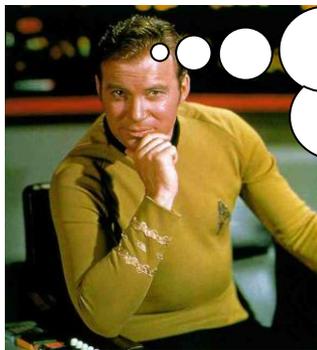


V71LAR: Locke: Appearance and Reality

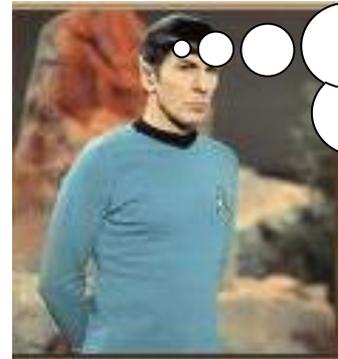
TOPIC 5: PERSONAL IDENTITY

Test Case 1

- Is the later individual the same person as the earlier individual?



I **hate** Klingons and logic
I **remember** growing up
in Kansas
Etc.



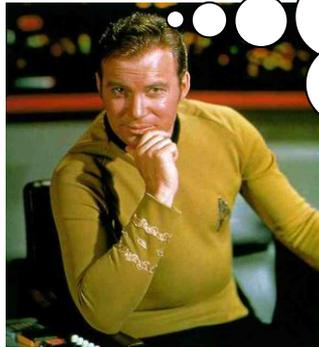
I **love** Klingons and logic
I **remember** growing up
on Vulcan
Etc.

t1

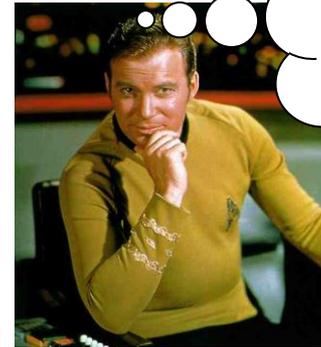
t2

Test Case 2

- Is the later individual the same person as the earlier individual?



I **hate** Klingons and logic
I **remember** growing up
in Kansas
Etc.



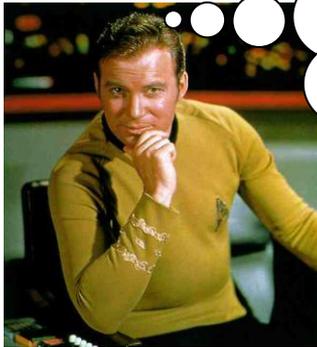
I **love** Klingons and logic
I **remember** growing up
on Vulcan
Etc.

t1

t2

Test Case 3

- Is the later individual the same person as the earlier individual?



I **hate** Klingons and logic
I **remember** growing up
in Kansas
Etc.



I **hate** Klingons and logic
I **remember** growing up
in Kansas
Etc.

t1

t2

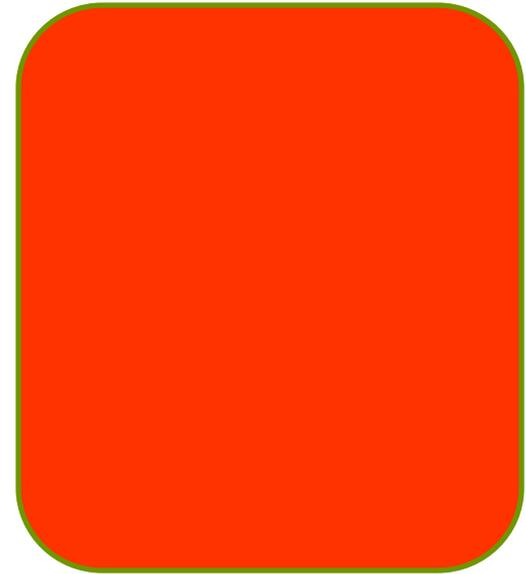
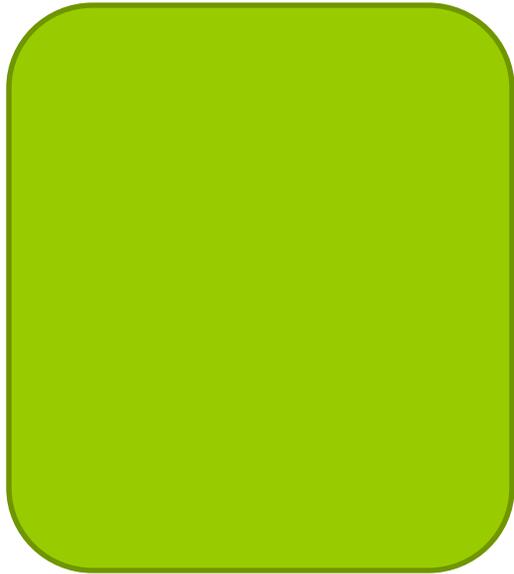
1. The Question of Personal Identity

- We (and Locke in *Essay* II.xxvii) are interested in the following question:
- **What makes it the case that a person existing at one time (t_1) is numerically identical with a person existing at some later time (t_2)?**
- I.e. we want to fill in the schema: Necessarily, for a person x existing at t_1 and for a person y existing at some later time t_2 , x is the same person as y iff. ... ???

1. The Question of Personal Identity (ctd.)

- **Important features of this question:**
- It is concerned with *numerical identity*, not *qualitative identity*.
 - One complication: Of course, two things cannot, strictly speaking, be identical (for then they wouldn't be two things!). So when we talk of two things being numerically identical, what we really mean is that a thing *referred to* in one way is identical with a thing *referred to* in another way.
- It is concerned with identity over time or 'diachronic identity'. It is the question of *survival* or *persistence*.
 - Hence answers give 'persistence conditions' or 'a criterion of diachronic identity'.
- It is a constitutive question, not an epistemological one. I.e. we want to know *what makes it the case*, not *how can we know*.
 - E.g. Fingerprints may be a good way of finding out whether we have the same person, but being the same person does not consist in having the same fingerprints.

Clear?



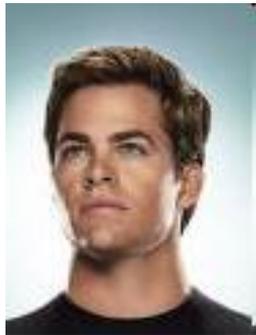
2. Locke on Sortals

- *Sortals* are the type of classificatory term for which questions of diachronic (and synchronic) identity make sense.
- They are categories that divide the world into individuals that can then be counted and re-identified over time.
 - *E.g.* We can ask: “Is this *tree* the same *tree* as the one I planted last year?”
 - *E.g.* We cannot ask: “Is this *green thing* the same *green thing* as the one I saw last year?”

2. Locke on Sortals (ctd.)

- Locke's important claim: questions of identity must be 'suited to the idea' (II.xxvii.7).

'Young'



t1

'Old'



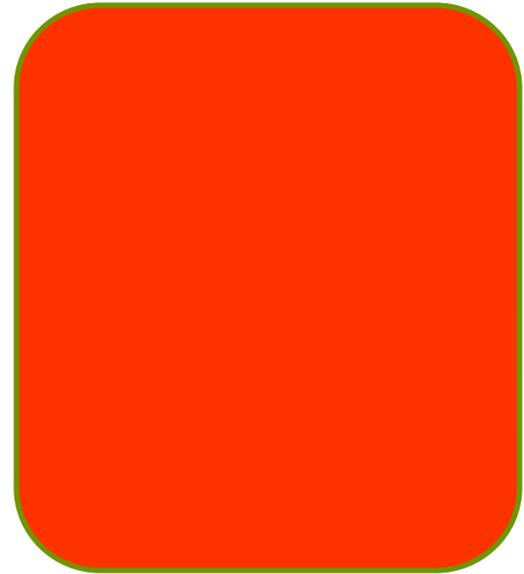
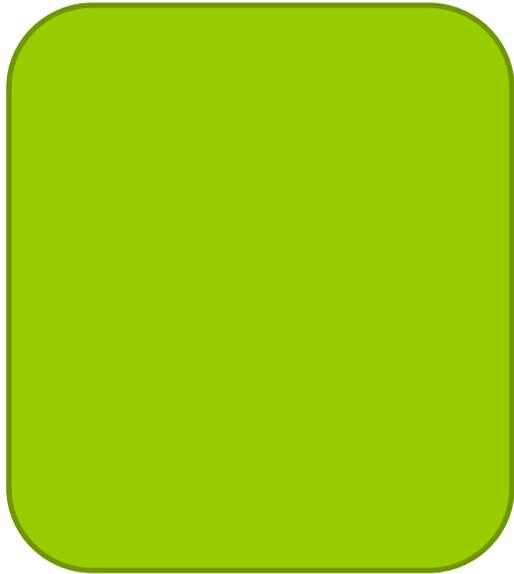
t2

Is Old the <u>same material object</u> as Young?	NO
Is Old the <u>same organism</u> as Young?	YES
Is Old the <u>same person</u> as Young?	??

2. Locke on Sortals (ctd.)

- Locke: Many puzzles of diachronic identity can be resolved by clarity over which sortal is at issue (II.xxvii.7 & 28).
- E.g. Heraclitus
 - (H) You can never step into the same river twice
 - (H1) You can never step into the same body of water twice (TRUE)
 - (H2) You can never step into the same geographically located water channel twice (FALSE)
- E.g. Theseus' ship

Clear?



3. Identity for Bodies of Mass

- What does it take for a body (or mass) of matter existing at one time to be (numerically) identical with a body (or mass) of matter existing at another time?



t1

t2

- Locke's answer: Necessarily, for any body of mass x existing at t_1 and for any body of mass y existing at some later time t_2 , x is the same mass as y iff. x and y have exactly the same material constitution.
- See *Essay* II.xxvii.3

4. Identity for Organisms

- What does it take for an organism existing at one time to be (numerically) identical with an organism existing at another time?



t1



t2

- Locke's answer (II.xxvii.4-6): "...the identity...consists...in nothing but a participation of the same continued life, by constantly fleeting particles of matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized body".

4. Identity for Organisms (ctd).

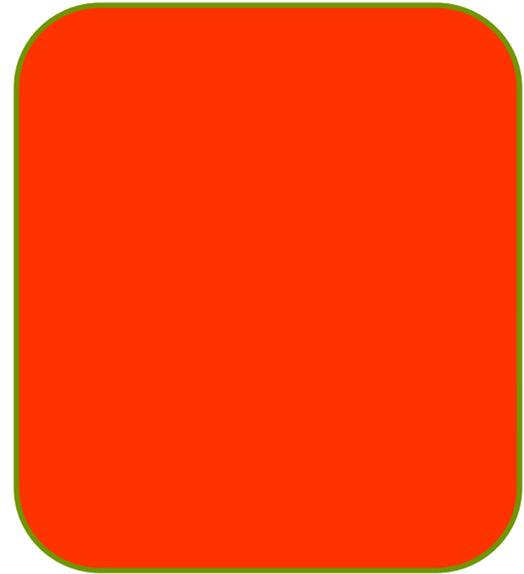
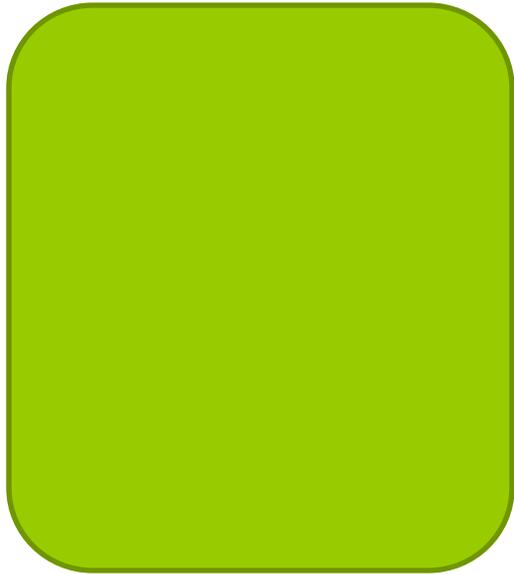
- I.e. Necessarily, for any organism x existing at t_1 and any organism y existing at some later time t_2 , x is the same organism as y iff. y is biologically continuous with x .
 - Where 'biological continuity' is continuity of life-sustaining functions (whatever they may be).
- Applies to all plants, animals **and "men"**.
- Note: This entails that an oak tree is *not the same thing* as the parcel of matter that constitutes it. A man is *not the same thing* as the parcel of matter that constitutes him. Why? Because the Oak tree/man existed before that parcel of matter came together (and will typically exist after it disperses). I.e. The objects are distinct because they have different life-histories (and possible life-futures).
 - Does this mean double-counting? See Lowe pp.101-2.

5. Identity for Persons

- Necessarily, for a person x existing at t_1 and for a person y existing at some later time t_2 , x is the same person as y iff ... ???
- 'Person' =_{df.} "...a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places." (II.xxvii.9)
- 'person' \neq 'human' or 'man' (II.xxvii.9)



Clear?

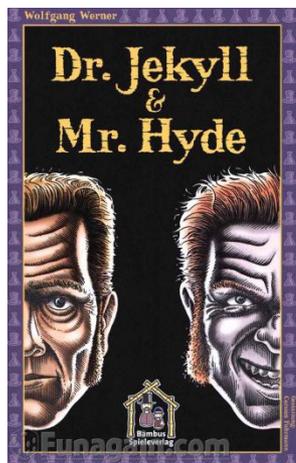


5. Identity for Persons (a) Somatic Views

- Locke first considers what we might call 'somatic views', i.e. those that take personal identity to consist in some physical (non-psychological) relation. E.g.
- **Material substance view:** Necessarily, for a person x existing at t_1 and for a person y existing at some later time t_2 , x is the same person as y iff. x and y have exactly the same material constitution.
- Locke's objection to this:
 - E.g. Losing a limb (II.xxvii.11). Shows that identical material constitution not *necessary* for personal identity.

5. Identity for Persons (a) Somatic Views (ctd.)

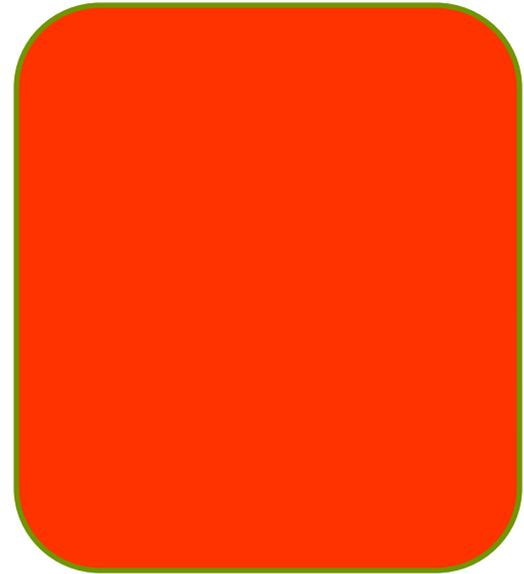
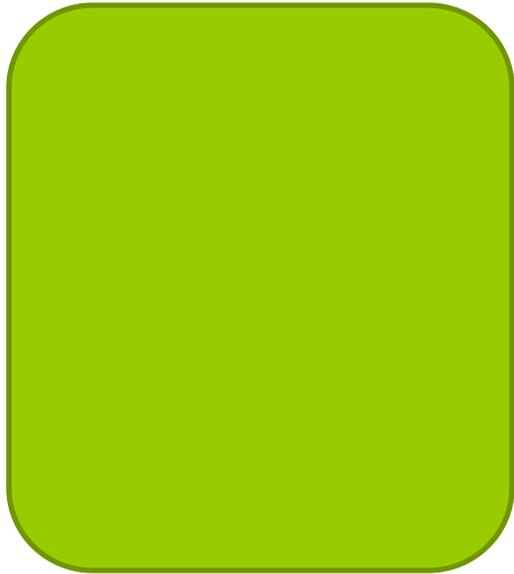
- Some more sophisticated somatic views:
 - **The Bodily criterion:** Necessarily, for a person x existing at t_1 and for a person y existing at some later time t_2 , x is the same person as y iff. x has the same body as y (where 'body' is a particular *organisation* of matter).
 - **The Biological Criterion** Necessarily, for a person x existing at t_1 and for a person y existing at some later time t_2 , x is the same person as y iff. x is the same organism as y .



Locke's counter-examples to these:

- E.g. Socrates awake and Socrates asleep (II.xxvii.19). Shows that having the same body, or being the same organism, not *sufficient* for personal identity.
- E.g. Prince and the Cobbler (II.xxvii.15). Shows that having the same body, or being the same organism, is not *necessary* for personal identity.

Clear?



5. Identity for Persons (b) Cartesianism

- Locke next considers the view that personal identity consists in some **immaterial** relation:
- **Immaterial substance view (or 'Cartesianism')**: Necessarily, for a person x existing at t_1 and for a person y existing at some later time t_2 , x is the same person as y iff. x and y share the same immaterial (thinking) substance.
- Locke's objections to this view.
 - E.g. of consciousness being transferred between immaterial substances (II.xxvii.12-13). Shows that sameness of immaterial substance is not *necessary* for personal identity....

5. Identity for Persons (ctd.)

Belief that: Klingons and logic are bad
Desire to: explore strange new worlds.
Memory of: growing up in Kansas
Perception of: Deck of the Enterprise
And many more...

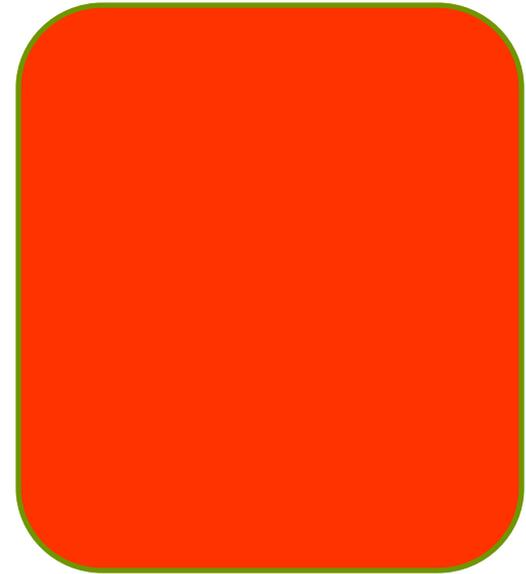
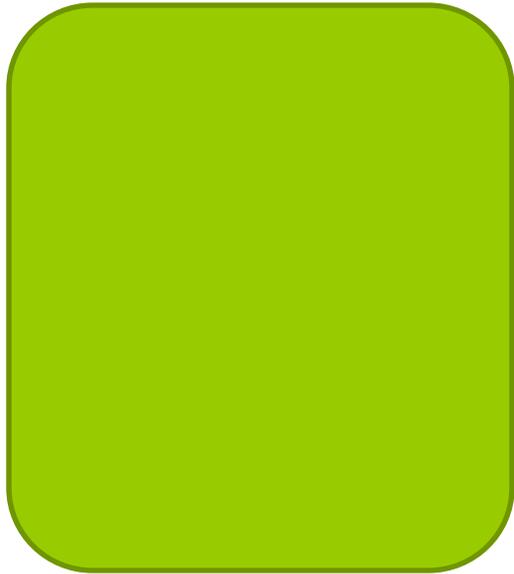
Immaterial substance I

Immaterial substance II

5. Identity for Persons (ctd.)

- Locke's objections to the **Immaterial Substance View**:
- E.g. of consciousness being transferred between immaterial substances (II.xxvii.12-13). Shows that sameness of immaterial substance is not *necessary* for personal identity.
- E.g. of the thoughts of an immaterial substance being wiped at the moment of embodiment. (II.xxvii.14 & 23). Shows that sameness of immaterial substance is not *sufficient* for personal identity.

Clear?



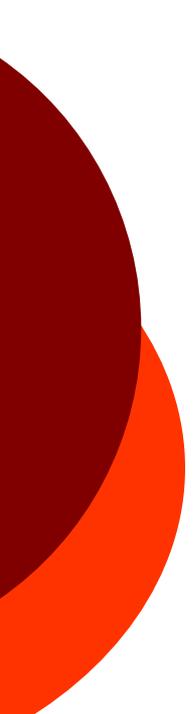
Next time...

- Locke's positive account of personal identity...



Key points for this lecture

- Questions of diachronic identity (identity over time) must be 'suited to the idea' i.e. We must identify the correct *sortal*.
- One sortal is that of *person*, i.e. "...a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places."
- On the question of what constitutes *personal* identity over time, Locke:
 - Argues against somatic views (examples of Socrates awake/Socrates asleep & Prince/Cobbler).
 - Argues against Cartesian views (examples of transferring consciousness & wiping consciousness).



Reading & References

- *Locke, J. Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book II, chapter xxvii.
- Lowe, E.J. 1995. *Locke on Human Understanding* (Routledge). Chapter 5.
- For a full reading list for this topic, see the Module Guide (the chapter from Mackie's *Problems from Locke* is particularly relevant, and available from Oxford Scholarship online).

Questions?

- neil.sinclair@nottingham.ac.uk
- Tel: 0115 95 13428
- **Office hours:** Thursdays and Fridays 12-1 (room C8a, top floor, Trent building).