

# Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 110W

Spring 2011

Russell Marcus

February 11

Finishing Personal Identity

Dennett, "Where Am I?"

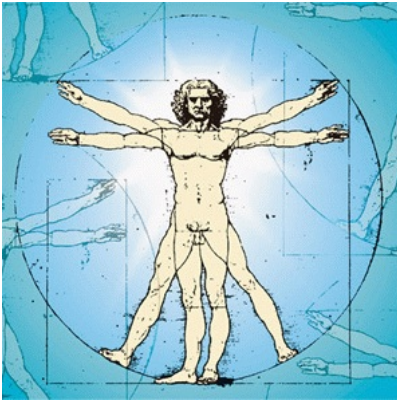
# Six Theories of the Self

- Body theory
- Biological theory
- Soul theory
- Memory theory
- Irreducibility theory
- Bundle Theory

# Body Theory

We are our material constitution.

- Our constitution is constantly changing in a way that our selves are not changing.
- Ship of Theseus

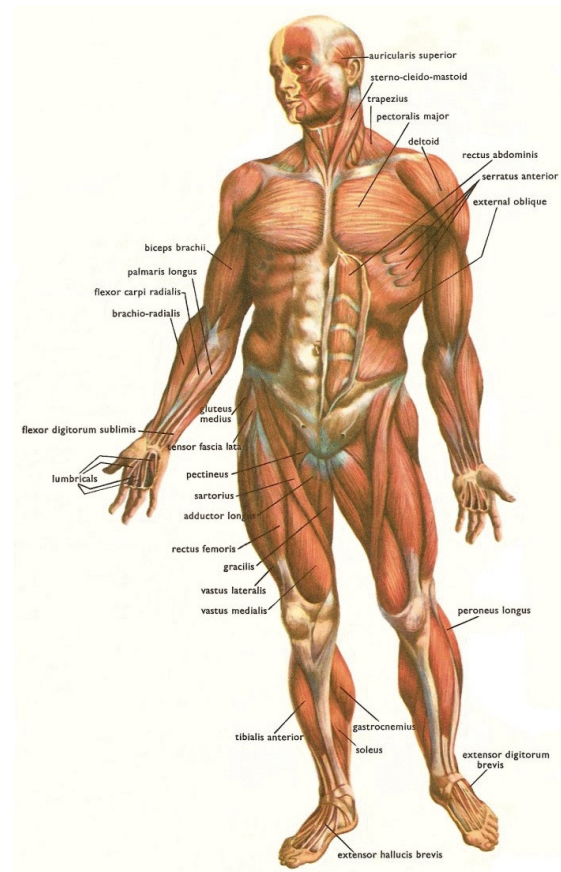


# Biological Theory

We are our biological selves.

the body considered according to its functional organization

- Locke's identity of man
- The same identity conditions for people as for other individual animals
- More plausible than body theory
- Locke provides thought experiments which ask us to consider the possibility of transferring consciousness among biological entities.
  - ▶ The Prince and the Cobbler
- Our intuitions support the claim that the self transfers with consciousness and memory.



# Soul Theory

We are immaterial souls.

- Descartes and Plato
- The soul it exists prior to birth and after death.
- Similar arguments, from Locke, to those against the biological theory
- We can imagine two different souls inhabiting the same person.
- Two different persons can house (or whatever) the same soul.

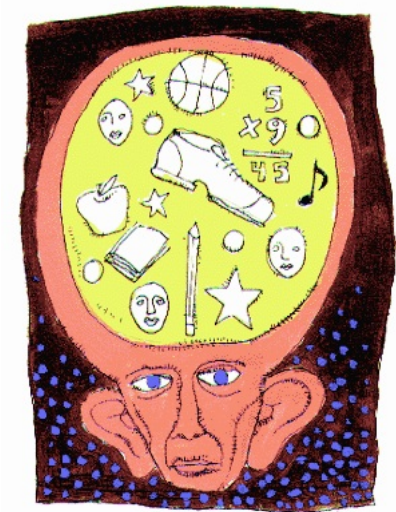


René Descartes 1596 - 1650

# Consciousness or Memory Theory

## psychological continuity

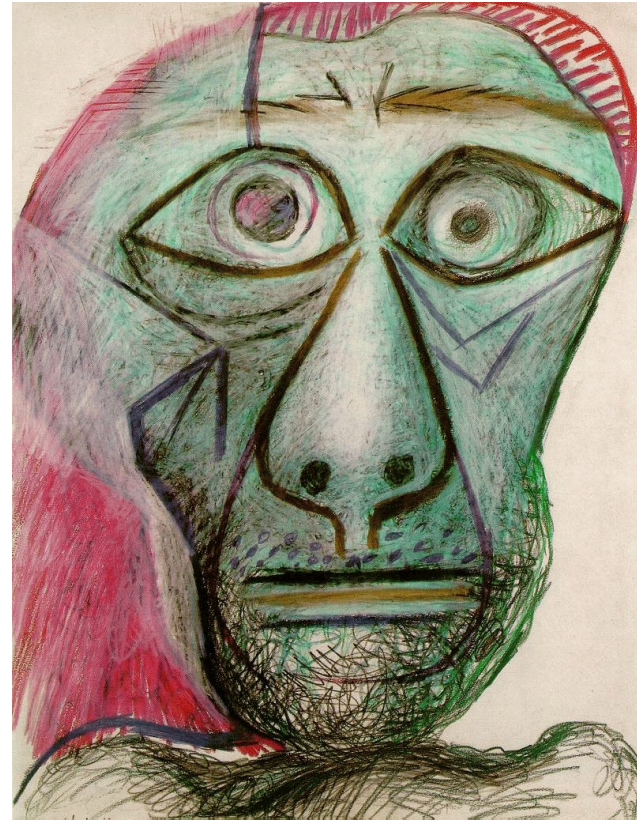
- Locke
- Reid showed that problems with memory and gaps in consciousness entail that we would be disjoint.
- The old general is not the same as the young child, if his memory is discontinuous.
- We tried to save Locke's theory by appealing to psychological continuity.
  - A neurological account of subconscious thought and memory?
- Worries about the construction of memory can undermine even the fortified Lockean theory.



# Irreducibility Theory

The self can not be reduced to any other property or substance.

- Reid
- Accepts the existence of a self
- Denies that we can do anything but characterize our selves, in various ways
- The lack of a reduction makes the irreducibility theory awkward.
- It gives up explaining the identity of the self while at the same time asserting that we have personal identity.



# Bundle Theory

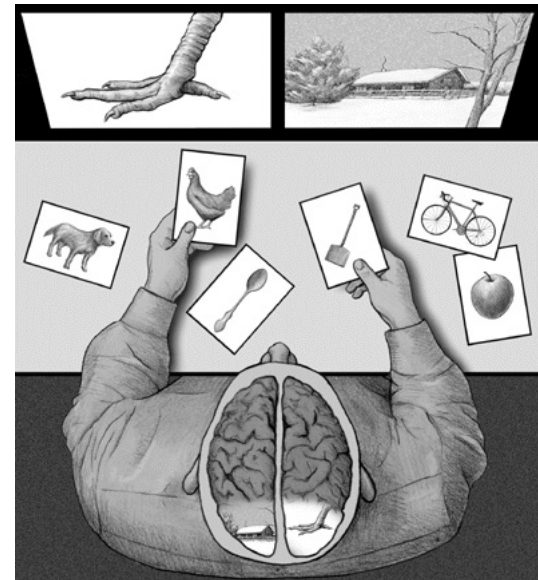
There is no self.

- Epistemic argument: We never sense our selves.
- Berkeley: since all ideas must come from sensation, we have no idea of the self.
  - There can be no idea formed of a soul or spirit; for all ideas whatever, being passive and inert... they cannot represent unto us, by way of image or likeness, that which acts... The words *will*, *soul*, *spirit* do not stand for different ideas or, in truth, for any idea at all, but for something which is very different from ideas, and which, being an agent, cannot be like or represented by any idea whatsoever - though it must be admitted at the same time that we have some notion of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind, such as willing, loving, hating, inasmuch as we know or understand the meaning of those words (Berkeley, *Principles* §27).



# Hume and Parfit

- Hume: there are just perceptions.
  - ▶ When I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception (Hume 349a-b).
  - ▶ There is only a series of loosely-related conjunctions of experiences.
- Parfit: it is an empty question
  - ▶ “If there are no such Egos, there is nothing else to ask a real question about” (Parfit 354b).
  - ▶ “In split-brain cases, there are two streams of consciousness” (Parfit 352a).



# Remaining Questions from Wednesday

# The Third Paper

- A compare-and-contrast paper on two or more of the readings
  - Locke and Reid
  - Reid and Kripke
  - Hume and Parfit
  - Others
- Apply one or two theories to an interesting case or set of cases
  - Gregor Samsa in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*
- Formulate your own theory of personal identity out of the criticisms of one or more of the standard theories, the ones we have read.
- In any case, your paper should show significant exegetical effort.

# Dennett's Case(s)

1. After the surgery: Where am I? (311)
2. Attempting to convince himself that he is suspended in the vat (312)
3. Considering alternative 1: He is his body (Hamlet) (313)
4. Considering alternative 2: He is his brain (Yorick) (313)
5. Considering alternative 3: The point-of-view theory (314-5)
6. Another alternative: He is in two places at the same time (316)
7. The death of Hamlet (317)
8. A new body (Fortinbras) is synchronized with Yorick (319)
9. Hubert, the computer back-up for Yorick, is introduced (320)
10. Flipping between Hubert and Yorick (320)
11. Considering synchronizing a new body with Hubert or Yorick (320)
12. A conundrum: I survive if either pair survives, but I may not want both to survive (321)
13. Disembodied Hubert/Yorick (321)
14. Asynchrony (322)