

Properties of Identity

Day 5 - Identity

Transitivity of Identity

Watch dad got from grandpa



Watch grandpa carried



Watch dad gave me

The watch dad got from grandpa is the same watch grandpa carried every day he worked at the post office.

Transitivity of Identity

Watch dad got from grandpa



=



Watch grandpa carried

Watch dad gave me

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Watch grandpa carried

Watch dad gave me

The watch dad gave me is the same watch dad got from grandpa.

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Watch grandpa carried

Watch dad gave me

The watch dad gave me is the same watch dad got from grandpa.

Transitivity of Identity

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Watch grandpa carried

Watch dad gave me

Therefore, the **watch dad gave me** is the same **watch grandpa carried** every day he worked at the post office.

Transitivity of Identity

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Watch grandpa carried

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Watch dad gave me

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Transitivity of Identity

Generally, if

$$B = A \quad \text{and} \quad C = B$$

then

$$C = A$$

Symmetry of Identity

If

$$A = B$$

then

$$B = A$$

Symmetry of Identity

By the symmetry of identity, we can restate the property of transitivity like this:

If

$$A = B \quad \text{and} \quad B = C$$

then

$$A = C$$

The memory criterion and properties of identity

Simple memory criterion for identity:

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If B remembers doing what A did, we have $B = A$.

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B now is the same person as A at an earlier time if and only if B now can remember doing some of the things that A did at that earlier time.

If B remembers doing what A did in the past, we have $B = A$. **But A will not be able to remember anything B does in the future.**

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If B remembers doing what A did in the past, we have **B = A**. But A will not be able to remember anything B does in the future. **SO A ≠ B.**

The memory criterion and properties of identity

Simple memory criterion for identity:

B now is the same person as A at an earlier time if and only if B now can remember doing some of the things that A did at that earlier time.

We have $B = A$, but $A \neq B$.

This violates the symmetry of identity.

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Also, C might remember doing what B did 30 years ago, and B might remember doing what A did thirty years before that. So $C = B$ and $B = A$.

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But it is possible that C does not remember doing what A did.

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But it is possible that C does not remember doing what A did. Then $C \neq A$.

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We have $C = B$ and $B = A$, but $C \neq A$.

This violates the transitivity of identity.

The memory criterion and properties of identity

Revised (neo-Lockean) memory criterion for identity:

B now is the same person as A at an earlier time if B and A are both part of the same stream of overlapping memories.

Example:

Today, Mr. Irons can remember doing some of the things Mr. Irons did yesterday. Yesterday, Mr. Irons could remember doing some of the things Mr. Irons did the day before.

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So Mr. Irons today and Mr. Irons two days ago are the same person, even if today he can't remember anything he did two days ago.

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The revised criterion is transitive, even though simple memory is not.

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Also, Mr. Irons now and Mr. Irons two days ago can both be in the same memory stream, even though Mr. Irons two days ago couldn't possibly remember the future.

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Also, Mr. Irons now and Mr. Irons two days ago can both be in the same memory stream, even though Mr. Irons two days ago couldn't possibly remember the future. **The revised criterion is symmetric, even though simple memory is not.**

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