Personal Identity

Introduction

1. Persistence (Survival) and Identity

What sorts of changes can we undergo and still ‘be there’ at the other end?
What sorts of changes can person A undergo such that after those changes there is a person B in existence who is identical to A?

What does it take for person B existing at a later time to be A’s future self?
Under what conditions is person A existing at an earlier time B’s past self?
What makes person A existing at $t_1$, identical to B, existing at $t_2$?

Body Criterion
(B) B (at a later time) is the same person as A (at an earlier time) if and only if B has the same body as A

Psychological Criterion (John Locke)
(M) B (at a later time) is the same person as A (at an earlier time) if and only if B can remember A’s experiences

2. Objections to the Psychological Criterion

Thomas Reid’s Objection: The Transitivity of Identity
General recalls being a dashing young officer. (a = b)
Officer recalls stealing apples as a boy (b = c)
General does not recall stealing apples as a boy. (a ≠ c)
But identity is transitive!

Joseph Butler’s Objection: The Circularity Objection
It is a precondition of B’s remembering A’s experiences that B be the same person as A.
This is to say, a memory is “real” only if the remembered person is you.
But this is circular.

Wiggin’s Problem: Divided Brains
A’s brain is cut in half and each half is transplanted into another body: one half into the B-body and the other half into a C-body.
Both B and C wake up psychologically continuous with A.
Which of C and B is A?