

The Self and the Future

1 Locke

this every intelligent being, sensible of happiness or misery, must grant, that there is some thing that is himself that he is concerned for, and would have happy: That this self has existed in a continued duration more than one instant, and therefore it is possible may exist, as it has done, months and years to come, without any certain bounds to be set to its duration, and may be the same self, by the same consciousness continued on for the future. ... Person, as I take it, is the name for this self. Wherever a man finds what he calls himself, there I think another may say is the same person.¹

2 The experiment

	Person	Who gets the money?	Who gets tortured?	Result	Is this what you asked for?	Is this what you wanted?	Person?
A-body	A	B-body person	A-body person	Torture	No	No	B
B-body	B	A-body person	B-body person	Money	Yes	Yes	A

	Person	Who gets the money?	Who gets tortured?	Result	Is this what you asked for?	Is this what you wanted?	Person?
A-body	A	A-body person	B-body person	Torture	Yes	No	A
B-body	B	B-body person	A-body person	Money	No	Yes	B

¹ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, Ch. 27, ¶ 25-6.

3 Williams's spectrum

- i. *A* is subjected to an operation which produces total amnesia;
- ii. amnesia is produced in *A*, and other interference leads to certain changes in his character;
- iii. changes in his character are produced, and at the same time certain illusory "memory" beliefs are induced in him; these are of a quite fictitious kind and do not fit the life of any actual person;
- iv. the same as (iii), except that both the character traits and the "memory" impressions are designed to be appropriate to another actual person, *B*;
- v. the same as (iv), except that the result is produced by putting the information into *A* from the brain of *B*, by a process which leaves *B* the same as he was before;
- vi. the same happens to *A* as in (v,) but *B* is not left the same, since a similar operation is conducted in the reverse direction.²

² Bernard Williams, "The Self and the Future," *Philosophical Review* 79 (1970), p. 172.