows

If the self rested wholly on memory, little of it would be left in severe amnesia. Clinical studies show a more complicated picture — with the caveat that these are data about people who are ill and about how self-representation is measured, not about metaphysics.

Hervé Platel and colleagues (2021) worked with 20 patients with moderate to severe dementia due to Alzheimer’s disease living in nursing homes, and with 20 healthy residents of the same institutions matched for age, education and mood. The authors build on earlier work that found in such patients a self-image that was coherent, though thinner. The participants took part in musical reminiscence workshops prompted by excerpts of familiar songs: the patients in six sessions, the control group in three. Memories were counted and scored at every session, and on day 12 autobiographical memory was assessed individually. The sense of identity was assessed on the first and the last day with two tests: IMAGE (24 statements about oneself, each judged true or false, wholly or in part) and I-AM (ten sentences about oneself beginning with “I am…”). At the last session the quality of the patients’ memories no longer differed significantly from that of the control group (at the first session it had been lower), and the patients produced no fewer memories. At the individual assessment on day 12, the episodic quality of memories in the control group remained significantly higher, as it had been before the workshops. In their conclusion the authors write that both tests showed the patients’ self-representations to be stable, confirming earlier findings of a preserved core of self-representation at moderate to severe stages of the disease. But, contrary to the authors’

hypotheses, no significant enrichment of the sense of identity was found, possibly because the measures were not sensitive enough.

A systematic review by Chiara Stramba-Badiale and colleagues (2025), covering 83 studies, describes a consistent deficit of autobiographical memory in Alzheimer's disease: memories become less specific, and, in most studies, remote ones are better preserved than recent ones. The authors write that the deficit affects patients' sense of self, and at the same time that patients in mild to moderate stages keep some ability to access self-defining memories and a preserved sense of self-continuity (paraphrase). Further research, they conclude, needs larger, more diverse samples and standardised assessment protocols.

The small sample and short time frame in Platel and colleagues, and the clinical populations in both works, do not allow these findings to be carried over to healthy people, and they yield no medical advice. Locke is not refuted by them: he spoke of what a person is, whereas the studies measure how patients describe themselves. But the example shows that the experience of self does not track the amount of remembered material one to one.

VI. A bundle of perceptions, and Hume's admission

Hume goes beyond the dispute about memory and asks whether there is anything at all that we call "I." Whenever he looks as closely as he can into what he calls himself, Hume reports, he comes upon some particular perception — a sensation of warmth or cold, of light or shadow, a feeling of love or hate, of pain or pleasure — and never finds himself without one. And when perceptions are absent for a while, as in deep sleep, he has no sense of himself, and for that time, he writes, one could say that he does not exist (Book I, Part IV, Sect. VI; paraphrase).

Hence the conclusion: human beings are "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement." Identity, for Hume, does not really bind these perceptions together. It is something we ascribe to them because the imagination links their ideas (same section; paraphrase).

It matters that Hume himself was not content with his answer. In the Appendix to the *Treatise* he writes: "upon a more strict review of the section concerning personal identity, I find myself involved in such a labyrinth, that, I must confess, I neither know how to correct my former opinions, nor how to render them consistent." Further on in the Appendix he admits that his hopes collapse once he tries to explain what principles bind our successive perceptions together in thought or consciousness, and that no theory he can find satisfies him (paraphrase). This is an honest limit of the theory: describing the self as a stream of perceptions works; explaining what binds those perceptions into one life does not.

The caution therefore runs both ways. From the fact that the self is hard to find in introspection it does not follow that the person does not exist or that nothing holds them together. From the fact that we habitually say “I” it does not follow that an unchanging thing lies beneath the word.

VII. A bearer who passes through the ages: the answer of the Gita

The opposite answer comes from the *Bhagavad Gita*: in it an unchanging self exists and only its covering changes. Krishna addresses Arjuna before battle: Arjuna grieves for those who may die. Krishna replies that neither he, nor Arjuna, nor these warriors ever ceased to exist or ever will, and compares the change of bodies to the change of ages: “To man's frame As there come infancy and youth and age, So come there raisings-up and layings-down Of other and of other life-abodes” (ch. II, verses 12–13 in the standard numbering; verse rendering by Edwin Arnold).

What matters is the structure of this answer. Change is fully acknowledged: the infant, the youth and the old man differ. But the changes happen to a bearer that does not itself change. This is a religious teaching about an indestructible soul, given in a particular setting: Krishna is speaking to a warrior about battle and death, not proposing a psychological theory of personality. Arnold’s version is a verse rendering, and we draw no conclusions from his individual word choices.

Set beside Hume, it becomes clear where the likeness ends. Both texts start from the same observation: states succeed one another. Hume finds nothing in experience but the succession and frankly admits the difficulty. The Gita affirms an indestructible life which, in its words, cannot in any way be lessened, halted or altered (verses 16–17; paraphrase of Arnold’s rendering); of the change of life-abodes it says that the wise know it and do not fear. This is the truth of a teaching, not the result of introspection. These are not two versions of one answer but incompatible positions. The article does not choose between them. It shows that the question of a core is closed neither by observation nor by appeal to the authority of a single tradition.

VIII. The butterfly dream: who wakes up

Hume noted that in sound sleep he is insensible of himself. The Daoist book *Zhuangzi* also speaks of sleep, but differently: not of a gap in experience but of a dream in which experience is different. At the end of the second chapter, Zhuangzi tells how he dreamt he was a butterfly, flitting here and there with no awareness of being a man, and how, when he woke, he was himself again: “Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man.” (tr. Herbert A. Giles)

The parable asks the same question as the section on memory, but from another side. There is no forgetting here: Zhuangzi remembers the dream. There is doubt about which of the two perspectives is the original one. Right afterwards the text adds that a man and a butterfly are nonetheless divided by a boundary (paraphrase of Giles). The word Giles uses for the transition itself is his interpretation, and we build no conclusion on it. On our reading, the parable does not erase the difference; it shows that the certainty “I am I” does not rest on uninterrupted experience alone.

The likeness with Hume is limited. Hume makes an empirical observation about perceptions. The *Zhuangzi* leaves the question open (“I do not know”); we read this as an invitation to hold two points of view at once and not to hurry to declare one of them the only real one. As we interpret it, this is a useful caution for talk about personal identity too. In our view, a person recognises themselves in the morning not because they have proved the continuity of consciousness through the night, but because they find themselves at once inside a web of links: the body, the memory of yesterday, unfinished tasks, people close to them.

IX. Character: what people take to be their “true self”

The next candidate is character: kindness, honesty, habitual inclinations. The phrase “he has become a different person” may refer precisely to character, while memory and body have hardly changed.

What people regard as the heart of the self was studied by Fernandez-Duque and Schwartz. In a first online survey, 172 US residents compared the “central” and the “peripheral” self. The central self seemed to them more brain-based, less subject to willful control, and at the same time more revealing of moral character: “As expected, the central self was deemed more indicative of moral character and more stable across time.” In a second survey, 210 participants rated 18 specific traits. How central a trait was rated went together with how desirable, how brain-dependent and how stable over time it seemed, but not with how moral or how controllable it was.

It does not follow that a person really has a moral core. These are correlational data about the beliefs of residents of one country, collected on MTurk, and the link between “central” and “moral” did not hold at the level of specific traits. What the data do show is that, in these surveys, the idea of a “true self” goes together with an expectation of stability: what participants regarded as central in themselves, they also rated as more stable over time.

Does character in fact change? A systematic review by Peter Haehner, Amanda Jo Wright and Wiebke Bleidorn (2024), bringing together 30 longitudinal studies of deliberate trait change, found that merely wanting to change seems only weakly linked to actual trait change, while dedicated interventions on average shifted traits in the desired direction, though not all of them

did; the evidence is still limited (paraphrase). How far personality traits persist across decades this article does not claim: we have no verified open source for such a conclusion.

X. Montaigne: contradicting oneself without contradicting the truth

Michel de Montaigne, in the chapter “Of Repentance” (*Essays*, Book III, ch. 2), describes himself as an object that cannot be held still. Other writers, he says, shape man; he merely gives an account of one (paraphrase). The world, for Montaigne, is in perpetual motion, and “Even constancy itself is no other but a slower and more languishing motion.” (tr. Charles Cotton)

Hence his honesty about his own contradictions. He describes his writing as a register of shifting circumstances and wavering thoughts that at times contradict one another — “whether it be that I am then another self, or that I take subjects by other circumstances and considerations: so it is that I may peradventure contradict myself, but, as Demades said, I never contradict the truth.” In the same passage he notes that he may change not only through chance but also by his own design (paraphrase).

Montaigne builds no theory of personal identity, and we do not ascribe one to him. But his stance is useful for our question. To say “back then I thought differently” is neither to lie about one’s former self nor to disown oneself.

Paul, in the verse used as the epigraph, makes a similar move in a quite different genre. One and the same “I” speaks of itself as a child and as a grown man, and the change is described as putting away childish things, not as the arrival of a different person. In Paul it is an image of growing up within a chapter about love; in Montaigne, an observation of himself. What they share is one thing: the past is told in the first person, and the teller does not disown it.

XI. What the feeling “this is still me” is made of

Let us move from criteria to experience. Hong, Sedikides and Wildschut, in five studies (samples of 254, 250, 250, 174 and 146 participants), examined how nostalgia, a wistful yearning for one’s own past, relates to the sense of self-continuity. Three studies were correlational: online samples in the United States and the United Kingdom, and students in Korea. Two were experiments in which nostalgia was induced on purpose. The authors tested three possible grounds of continuity: a narrative that gives meaning to life transitions; associative links with the past; and a belief that the self resists change.

Nostalgia predicted the sense of continuity and, in the authors’ conclusion, caused it in the two experiments; in the first of them the difference from the control group did not reach the 0.05

significance level (p = 0.056). The authors' main finding, as summarised in their general discussion: nostalgia is linked to the sense of continuity, or strengthens it, chiefly through narrative (Studies 2–5), to a lesser degree through associative links (Studies 2 and 3), and not through stability. At the same time, belief in a stable self was itself related to the sense of continuity; in the authors' models, the mediator between nostalgia and continuity turned out to be not that belief but narrative. The indirect link through narrative held when rumination, that is, repetitive brooding, was controlled for (Study 3). The authors explain the weak link between nostalgia and stability by noting that nostalgia can set past against present, and so bring change rather than constancy to the fore.

The authors name the limits themselves: continuity and its grounds were measured with single items. Associative links showed up in the correlational data but not in the experiments. We would add that the samples were online and student samples.

For our subject the conclusion is modest but important. For these participants, the feeling "this is still me" was related not only to a conviction that nothing had changed. It was also related to how far a person sees their life as a story (this was measured with a single self-report question, not as a skill). How such a story is built, and how to tell it from a convenient invention, is the subject of article I03.

XII. The link with the future self

Continuity does not look only backwards. Ying Yang and colleagues (2024) tested whether feeling close to one's future self is related to choosing between a smaller sum now and a larger one later. In the first study, 370 participants from a Chinese online sample, aged 18–35 (mean age about 19.5), completed questionnaires. The result: "Future self-continuity significantly negatively predicted the time discount rate of intertemporal decision-making." In other words, the closer people felt to their future selves, the less they discounted delayed money. The link appeared only among those whose self-concept was clear.

In the second study, 234 students read a text stating that personality over the years either holds together or changes substantially, with life breaking up into unconnected stages, and then described similarities or differences between their present selves and themselves ten years on. In the authors' model, the effect of continuity on choice was mediated by the readiness to consider future consequences (which was measured, not manipulated) and depended on self-concept clarity. The authors propose that knowing clearly who one is makes it easier to picture one's future self vividly; this is their interpretation, not a tested mechanism.

The limits are substantial. The samples were young and Chinese, the decisions were only about money, the first study was correlational, and response times, as the authors acknowledge, affected the data. It does not follow that feeling connected to the future is

enough to manage one’s money or life wisely. What follows is narrower: in these tasks, the sense of continuity was related to how far people took their tomorrow’s selves into account.

What this means in practice

This article offers no method for “finding yourself.” The upshot of the comparison, as we see it, is that no candidate survives every change on its own. The body changes and does not explain why the past is lived as one’s own; memory loses most of what we have lived through; character can change — in the review by Haehner and colleagues dedicated interventions on average shifted traits in the desired direction — while its stability, in the surveys of Fernandez-Duque and Schwartz, was measured as a belief of the participants; how far traits persist across decades this article does not assess; the story is only one of the grounds. Recognising “this is still me” rests on several links at once, and a change in one of them does not necessarily cut the others. Whether an unchanging core lies beneath these links, Hume and the Gita answer incompatibly, and the article does not settle that dispute. A few cautious steps follow from what has been said, and each works only within its limits.

• When you feel like saying “I am not the same person anymore,” it helps to specify which link has changed: the body, memory, character, relationships or the story you tell about yourself. Changes in different links mean different things, and they do not necessarily all change at once.

• Gaps in memory do not by themselves cancel the fact that the forgotten days were your life. This is Hume’s philosophical argument, not a medical statement.

• The sense of continuity, judging by the work of Hong and colleagues, is related not only to a conviction that nothing has changed but also to whether a person sees their life as a story. You might try to put into words how earlier events led to present ones; this step itself was not tested in the study, and the result is not guaranteed. More on the story in article I03.

• Before a decision that concerns the future, you can picture yourself a few years on as a continuation of who you are now. In an experiment with Chinese students a similar task was related to money choices, and the link depended on self-concept clarity; this does not carry over automatically to other decisions.

• If someone close to you has dementia, it may help to know that studies describe preserved components of self-representation. This is not medical advice: decisions about care and treatment are made together with doctors.

• If you or someone close to you feels that you are not yourself, or if memory lapses, a sense of unreality about yourself or abrupt changes of character persist, frighten you or get in the way of life, that is a reason to see a doctor. This article does not diagnose.

• The responsibility and promises of a changing person are the subject of article W-22-N02 *Anātman and the Continuity of Experience*; we do not repeat them here.

Key quotation

> *“I do not paint its being, I paint its passage; not a passing from one age to another, or, as the people say, from seven to seven years, but from day to day, from minute to minute”*
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> *— Michel de Montaigne, Essays, Book III, ch. 2 “Of Repentance,” opening paragraph; tr. Charles Cotton, ed. William Carew Hazlitt. Project Gutenberg #3600*

The quotation sums up the article: a person recognises themselves not in a motionless being but in a connected passage. It does not follow that the self does not exist or that change removes responsibility: Montaigne describes his own manner of self-portrayal, not a doctrine of the person.

Connections between traditions

Comparison (side A ↔ side B)	Meeting point / similarity	Essential limit
Locke, *Essay*, II.XXVII § 11 (PG numbering) ↔ Platel et al. 2021, Stramba-Badiale et al. 2025 (neuropsychology of Alzheimer's disease)	Both sides tie the self to memory of one's life	Locke defines what a person is; the studies measure self-representation in patients and find it partly preserved despite memory impairment. This is no refutation of Locke; moreover, Platel's sample is small, and both works concern a clinical population
Plutarch, *Theseus*, ch. XXIII ↔ Paul, 1 Corinthians 13:11	Both passages concern what continues when parts (the ship's timbers) or ways of speaking and thinking (child — man) are replaced; in Plutarch identity is disputed, in Paul it is carried by the narrator's "I"	Plutarch reports a philosophers' dispute about a thing and does not settle it; Paul uses an image of growing up in a chapter about love and offers no theory of identity
Bhagavad Gita 2.12–13 and 2.16–17 ↔ Hume, *Treatise*, I.IV.6	Both start from the succession of states: infancy, youth and age — a flux of perceptions	The Gita teaches an indestructible soul passing through bodies (religious teaching); Hume finds nothing in experience but perceptions (philosophical position). The answers are incompatible
Questions of King Milinda II.2.1 ↔ Hume, *Treatise*, I.IV.6	Continuity without an unchanging self: "Neither the same nor another." and Nagasena's lamp flame — Hume's bundle of perceptions	Nagasena gives Buddhist teaching in the context of rebirth; Hume reports introspection; we claim no historical link. The Buddhist answer in full: article W-22-N02 *Anātman and the Continuity of Experience*
Zhuangzi, ch. II ↔ Hume, *Treatise*, I.IV.6 (on sleep)	Sleep takes away the self-evidence of the "I": in Hume, deep sleep without perceptions; in Zhuangzi, a dream with another perspective	Zhuangzi leaves both perspectives open and notes a barrier between man and butterfly; Hume draws an empirical conclusion about perceptions

Comparison (side A ↔ side B)	Meeting point / similarity	Essential limit
Montaigne, *Essays*, III.2 ↔ Hong, Sedikides, Wildschut 2022	Connected passage (in Montaigne, “passage”; in the psychologists, narrative) serves as a ground of the sense of self	Montaigne describes his own practice of self-portrayal; the psychologists measure a sense of continuity with single items in online and student samples, and in Hong and colleagues belief in stability was also related to continuity. We claim no anticipation of science
Locke, *Essay*, II.XXVII § 28 (PG numbering) ↔ Fernandez-Duque, Schwartz 2016	The self is tied to moral evaluation of actions and character	Locke gives a philosophical definition of the person as a term of accountability; the study describes beliefs of US residents, and the link between centrality and morality did not hold at the level of specific traits

The rows compare passages that were read, not whole traditions. A shared word or image does not mean a shared teaching: in each row the limit shows where the likeness ends.

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Tags

personal identity, continuity over time, sameness of the person, self, memory, body, character, Locke, Hume, bundle theory, Plutarch, ship of Theseus, Montaigne, Essays, Bhagavad Gita, Zhuangzi, butterfly dream, Paul the Apostle, 1 Corinthians 13:11, Questions of King Milinda, Alzheimer's disease, autobiographical memory, self-defining memories, nostalgia, self-continuity, future self, intertemporal choice, central self, moral character, personality change, growing up, change, philosophy of the person

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