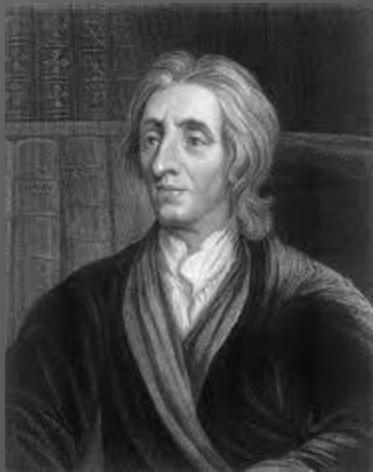


Identity & Literature (Summer 2013)

Laura Guidry-Grimes

MEMORIES & SOULS



JOHN LOCKE

1632-1704

APPROACH

WELKOACH

- What is necessary for me to persist as a person?
 - ‘Person’: “a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places” (340)
 - For us to hold Jack *morally responsible* for past actions, we need to know if he is the same person (numerically) today as he was then.
 - Different from persisting as a *human*

CONSCIOUSNESS



- “since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that that makes every one to be what he calls ‘self,’ and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things” (340)
- Given how consciousness can be interrupted, we should inquire:
 - Does identity of substance need to underlie the changing flow of consciousness?
 - ‘Substance’ (roughly, for Locke): what supports properties

MEMORIES

WORKED

- Can imagine the same consciousness being presented in different substances—identity of person follows consciousness
 - Does not depend on identical material or immaterial substance (i.e., body or mind/soul)
- “as far as any intelligent being can repeat the idea of any past action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same consciousness it has of any present action; so far it is the same personal self” (340)
 - **What is potentially problematic about this answer? What sorts of questions does Locke need to answer?**

PUZZLES LOVED

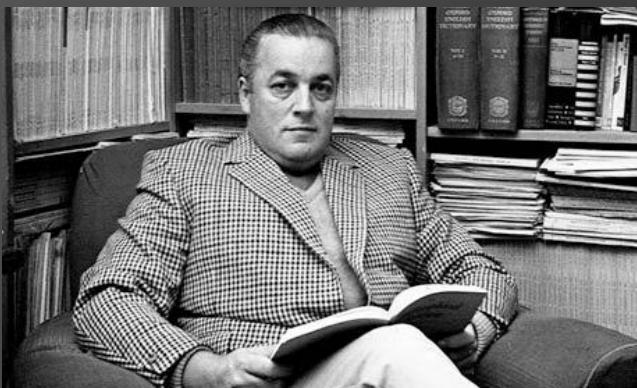
- But couldn't consciousness falsely represent past action (as in dreams)?
 - God's goodness would not allow such an injustice (needs to judge people based on what they actually did, as revealed in memories)
- What if 2013 Jane has memories of Cleopatra's actions?
 - Then they're the same person (as long as consciousness is the same)!
 - (Even though everyone else would probably fail to believe her)

CHALLENGES?

- Do you share Locke's intuitions on how we should judge Jane and Cleopatra?
- Should we primarily be concerned about moral responsibility in personal identity discussions?
- Has Locke convinced you that memories reveal whether a person persists over time?

1925-2010

ANTHONY QUINTON



APPROACH

WILKOWSKI

- Reinterpret ‘soul’ in its relation to personal identity
 - **Widest interpretation:** soul as “nonphysical aspect of a person” (393, emphasis added)
 - **Problems w/ viewing soul as immaterial substance for PID**
 - Similarity of parts/phases over time does not necessarily mean the whole is continuous
 - No observable method for determining PID
 - Substance, as a property-less something, will always fail to give us criteria for determining PID

EMPIRICAL CONCEPTION OF THE SOUL

- ‘**Soul**’: “a series of mental states that is identified through time in virtue of the properties and relations of these mental states themselves” (397)
- **Continuity of soul-phases**: “connected by a continuous character and memory path” (398)
 - Juxtaposed temporally + character of each phase is similar + later phase has memories of former phases
 - **What sorts of questions does Quinton need to answer for these criteria to be usable?**

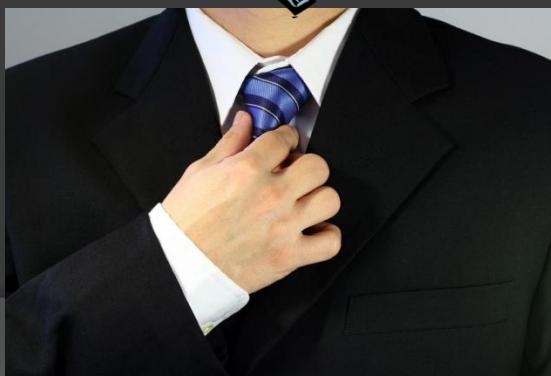
THE SOUL & THE BODY

- Soul (series of mental states) can involve brain states
 - Identity of brain *might* be necessary, but it cannot ever be sufficient for PID
- But rejects notion that the person should be identified with the body
 - Otherwise, reincarnation would be inconceivable
 - **Do you share Quinton's intuitions about someone persisting as a ghost?**



SOUL SWITCHING

- If I detect B's soul in C, would I not treat C as B (and vice versa)?



B



C

SOUL SWITCHING

- Evidence for believing PID follows the soul, not the body?
 - Weak evidence: imaginative literature
 - Stronger evidence: how loved ones would be inclined to treat B and C
 - Care about what is distinctive—their character, memories (not their bodies...unless we're only viewing them instrumentally...)
- Do you agree with Quinton on how we should ascertain the identity of B and C?
- Has he convinced you that we should not abandon talk of souls?

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?