

IDENTITY

It is important to distinguish between the different philosophical concepts of identity. As a formal characteristic and relation, e.g. in philosophy of language and mathematics or whether regarding the identity of a person, as in psychology and social sciences, where it concerns e.g. psychological identity, sexual identity, cultural identity, national identity, online identity, gender identity etc., but also different concepts of identity policy.

The question of personal identity is a well-known philosophical problem and essentially consists of two different but closely related questions: Firstly, what are the essential characteristics that make human beings or living beings to persons and secondly, how is the identity of these persons - even over time - ensured or constituted.

As a relation between two given quantities, identity means they are one and the same thing, or *identical* to each other. This means: A is identical to itself if it remains the same in different situations and circumstances, so that it can be identified as the same. But what does it mean for an object to be considered the same, even with changes in time? Theseus' ship is a well-known philosophical paradox that raises the question of whether an object loses its identity after many or all of its parts have been replaced in succession. The term identity raises many philosophical problems and questions, e.g. when it comes to change and personal identity.

What about identity in the virtual world?

Discussion plan: Identity

- How does identity develop?
- How does identity develop on the Internet?
- What is identity?
- What is the basis of the development of identity?
- What does identity mean?

- Do you want to serve the Internet unknown? Why?
- What is it like to build a new identity?
- What do you associate with “patchwork identity” of today's human being?
- Can you protect your identity?
- Is it possible to look at the digital identity separately from the individual person?

Who am I?

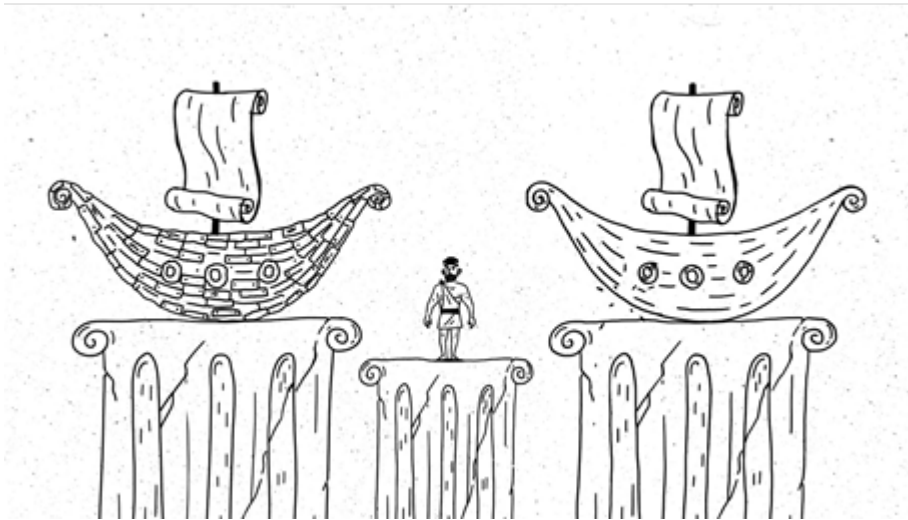
The question "Who am I?" is a difficult philosophical question and various great philosophers in the history of philosophy have made very different reflections on the question. The "I" can be experienced through thinking, through feelings, through perception, through action.

Discussion Plan: Who am I?

- Does your mind tell you who you are?
- Does your appearance affect who you are?
- Does your profile on the Internet tell you who you are?
- Is it possible to become someone else or something else?
- Do you have the same identity on the Internet as in real everyday life?
- Do you sometimes do something that someone else wants you to do?
- If you change your profile on the Internet, are you another person?

Exercise: The Ship of Theseus

Who am I? Why am I me? And how can I stay "I" if I am constantly changing? One of the best-known thought experiments in philosophy deals with questions of identity: The Ship of Theseus



SRF Kultur: Plutarchs Gedankenexperiment. Das Schiff des Theseus. 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zl8j7eq-ls/>
Accessed on 2018.5.22.

Exercise: Thought Experiments

Are you still you,

- ...if you speak another language?
- ...if you use a foreign image for your profile on the Internet?
- ... if you give yourself another name?
- ... when you chat with someone on the Internet?
- ...if you had another face?
- ...if you had another body?
- ...if you had other friends?
- ...when you pretend to be another person?

Literature

Kundera, Milan: Identity. Harper Perennial. 1999.

Deutschlandfunk: Buchbesprechung. Milan Kundera. Die Identität. 1999
http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/die-identitaet.700.de.html?dram:article_id=81164
Accessed on 2018.5.22.

Materials

SRF Kultur: Plutarchs Gedankenexperiment. Das Schiff des Theseus. 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zl8j7eq-ls/>
Accessed on 2018.5.22.

I am...In:pixabay.com.
<https://pixabay.com/de/identität-selbst-authentische-795295/>
Accessed on 2018.5.24.