

Second Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

Theseus the Greek hero, slayer of the Minotaur, returned to Athens and lived out his life. His ship was anchored in the harbour and became a great visitor attraction. Once a week it would be sailed around the bay filled with the curious. Over time parts of the ship began to wear out and had to be replaced. First some of the rigging and then the sails and eventually oars, hull planks and the like.

All the pieces that were removed from the ship were kept in a big heap in a warehouse next to the harbour.

Gradually more and more bits of the ship were replaced first 5% then 20% then 50% eventually 80% and finally one day 100%. All the time the ship in the harbour remained a functioning ship doing its weekly sail around the bay for the tourists. Of course the ancient Athenian Tourist board made a lot of money out of the fares for the trip.

One day an enterprising Spartan entrepreneur managed to buy the warehouse and the property rights to the growing heap of parts of the ship it contained. He hired a team of skilled craftsmen to reconstruct the ship from the parts as they became available. When all the parts were assembled he then announced that he had the real ship of Theseus in his warehouse and for a small fee a dinar and a half people could come and see it. The authorities were angry at this because they claimed they had the real ship of Theseus in the harbour.

The tourist industry was now suffering as not so many people were taking the boat trips. The ship in the warehouse was too fragile to sail around the harbour. The tourist board of ancient Athens decided to sue the entrepreneur for making a false claim.

Now if you were the judge you have to decide which is the real ship of Theseus, the one in the harbour, or the one in the warehouse? Both sides are claiming that at some point the other object ceased to be the true ship of Theseus but when did this happen and why?

The Ship of Theseus Paradox is an example of the Sorites Paradox. Sorites comes from the Greek meaning heap. The paradox concerns issues of borderline cases, vagueness and identity. Here is some more information about them.

An example:

Suppose a man has a full head of hair say 60,000 hairs. If you remove one hair is he bald? Answer is obviously no. Removing one hair does not make you bald. Repeat the above 59,997 times he now has two hairs left on his head if you remove one hair is he bald. Well the removal of one hair does not seem to make you bald so the answer is no.

This is obviously ridiculous since a man with one hair or two even is clearly bald. That's the paradox. Obviously at some point between having 60,000 hairs and two the man went bald but when? What was the exact borderline between being not bald and bald? We feel this borderline must exist but we can't quite define it, it remains vague.

That's why we get people trying to say well it's when he lost 50.000000001% of his hair. But we are not convinced by such answers.

Second Philosophy

The importance of the paradox is that it seems to open up a metaphysical black hole under our feet. You can take concrete terms like tall, red and suddenly you realize that when you are put on the spot you can't define these terms exactly. This means that in language we can't eliminate vagueness we are fuzzy creatures. The great expert in this field of philosophy is a man called Timothy Williamson he has written a whole book on the subject. Unfortunately almost everything Williamson writes I find ferociously difficult. However if you go to Philosophy Bites which is an excellent podcast site for all sorts of things you can hear Williamson describe the issue of Vagueness in a very accessible podcast. http://nigelwarburton.typepad.com/philosophy_bites/.

Williamson basically says that although there must be a borderline position between the true and false of whether a man is bald it can never be accessible to us. Williamson says of his idea of epistemic vagueness, "The central idea is extremely simple, it is just that in every case it is either true or false to apply whatever vague concept is in question, and not both. But in borderline cases what is going on is that it is impossible to know which of the two truth values, truth or falsity, ones statement has, so the epistemic view is that vagueness is a certain kind of inescapable ignorance." If you want to read more about it then there is very good article on Vagueness on the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy Site.

QUESTIONS:

So what's the answer?

1. In our example which is the real Ship of Theseus the one in the harbour or the one in the warehouse and why?
2. Let's consider the ship of Jason `The Argo` This was bought by an American Entrepreneur and every time a part wore out he replaced it with an exact replica made of aluminium. Over the years he ended up with a ship in the harbour `The Argo` made of aluminium. Then he charged people to ride in it and now an irate Athenian is suing him under the trades Descriptions Act. I hear if the entrepreneur wins he is going to buy the Ship of Theseus in the harbour and make it into the Aluminium Ship of Theseus. Is the aluminium Argo, the real Ship of Jason?
3. Do we just have to accept that some of our most basic concepts are Vague? Would this be a good thing or a bad thing?

Second Philosophy

DISCUSSION:

Oswy: OK we will start with question 1. Is the ship outside one of the two in question the real ship of Theseus?

Nondescript: I would say the ship in the harbour is the real one. The one in the warehouse is just a pretend ship made from rotting wood

Shingles: both are the ship, but in different capacities

Simulat: it seems to me that a paradox like that means that we are using categories inappropriately

Oswy: Would anyone agree with Nondescript?

Eolas: I don't think so.... both are and aren't the ship

Oswy: By the way I am the judge in the Athenian court for the evening. haha

SeanBrian: neither is the real one, as presumably over time all parts of both are replaced so none is original

Nondescript: the ship in the warehouse was the ship, but not anymore

Marya: I think they are both and neither - it depends entirely on context

Reflection: it seems to depend on how we define "real" as in "real ship"

Eolas: I was about to agree with Sean, but I don't think the issue is just whether or not the "pieces" are original

Oswy: Look here you dissembling Greeks we are here to say which of the two ships is the real one they can't both be or neither?

Nondescript: if you clip of your fingernail, is it still part of you?

Eolas: this is a situation where things are both their tangible elements and their essence.

Shingles: The one that's in the warehouse has taken Theseus' journey and so would be that ship, but the one in the harbour is Theseus ship because its parts have gradually become melded to those original parts and so share the concept of Theseus' ship

Oswy: You will need to explain that Eolas

Simulat: yes - you often run into that sort of problem when you use the term real - some people will say that this or that person isn't 'really' an artist for instance

Eolas: ok.... well it's what Shingles just said basically

Oswy: Shingles Theseus did not have a fleet of ship he had one only.

Eolas: the warehouse pieces are the tangible elements - the parts owned by Theseus

Marya: it's about continuity I think

Eolas: but the essence of the ship was his gift of it as a working harbour tour boat; the boat in the harbour, reminding people of his escapades is the essence; regardless of what parts.

Reflection: yes

Sojourna: I think it's the same ship - we know what we are talking about when we refer to the ship - but it is impractical to say; oh this is Theseus' Ship plus a new wooden board here, etc, etc.

Eolas: there's a ship in the harbour at Long Beach in California - it's the Queen Mary

Shingles: but the ship was effectively cloned, ie, grown out of itself, Oswy

Eolas: but it's a hotel now

Nondescript: can the ship 'die'?

Eolas: it's the original parts; the original ship

Nondescript: that neither is the real ship

Eolas: but it doesn't function as the Queen Mary

Reflection: with theoretical abstractions you can theoretically have true/false, this/that, but with actual things there is always transition and indeterminacy, I think

Nondescript: that the real ship is confined to a time as well as parts

Patrick: The ship in the harbour is a reproduction of the old with new materials

Oswy: Many would say the ship in the warehouse is made from the original bits that Theseus was in contact with what's wrong with that?

Simulat: I think that old airplanes run into the same situation - over time all of the components get replaced with new ones

Second Philosophy

Nondescript: I have to disagree with you on that Patrick

Shingles: The original parts have a more legitimate claim on belonging to Theseus, but the duplicate has a more legitimate claim on being a ship

Eolas: yeah.... can I ask a bigger question?

SeanBrian: no part of the harbour ship is original - it is no more real than a replica

Eolas: my bigger question is this:

Oswy: Eolas yes but don't expect a full answer yet

Eolas: what's wrong with some things being vague?

Shingles: whoops that's question 3

Eolas: when we zoom in on most "lines" we find a blurry edge

Simulat: good question Eolas :-)

Oswy: Eolas we don't like it we are scientific type people. Vague is almost an insult?

Patrick: Is that scholars tend to use operational definitions

Nondescript: We're humans. We have a basic need for definitions

Eolas: I don't have a problem with either drawing lines or accepting vagueness

Eolas: yeah but you can do both

Oswy: It's a good question, Eolas, can we save it for just a bit I am interested in who supports which ship or neither

Shingles: but definitions are always conditional, aren't they, Nondescript?

Eolas: it's possible to say "this is this, and that is that" and also leave it open to fuzzy edges when you put it under a magnifying glass

Simulat: it's not really a question of definition it seems to me - its just an example of how the idea of essence is very confusing

Oswy: Some are saying it is neither or both ships both cant be right

Eolas: ok

Oswy: Common sense tells us that one has to be the ship

Sojourna: We are disagreeing because we are being vague :p

Simulat: we have no problem riding in the boat - we don't need to define its essence to do that

Nondescript: both can be right

Eolas: why? They can both not be the ship right?

Reflection: but Oswy, if the question is nonsensical, then all of those answers can be acceptable also

Wichard: Then, consider this: the ship has become a new entity in the narrative that surrounds it. There are those who believe in the narrative and take various positions on objects that may have a relationship to the narrative. The wonder of participation on the ship in the harbour or its replacement is entirely dependent on the acceptance and participation in the narrative, in this case, that of Theseus.

Oswy: I am swaying at the moment to the warehouse ship any arguments for the harbour ship or is it just a tacky replica?

Shingles: My response is: if you are asking me which belonged to Theseus it's the one in the warehouse, if you're asking me which is a ship, its in the harbour. A more practical answer is the one in the warehouse is Theseus' Ship, but it's broken

Eolas: I'll second Shingles

Marya: it can be both or neither - it depends on context - it can be neither because the 'real' ship of Theseus existed a long time ago and technically does not do so anymore, ie: it is not in use by Theseus - and yes, agree with Wichard

Wichard: Our problem deals with the great issue of "reality"

Nondescript: In a world where humans have to interact with each other, one has to be right and the other wrong. Prove that god exists, prove that he doesn't exist! The solution is to not consider the question

Marya: yes Shingles - the answer to the question relies on a more defined questioned

Second Philosophy

Patrick: It seems to be a question of where you touch the elephant. If you are concerned with the experience of being on the ship the one in the harbour is real. If seeing the original materials and construction then it is the warehouse

Eolas: right

Oswy: Wichard are you saying that it's the ship if I say it is?

Wichard: And "reality" is very difficult to explain apart from our experiences of it/them

Shingles: precisely, Marya

Eolas: but neither is "Theseus' ship" per se

Shingles: like my earlier point to non-descript; all definitions are conditional, Marya & Oswy & all

Oswy: Marya how much clearer do you need to be . Which is the real ship of Theseus. Haha

Wichard: In your reality, you can take a position of the reality of one version, the other, both or neither, and that only begins the complexities associated with "reality"

SeanBrian: the point about the harbour ship is whether or not it is Theseus' ship - plainly it is A ship but no part of it except design has any contact with Theseus other than the somewhat marginal "this bit of wood touched a bit of wood that WAS part of the original"

Marya: Nope, I don't think it is a clear question - if it was a clear question we wouldn't have a paradox :)

Eolas: is it really a paradox? I'm unconvinced

Reflection: correct

Wichard: None of the discussion of "reality"/"realities" is simple.

Oswy: This is a court of law I rule paradoxes illegal for this evening

Shingles: Oswy, the response to that, is that the answer changes in accordance to the conditions of the question

Eolas: right

Simulat: In Nova Scotia there was a famous schooner called the Bluenose - it rotted and sank and they made another using the original plans - they didn't quibble about whether the new one was really the Bluenose - they just called it the Bluenose II :-)

Eolas: but that's not a paradox...

Wichard: And sometimes a court of law returns something that is ambiguous.

Oswy: Wichard we have two very concrete ships your analysis sounds very mystical to me.

Eolas: haha.... Simulat - you know I worked with Holland America for a while, and all their ships have the same names; one of the ones I managed was called "The Rotterdam" which was the first ship they ever built

Patrick: If I was judge I would look for precedents that defined genuine

Sojourna: When we are referring to Theseus' Ship - what are referring to exactly?

Eolas: but they rebuilt it/redesigned it dozens of times over the last century

Wichard: But someone else commented on context, and the view on takes on "realty" is very dependent on the contexts where one exists.

Simulat: Doesn't a paradox always that people have their concepts muddled? And so what concept is muddled with the Theseus Ship Paradox?

Oswy: Soj one of the two ships in question.

Eolas: for everyone who uses it though, it's still the Rotterdam

Marya: This is it - we can't answer without a clear question - we need to know what the context is, Soj

Patrick: It depends on what you want to know about the ship

Wichard: The only mystical part is the issue of existence.

Shingles: absolutely, yes, Marya

Eolas: I think we've accepted that both ships exist though, yes?

Reflection: Sim, it seems as though we have not defined what we mean by the "real" ship

Oswy: Marya how do we arrive at a clear question

Shingles: are we asking which took Theseus' journey, or which is still used as Theseus' ship?

Sojourna: Seems to me Theseus' ship is the one that existed thousands of years ago and did the rounds then. ? Does everyone agree on that?

Eolas: yes.

Second Philosophy

Marya: we can arrive at a clear question by figuring out why we are asking a question - what is the goal

Patrick: The original owners should have burned the heap:)

Simulat: probably that's the concept that's muddled - the idea of the 'real' ship

Eolas: and the shards of that ship are now in a warehouse

Wichard: But the "value" of the ships depends on the story that they're embedded in and that leads to monetary transactions.

Oswy: Marya the goal is to see who gets the money for showing he real ship.

Sojourna: But we use the term Theseus's ship to also refer to the one in the warehouse and the restored version and the replica etc. We use the same term but we know the differences? We just don't go into detail unless we have to.

Eolas: is this a legal question?

Oswy: Patrick we may all wish that but they didn't. Hehe

Eolas: because... we have this issue all the time

Eolas: ex: ANY civil war era military fort in the US

Wichard: Simulant, but I'm not sure we can agree on what's real about the two ships beyond stating that they physically may exist in our thought -experiment.

Shingles: in that case then there are two Theseus' ships Oswy, but in terms of antiques, the warehouse would be the original, so legally the genuine one Oswy

Oswy: So Wichard to put it another way who has teh best story

Marya: I think Eolas asking if this was a legal question is on the right track - if it is a legal question then the answers may be different

Shingles: There a context provided and a goal to the question and I can answer it faster

Eolas: pieces of the original are lying around - but they're always rebuilt

Patrick: true, and what judges look for are precedents to relieve them from having to rule

Eolas: but you just label it properly

Marya: if it is a philosophical question as opposed to a legal question, then the context changes and the answer can change as well

Eolas: the rebuilt fort is "the fort rebuilt", the pieces are "original artefacts from the fort before it burned in a fire, etc."

Simulat: well - what we really have is a working tourist attraction and also a pile of rotten wood

Wichard: And in courts of law there is also the issue of who can provide the best rhetorical structure to the story and their convictions must sway judge and/or jury

Eolas: neither, as Shingle keeps saying are really the "original" fort

Oswy: Well I am de judge an' I am lookin for de answer

Eolas: because the pile of wood doesn't constitute a fort/ship

Patrick: When they make an original rule they arbitrarily choose the dimension they consider most cogent

Simulat: but is there really an essence that defines Theseus' Ship?

Wichard: Marya, yes, and that's the amazing piece of the contextual puzzle that is "reality"

Eolas: and the ship doesn't constitute the original pieces

Sojourna: lol Oswy

Eolas: if I was the Judge, Oswy....

Shingles: yes, that it is thought of as Theseus ship makes it more credibly so

Sojourna: In terms of essence I can only think of the ship in its original form and performing its original function in a specific historical time frame

Eolas: I would tell both that they weren't allowed to advertise it as "Theseus' ship"

Oswy: I am not hearing much to defend the ship in the harbour. Are the Athenians the real fraudsters?

Eolas: one could claim "pieces of Theseus' ship"

Shingles: great conclusion, Eolas

Eolas: and the other could claim "Theseus' legacy"

Wichard: But tourism is filled with well meaning fraud.

Second Philosophy

Eolas: sure... but the narrative doesn't change

Eolas: the ship in the harbour gets to tell the story

SeanBrian: the best the harbour might claim would be "the Theseus experience"

Eolas: the story is what people are going to see

Nondescript: I've said what I wanted to. The ship in the harbour is the 'real ship'. The one in the warehouse is just old nail clippings of the harbour one

Wichard: We are reading into many of the things that the tourist encounters the idea of authenticity of reality, when that has faded long ago.

Patrick: If I were judge I would grant functional ownership to the vessel in the harbour and archaeological ownership to the warehouse

Eolas: and other people, who want tangible history - go see the ruins

Eolas: and my guess is

Shingles: the ship is not organic, nondescript

Eolas: people probably go see both! Which means everyone wins

Sojourna: Non - I'd say the ship in the harbour is "a" real ship, but not "the" real ship - though it is meant to represent the real ship.

Oswy: You could claim as I have been advised that the ship in the harbour never changed its form from the time to Theseus. The one in the warehouse became a non ship was then reconstructed and still can't sail around the harbour.

Reflection: the 'real' Parthenon is in Nashville, Tennessee you know ;-)

Nondescript: haha, take a mountain then. If you blast it with dynamite and take a stone from the crater. The stone is no longer a part of the mountain

Sojourna: haha Ref

Eolas: surely everyone here's been to an art museum that shows a replica of a Sumerian sculpture or whatever right?

Eolas: with chunks of the stone original next to it?

Wichard: Of course, if someone builds a ship in Second Life, we can still appreciate it as a work of art and a representative of the narrative that one or more of us buys into.

Patrick: Lets approach from the negative:

SeanBrian: as an aside the real London bridge is Arizona....

Eolas: I want to see both

Simulat: as we live all of the material in our bodies changes all the time - am I really the same person who was a baby?

Eolas: the one that works, and the parts.

Patrick: the warehouse cannot claim original construction

Eolas: that's a good point too Simulat

Teleo: real, usually denotes something that exists. One problem is that in many ways everything can be said to exist so ... even an idea can be said to exist in the case of the ship, the idea that it represents a real ship is in some way, real also. The intention regarding the ship is to lets say, make money or obtain kudos. Then is often when disingenuous retyping of terms occurs...e.g. the ship is real, independent of any other factor. However, it is not -original- even with this, the ship would never be termed -mostly un-original- for obvious reasons.

Wichard: We have the wonder that allows us to create and recreate the narrative for ourselves in a manner that becomes more "real" to us than the physical aspects of the ship.

Nondescript: the ship in the harbour was never replaced. It was maintained

Shingles: but the problem arises when one assumes that the term 'Theseus' ship' corresponds directly to the object, which terms never do exactly

Patrick: the harbour cannot claim original material

Eolas: right....

Wichard: We've had several discussions about the "reality" of SL with Simulat and Freenote

SeanBrian: however Wichard if you are saying "becomes" real that implies it isn't...

Second Philosophy

Shingles: you are Simulat as you are now and you were Simulat as you were as baby, sim

Eolas: so do we want to know at what point something has too few "original" parts to be labelled the original thing?

Nondescript: what is the 'original material'? the material that went into building the ship?

Simulat: which is the 'real' me?

Eolas: Simulat - the essence of you is the real you

Simulat: it doesn't seem to be a coherent or meaningful question

Oswy: Lets not get into percentages Eolas?

Eolas: think: Cyborg version of you, same brain/personality

Wichard: I usually choose the position that the individual chooses the reality within a particular context of self, and then nothing can change those beliefs except some major traumatic event.

Simulat: what essence Eolas?

Shingles: the term 'Simulat' is a description of a thing that gradually replaces its own material, so it still is appropriate to call Simulat the real Simulat at every stage in his life

Eolas: haha

Oswy: Wichard I am going to put you on the spot. Given your analysis, which for you is the real ship?

Shingles: trouble is, the term 'Theseus ship' describes something which does not replenish its own material in the same way

Teleo: I always took you as a simulation anyhow Sim :9

Oswy: Good point Shingles

Wichard: Oswy, I will attempt an answer:

Simulat: sure shingles - but what if you captured all of the material that moved out of my body and stored it in a box - which would be the real me? The person who can walk around or the stuff in the box?

Patrick: Sim, that paradox extends beyond the dichotomous, who am I today in the RL and who am I tomorrow at work. Who am I in Open Habitat and who am I other places SL

Oswy: Simulat I would not want the box me

Wichard: The "real" ship is one that once existed and has become part of the narrative culture that surrounds Theseus. It is an abstraction that is a mental construct from our cultural experiences.

Shingles: the description the term 'Simulat' implies demands it to be the living one, Sim

Oswy: Wichard does that mean we take a vote on it?

Chazz: What if Dr Frankenfurter reanimated all the stuff in the box, and it was better looking and smarter than the original Sim, would that change the answer?

Simulat: but the stuff in the box would be the "original" me wouldn't it?

Shingles: but you are not a ship, Sim

Sojourna: Hey, Wichard, well said!

Oswy: Shingles, isn't the ship in the warehouse like the body in the box. A bit creepy if you ask me?

Wichard: Neither of the quasi-physical "ships" in the thought experiment are particularly real for me, but the abstractions that I have constructed allows me to filter the two existences and tag them in more complex ways because of the fuzziness that surrounds the concept of "reality/ies"

Reflection: agreed Wichard

Shingles: if we're being most pedantic, the single-cell embryo would be the original Simulat, in terms of materials

Eolas: ok.... so Oswy, if this is a legal question, why do both not get to claim that they are the original ship? or neither; they're clearly selling different things

Simulat: A similar problem comes up when you consider making a teleporter - what if you teleported by making a duplicate of yourself in a new place - which is the real you? The one that goes where you want to go? or the one that is left behind?

Wichard: So one ship I tag with a meme about having undergone the gradual replacement of all its parts during the time since it might have been the "real" ship. While the other has been constructed from pieces that might have been the "real" ship.

Second Philosophy

Oswy: Wichard and other in the concrete real world a rival claim has been laid on each object. Is Williamson right to say well there is an answer but we are inescapably ignorant of it?

Wichard: Both have aspects that provide instances related to the narrative which has become the abstract "reality/ies" wherein the self is contextualized.

Simulat: There are endless conundrums like that, and it seems to me that the common element in them all is the assumption that it's reasonable to ask which is the 'real' or authentic yada yada

Oswy: Eolas because it defies common sense to say they both have THE ship

Wichard: I'm not sure that helps. I might want to read it again and rethink some parts.

Sojourna: Sim, I think the teleporter example might be a bit different, because if you take your memory with you, you also have your identity, but the ship is different as we are defining its identity (?)

Teleo: I would have thought it would depend on which factor is being emphasised as Real. Is it the idea? Is it the representation? Is it because you have a document held in trust, stating it belongs to Theseus, or is it the material?

Shingles: however, when one introduces a 'goal to the question' as Marya puts it, the conundrums dissipate, Sim

Reflection: Oswy, it does seem as though the question pertaining to the example is very much a legal question, having to do with sociological purposes to be served, and the power dynamics of those who will benefit from one definition of "real" versus the other.

Oswy: Wichard how do I explain what you are saying to the Athenian Tourist board?

Wichard: Teleo, I think I'm on the side of the "idea is real" right now.

Sojourna: Maybe we should ask whether they are the same ship and not the real ship?

Patrick: When my wife and I were in Britain, we visited a wall built by the Romans. As we were told about it in the bus, I pictured a tall wall. When we arrive. There were three ground level stumps. My expectation of seeing a real Roman wall had been dashed :)

Shingles: clearly they would be distinct ships, Sojourna

Nondescript: I do not see that the ship in the harbour ever changed. Even in Theseus time the ship had to have maintenance and hence have pieces replaced. And the ship in the warehouse can not have all the parts of what the ship has been

Oswy: Don't follow that Soj

Shingles: in the same way Dolly and her DNA donor are distinct sheep

Wichard: I would tell them that I'm an Epicurean hedonist and that both are fine with me, so long as there's no violence associated with them in the harbour of Piraeus.

Oswy: I am strongly swinging to Nondescript's argument here

Teleo: I would think they would answer that it was a really accurate representation of the original ship... they just called it real for short

Simulat: Sojourna - yes - the teleporter question is a different issue - but it points to the same sort of conundrum

Simulat: how about the example of what is the boundary between being hairy and bald?

Oswy: All The ship in eh harbour is a continuous ship Agreed.

Teleo: I think that's a better one Sim

Shingles: ah ok, so the term 'Theseus' ship', does that describe the working, sailing ship, or the historical monument, nondescript?

Simulat: is there really such a boundary?

Nondescript: At the time the question is asked is where i define the ship

Oswy: This ship in the harbour is continuous with the Ship Theseus stood upon, agreed?

Nondescript: not when it was

Nondescript: agreed

Oswy: It is still a working ship Agreed?

Simulat: you get the same problem with any continuum - the extremes are clearly different - but is there a boundary between them?

Teleo: My gut feeling Sim, is that it is the same kind of boundary that exists between past present and future... maybe some of that can be applied to the ship also.

Second Philosophy

Shingles: its now, so the term means the monument and as such its the warehouse copy, the 'genuine' antiquity, nondescript

Oswy: It has never ceased to be a ship and so it must be the ship of Theseus I rest my case, Sorry I am the judge? What do you think?

Eolas: I disagree with your premise Oswy, or that of the tourism board

Eolas: they are both the ship, and both not the ship.

Wichard: I guess that I could agree that each of the ship is a relic of Theseus that has some aspects related to his original ship, but neither works for me as anything more than a representation

Eolas: so for commercial/legal purposes, I believe BOTH should be allowed to exist

Shingles: eloquent and accurate, Eolas

Eolas: and make money; speaking as a potential tourist

Nondescript: I see the ship in the warehouse as a dinosaur. You dig up it's bones and put them together in the way they used to be. But it is no longer the real dinosaur per se

Eolas: I would want to see both.

Wichard: And the small print should expose their relationships and history

Eolas: Right and the working ship is an animatronics dinosaur in a theme park. I want to see both. I get different things from both

Wichard: I agree, Eolas

Oswy: I will reserve judgement for the time being. What now about the Aluminium Argo.

Shingles: so you're asking for A working ship, that's your goal to the question, Nondescript

Eolas: I get the fun and excitement of seeing the dinosaur (ship) in action

Nondescript: The question is which is the real ship?

Eolas: AND the tangible experience of seeing the bones of one that lived millions of years ago

Patrick: Eolas, I agree with and laud the eloquence of your summary

Eolas: thank you sir

Shingles: and yet 'real' is a conditional term, Nondescript

Oswy: Order in the court what about the Argo the bits were replaced with aluminium parts. No wooden bits ere kept Is it still the Argo?

Eolas: ok.... can we stop using that term? Everything is real in this discussion

Eolas: unless one party imagined their version of the ship

Nondescript: shingles, conditional to what?

Oswy: Can I interest anyone in the Argo?

Eolas: it's the same fundamental issue right?

Teleo: I would have thought that the emphasized point is one of ownership - ownership is quite a nebulous concept anyway so any kind of grounded reality is hard to obtain under those conditions... also interestingly, some people do say, that bald people no longer own any hair.

Eolas: except that the Argo is now a different form

Shingles: I quote Morpheus: 'If you smell or taste then 'real' is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain'.

Shingles: if you're talking about what you can*, If You're talking about*

SeanBrian: plainly the aluminium ship is not the real Theseus ship

Reflection: Teleo, I believe my head is half filled with hair

Patrick: Oswy, it is a cheap knock off and no standing in the court...aluminium

Teleo: glass half full ref ? :P

Reflection: :))

Simulat: Oswy - maybe we could get a little clearer if we could define where a 'boundary' is on a continuum - isn't it a contradiction to look for a sharp boundary on something that doesn't have one?

Wichard: And there may be plenty of hair on other part of the body - eh?

Oswy: But all that has happened is that wood has been replaced with aluminium. What's so special about wood?

Second Philosophy

Shingles: conditional in the sense of with what perspective you define 'real' from, as Morpheus just illustrated, Nondescript

Nondescript: shingles, but when you stop existing in your own reality, does everything else stop existing as well?

Oswy: Simulat tell us where the boundary should be?

Wichard: The boundary is fuzzy

Shingles: That would be a pointless answer, but yes, all things cease to be for a being when that being ceases to be, Nondescript

Simulat: I don't think there is one Oswy - like I said - it's a contradiction to look for a sharp boundary where there isn't one

Eolas: hehe

Oswy: Williamson says the boundary is clear its just we are inescapably ignorant as to where it is.

Eolas: whoa.... I must have missed something.... what boundary are we looking for?

Teleo: yet we assume those boundaries Sim. Bald is bald

Oswy: Eolas, Bald not bald.

Renald: Trespassers will be shot.

Eolas: I'm bald... what of it? :P

Wichard: But between any two points on the continuum lie infinitely many points.

Eolas: no.... Bald = 100% or real close to it

Patrick: I weigh 260, but I define myself as thin :) However, no one else would. Will the boundary ever be other than arbitrary?

Simulat: but are we accurate in assuming that there must be a boundary Teleo?

Eolas: perceptibly 100% hair loss, "hairless" I should say; you can shave & be bald

Oswy: Arguing percentages is a hopeless blind alley

Eolas: no it isn't

Shingles: but its like we want a more conformatable time of understanding things if we ask for an absolute boundary, it will always be a conditional boundary, guys

Simulat: it could be just a conceptual mistake couldn't it?

Renald: Legally blind?

Eolas: we're on a continuum which has no definite boundary; if you want to say what's "bald" then you go to the end of the spectrum; bald is the superlative full hair is the other end; everything else in between is in between and we can label it however we want; "losing his hair" - "balding" - "almost bald"

Oswy: OK I have not given up on the Argo. But does it matter if some things are vague? Does it have any implications for us?

Wichard: thinning

Reflection: jumbo shrimp

Eolas: and because it's a continuum the "line" doesn't exist

Simulat: just because you can pose a question in a grammatically correct form doesn't mean that it's necessarily a meaningful question

Eolas: it's infinitive; you just keep looking closer and making finer distinctions and create a new label; so talking percentages is just as descriptive as anything else

Wichard: We're splitting hairs!

Eolas: HA!

Simulat: hehe

Eolas: Score Wichard

Wichard: Literally and figuratively?

Eolas: but yes.... we are

Oswy: Order in court. Does it matter if we are fuzzy? This will be a shock to the scientific realists?

Eolas: No, and no.

Second Philosophy

Teleo: Sim It seems when looking for the phases of distinction one can not easily say there is a boundary, but when faced with brute facts then this reality over-rides any enquiry; maybe this is the nature of assumptions.. un-investigated perceptions of reality.

Eolas: Science is capable of being fuzzy all the time

Wichard: Don't they need a shock once in a while?

Shingles: no, I think vagaries are natural and beautiful, so rather than cause me a problem, it enriches my experiences, Oswy

Eolas: I am a very serious realist who advocates reason & science and I don't see a contradiction at all; some things are continuous.... gradients; what label I apply is my business

Oswy: Nondescript said early on he could define Red.

Simulat: well - say you have a rainbow - where is the boundary between red and yellow?

Shingles: did he?

Eolas: but I don't think I confuse that with believing there is truly a boundary in some instances

Eolas: exactly Sim

Marya: About being vague - it doesn't have to be vague - again, the vagueness arises from asking a broad question without a specified context. Once the context is established, we can answer the question.

Eolas: I can estimate a "boundary"

Simulat: and if you say that it's orange - where is the boundary between red and orange?

Eolas: but I'm not kidding myself that it's anything substantial

Simulat: I don't think it's meaningful to look for a boundary there

Oswy: Don't we feel uncomfortable with this metaphysical black hole?

Eolas: how is it a black hole? The rainbow is real

Teleo: if it 'aint black or white ... can it!

Eolas: I'm not confused on that point... it's a question of semiotics that's the problem

Simulat: It's not a metaphysical black hole - it's a conceptual mistake

Wichard: And we could operationalize baldness with a density measure of a certain number of hairs per sq. cm. over a certain percentage of the surface of the head.

Eolas: it's not the physical object; it's me, and you

Wichard: where hair grows during youth

Eolas: it's the words we're using to describe the thing

Shingles: precisely, it is only in attempting to remove the context (ie to seek a universal/absolute) that you get into trouble, Marya & Oswy & all

Oswy: Well it's a black hole in the sense that as we try to define some very basic concepts we don't feel able to do this even simple task?

Marya: yes Shingles

Eolas: I find it more interesting and more complex an understanding to be able to realize that some things have multiple traits which are non-competing

Marya: we are able to do the task Oswy - this is the point - these things can only have meaning within a given context

Eolas: the ship is the ship, and it isn't... depending on what parts you are emphasizing, but neither can be truly "Theseus' ship" if all aspects are required

Nondescript: Shingles. If the question is conditional to who interprets the question then take this example: A smart man says the earth is round because he has calculated the blablabla... the rest of the village disagrees and prosecute the man because he is wrong. The earth is flat! Are the people in the village right because they have more voices to support their cause?

Eolas: for that to be the case then we are *only* talking about the ship he owned and used 1000s of years ago and that's it; in fact, once the ship was no longer in his possession it wasn't "his" anyway

Simulat: Oswy - you haven't addressed the reason that there must be a boundary in a continuum

Second Philosophy

Oswy: But when we say what is red what is tall and we find we can't answer these questions with any degree of definition doesn't this open the way to relativism and scepticism?

Eolas: no

Shingles: effectively, and for their purposes, yes they are. the context dictates, Nondescript

Eolas: scepticism isn't relativism though btw - to be clear on that point

Teleo: I think that meaning appears in clusters... the more connections between the clusters the more arguments you have for holding onto your definition... that's why it will be hard to win the case against the owner of the ship of Theseus.

Shingles: who says this Smart man is smart anyhow?

Nondescript: then we are on the same page shingles.

Patrick: Oswy, in simple (research) tasks, we agree on operational definitions and either modify or discard them as they fail us.

Simulat: are you claiming inerrancy? That just because you have a concept that it must be valid?

Nondescript: Can we have a vote on what the real boat is?

Eolas: you know.... part of this comes down to the idea of imposing definitions vs. allowing them to arise through an aggregate of society

Oswy: Nondescript, I will consider that under advisement.

Eolas: words & terms are fluid and malleable

Marya: I think we have not established or do not seem to have established the context of the question, to my mind, so we cannot vote on an answer - we are not agreeing on the question

Shingles: as long as the possible answer include a) warehouse b) harbour c) neither and d) both, Nondescript ;)

Eolas: what I think Marya has been asking for - and what I support, is that we need to define our terms better

Eolas: what attributes are we going to define as the "authentic" attributes?

Oswy: Simulat on the boundary issue. Williamson says there must be a truth of the matter bald or not bald. So there must be a boundary. Its just we are not capable of seeing it we remain in inescapable ignorance.

Eolas: (a) physical parts (b) function/use (c) owned by Theseus

Shingles jokes again 'Only a Sith believes in absolutes'

Nondescript: I'd like to add option e) neither and both at the same time

Eolas: so much irony Shingles

Shingles: that's super, Nondescript

Eolas: thanks George Lucas...

Oswy: Marya, you still haven't given me the question to use yet. Hehe

Teleo: if the determinant is material and none of the material is the same as the original, the ship is not real... if it is the form or shape or similarity of build and construction.. then the term could hold, and so on.

Simulat: but clearly Oswy I'm saying that Williamson is mistaken

Shingles: perhaps because Marya isn't asking which ship is the real one, Oswy

Eolas: what do we define as "real" in this instance?

Marya: I'll try to be more specific, when you ask, 'which is the real ship of Theseus', I must ask real to whom, real for what purpose, in what context, why do we need to know which one is 'the real one' - what function are we attempting to establish by establishing which is the 'real' one. If we can get a clear question in the right context, then we can come up with an answer

Oswy: Simulat I am not so sure. We clearly understand the truth of bald and not bald. So it seems reasonable that there should be a boundary somewhere.

Eolas: that's the key to that determination - but again, if it's a legal question...it doesn't matter

Shingles: why 'must' there be a boundary?

Oswy: Marya, who gets the cash for showing off the real ship.

Reflection: Oswy, bald is in the eye of the beholder, I think

Eolas: ahhh yes... the question I asked 30 minutes ago - why do we need a boundary Oswy?

Oswy: Shingle because bald can not be not bald.

Second Philosophy

Simulat: That's the mistake Oswy - it's a mistake to say that the boundary must be there

Eolas: ... both get cash for showing the real ship

Renald: It has seemed to since first reading the "problem" that both ships have a claim, but neither can satisfy the other's claim. So there is a very narrow definition under which neither ship is the real ship, and two broader claims under which both are, but for different reasons. That may all be obvious and long since thrashed through, but...

Eolas: if it's a practical/legal/economic question; they BOTH get it; or neither if you want to be a jerk

Marya: yes, I think Eolas has given the most accurate answer there (to my mind), they both get it :)

Nondescript: A boundary can be in flux

Shingles: yes because what we understand as 'bald' is conditional, I'm asking what are the conditions, without them I cannot answer who is bald or not, Oswy

Oswy: Well you could say with 50000 hairs he 'aint bald but with 4978 hairs he is and the boundary is anything in between but its still a boundary. Only here its loosely defined?

Eolas: which is why we agree on percentages and such

Shingles: is an egg bald? Is a tree bald?

Eolas: haha, yeah, well a tree is "hairless", so yes :P

Reflection: only the ship which is in SL should be real for us

Marya: yes Renald - all of that :)

Teleo: bereft of its vital matter? :P

Eolas: of course.... many fine poets use the term baldness with trees to depict a lack of leaves

Nondescript: no, a tree cannot grow hair so the term of bald is not appropriate

Eolas: ah... there you are Nondescript - context ;)

Renald: Bald is only hair?

Patrick: Sim, I think you are on to something...similar to issue is light particle or wave. Physics have decided to see as both

Eolas: more specific definitions

Shingles: or conditions rather, Eolas

Oswy: Ok its 21-20 in my real world so I am going to try and sum up. Do you want to take a vote?

Eolas: sure - what are the options?

Simulat: well - I'm interested in why Williamson must be considered correct

Shingles: I'm sure the term 'tree' does include an example of a tree that grows 'hair-like' growths you know

Eolas: I am too Sim

Renald: Sim, Williamson belongs to an organization I founded, whose members must be considered correct.

Oswy: Question is between ships

Simulat: smiles at Renald

Eolas: hahaha

Eolas: ok.... so are we voting?

Oswy: All who think the ship in the warehouse is the real ship stand on my side of the fountain. All who favour the ship in harbour on the other side? Don't know in the doorway OK?

Marya: what about the 'both' option?

Oswy: Agreed?

Eolas: I won't vote on that

Oswy: Boths in the door way

Wren: all abstaining just stay sitting

Oswy: Two minutes to get into position/ Quick march

Shingles: I'm straddling the mountain, I may lean one way or the other depending on the conditions given as to 'real', Oswy

Simulat: I abstain

Renald: you're with me, then, Shing

Second Philosophy

Eolas: there were no conditions given....

Oswy: Abstainers in the door way.

Teleo: I don't think either of them will be, if they have hardly any parts left

Eolas: no I'm not abstaining

Marya: the only condition was a legal question - so legally speaking I would say both - so we stand in the doorway :)

Renald: I can't stand anywhere with those options, so... I hover. But I'm not abstaining, either.

Eolas: put the abstainers back in their chairs. Legally & philosophically I say both ;) and neither

Oswy: I will hold you all in contempt in a minute

Eolas: but only "both" for legally

Teleo: I'll hover because its seems like fun

Marya: lol okay Tel

Eolas: hovering is fun

Oswy: No hovering in my court I am de judge

Eolas: but you should do it in the door way where all the other "correct" people are :P

Shingles: we hover because we're enlightened Teleo

Nondescript: I don't like to be main stream. That's my main reason for not standing in the doorway

Oswy: We appear to have seven in favour of the ship in the harbour none in favour of the warehouse

Patrick: As a legal question without precedents, the judge would have to decide as to function or authentic materials; neither are the original boat

Eolas: I gave up the notion that mainstream vs. subculture was a good distinction.

Renald: Thank you Patrick

Oswy: Overruled Patrick

Shingles: there are more categories than that Oswy, listen to your people!

Patrick: very good, your honour

Oswy: Six in he door way I think?

Nondescript: It's important to be a little different than everyone else

Eolas: its important Nondescript, if being different is done for a valid purpose and not for its own sake

Marya: well generally speaking yes Nondescript - but if being different means you jump off a cliff because others don't ... then perhaps not :)

Oswy: I therefore rule that the ship in the harbour is the true ship of Theseus at least for tonight. I fully expect an appeal

Eolas: Lame Oswy

Shingles: Objection!

Teleo: yes and now we have had the chance of joining something the Ren founded too, so that's a 5th element

Eolas: way lame, you still haven't answered the question of why only ONE has to be "real"?

Nondescript: emphasis on 'little'

Oswy: Overruled Shingles and everyone else. The court is now closed further arguments will inevitably take place .Dismissed

Eolas sighs

Shingles: We don't need a conch, Oswy

Oswy: Eolas. We said before Theseus did not have a fleet he had one ship so only one can be the real ship. You can all sit down again now

Eolas: Oswy, that's a completely false dichotomy; of course Theseus only had ONE ship; but neither of those two is it; neither of those two has to be; the ship Theseus had 2500 years ago was his ship; the two you're dealing with now are just called his ship; but your premise is backward

Oswy: Well if someone makes a claim to it they that has to be evaluated. Wichard said something similar.

Renald: Ack!

Second Philosophy

Eolas: but the claims aren't wrong; assuming we believe their individual veracity; claim 1: ship in harbour was the rebuilt version of Theseus' ship = true

Claim 2: warehouse contains pieces of the original ship which were actually physically touched by Theseus himself = true

Renald: Rebuilt and in continuous use

Oswy: I prefer repaired and in continuous use.

Shingles: our survey says: BING

Eolas: or false.... but we'll assume true, but they aren't competing Oswy! They're totally different things

Renald: Either way, Oswy... the continuous use is key.

Eolas: one is pieces of a ship

Teleo: Provenance, from the French provenir, "to come from", means the origin, or the source, of something, or the history of the ownership or location of an object especially a work of art, or some object of value such as is found in archaeology, or palaeontology, or some document, such as a manuscript, or even an item of literature in the broadest sense, including a first edition of a very rare published work. The primary purpose of provenance is to confirm the time, place, and if appropriate the person responsible, for the creation, production or discovery of the object. Comparative techniques, expert opinions, written and verbal records and the results of various kinds of scientific tests are often used to help establish provenance.

Eolas: one is a functioning rebuilt ship; both have aspects of Theseus but neither is the actual ship he used or owned, and in either case, Theseus' ownership has little bearing on the discussion as he and his descendents are dead; so the question is which of the two (or both) has his legacy, and the answer is clearly both, for different reasons

Renald: clearly

Oswy: Did the actual ship die with Theseus that's a curious notion?

Eolas: no, the actual ship ceased to belong to Theseus when he died though

Shingles: but it ceased to be the ship that Theseus sails, Oswy

Eolas: and became "was Theseus' ship", past tense, then that ship was rebuilt time and time again

Shingles touches wood

Eolas: and no part of it had ever been touched by the hero; so now it's just a representation of what he sailed on; he never touched it, he doesn't currently own it.... and the remains of what he did touch are in a warehouse

Oswy: I don't like rebuilt. Repair gets the sense that the ship was in continuous function

Eolas: the warehouse pieces of wood don't have the Theseus narrative though

Renald: The ship in the harbour IS what Theseus' ship became. And in the sense that anything that endures IS what it becomes...

Eolas: well, ships are never in "continuous function"; you have to dry-dock them all the time; but it doesn't matter.... because both are true, if the story is true, both are real and both have connection to Theseus and that mythology

Renald: All right... continuous to the degree that can be said of ships.

Eolas: yes, but again, continuous or not.... who cares

Renald: I hope someone cares...

Eolas: the crux of the problem is you are making an absurd determination that only ONE can be "true" when both can and probably are

Oswy: If I apply what you say to the Rembrandt in the National Gallery of Scotland . As soon as he died the painting a self portrait became the past painting of Rembrandt. I find that a curious notion as well.

Eolas: it is Rembrandt's self-portrait much like I write an auto-biography about myself but it is ALSO a picture of deceased painter, Rembrandt; it's both things. I'm perplexed as to how we are having problems with the concept of plurality. Things can have multiple, true, and non-contradictory attributes and can share those with other things

Oswy: On the continuous aspect it is important because the form of the ship was maintained throughout via its continuous function.

Eolas: do both the ship and the warehouse have legitimate ties to the Theseus legacy or not?

Second Philosophy

Renald: both

Eolas: were both things associated with the legendary hero?

Eolas: yes.

Oswy: On the Rembrandt people don't go around calling the painting a painting by the deceased Rembrandt they say ah this is a real Rembrandt.

Eolas: are both related to the ship?

Eolas: Oswy, that doesn't make much sense - it's a "real" Rembrandt because when people say that within the context, "real" means "painted by Rembrandt", when he died it doesn't change that he built it and actually - if you want to use that example with respect to the ship ... then you go with the Warehouse as the real ship

Shingles: the painting is a painting and the ship is a ship, different conditions apply; a painting is not a vehicle

Eolas: because those pieces are what Theseus himself touched and used but it's no longer a ship, so you can't call it a "ship", so you can't call it a real "ship", but you can call the pieces "owned by Theseus". Whereas the one in the harbour may very well be a ship, but it was never Theseus' ship physically; it just shares his narrative; but both things are awesome

Wichard: And what happens when all the original paint from Rembrandt is replaced through the ages and the canvas underneath is replaced and restored?

Eolas: and both have a place in tourism

Wichard: Aren't we back in the paradox?

Eolas: it's not a paradox; it's a problem in how we're limiting definitions and being purposefully vague

Shingles: I didn't know people went around touching up Rembrandt, Wichard

Wichard: Art restoration goes on all the time.

Eolas: typically paint restoration is just cleaning but I imagine it can also be adding paint. Who knows ... or rather - I don't know... someone does

Teleo: there's the ownership phenomenon again... most of it is about ownership in my opinion. To say that this ship was owned by someone who never actually did own it is a bit ripe.

Oswy: I am merely probing our intuitions about these things. In general we do want to say something is real. I am prepared to say the ship in the warehouse is the reconstructed ship of Theseus and this will satisfy a lot of people. It has the element of Theseus touched it. But I like the idea of the ship in the harbour as the continuous link with Theseus, a functioning ship that has links to Theseus as well. Most ordinary people want to be able to say which is more real.

Shingles: perhaps then the 'Rembrandt' (meaning the painting) refers to his design or blueprint, to which restorers replenish the materials, Wichard

Eolas: Oswy - can you please answer why you can't say both are part of Theseus?

Oswy: I think it's a fudge to say they both are. It's too easy?

Eolas: this isn't a contradiction; it's not too easy; it's more accurate to say "neither" however

Sojourna: Oswy - I'm a little confused - (meanwhile was away from keyboard for a bit) isn't the Theseus Paradox used to talk about sameness and identity? Rather than the notion of real is, which is about value?

Renald: Oswy, I'm very much interested in the intuitions of "ordinary people"... but I'm also aware of instances when those intuitions can benefit from nudging.

Shingles: I'm not saying that they both are, merely that they both have a possibility of being the real one, the conditions implied shall eliminate the possibility of one of them being the real one, Oswy

Renald: And I don't think most people would be TOO resistant to recognizing the ships are both real in different ways. Especially if it were pointed out.

Oswy: You see you could go on multiplying the versions of the ship. I.e the ship when Theseus died. The ship when the first repaired was made and so on to the nth degree.

Shingles: is that a problem, Oswy?

Eolas: right... but that's my point Oswy... once it ceased being actively used by the man himself, the definitions get fuzzy, but so what?

Wichard: I think that we're back to cloning!

Second Philosophy

Eolas: it's all true; all part of the narrative of Theseus, and everyone involved seems to have a legit claim and they don't compete with each other. If there was another ship in the harbour right now... that claimed to be Theseus' continually repaired ship as well. Then there's a problem; only one of those could be true; but this isn't that.

Renald: Not just cloning... now that a painting is introduced, think of a manuscript, like a state's constitution

Oswy: Soj, I am not sure I am understanding the main point you are making.

Shingles: you couldn't ever get the 'philosophy of the common man' simply because the philosopher seeking it would invariably, and unconsciously manipulate the survey to confound the validity of the data; assuming 'common man' can't answer for himself

Sojourna: Er, no point, really just trying to work out whether the Theseus paradox is a philosophical problem about sameness or about what is real and what is not.

Renald: People don't have to consult the original manuscript of a constitution in order to apply it, because a copy will do. But you keep the original in a museum or a vault for a reason -- just not the same reason.

Eolas: ok... so Oswy.... I've asked this like 6 times, but why can't both companies/ships claim the following: Ship in harbour: "Continuously rebuilt from Theseus' original ship" - Ship-pieces in warehouse: "Pieces of the original ship"

Renald: Soj, perhaps the questions are related :-)

Oswy: Soj, Right I think it's about identity and whether and how it can be transferred eg in one state a man is bald in another state he is not. In one state the ship in the harbour is the ship of Theseus and then at another time and in another state it is not.

Eolas: and have both be completely true, and both be allowed to do business

Shingles: I agree with Eolas' verdict, and think it would set a good legal precedent

Teleo: well it looks like anyone can build a real ship of Theseus and claim it to be so, so that's nice.

Wichard: yes, I agree with Eolas and see that he's set out the fine print for the legalities

Eolas: thank you

Sojourna: OK, thanks Oswy.

Oswy: Eolas both can no one is denying that but that is not the point of the paradox. The paradox is asking at what point is there a transfer of identity and how can that be described or as you seem to be saying there is a bifurcation of identity and that is the solution. Now you are claiming there is no paradox. Well many would disagree. They don't agree with the bifurcation you are pinning your colours to.

Eolas: it's not a paradox though; a paradox would be if the things were contradictory and could not coexist

Renald: In order for there to be a problem, we have to define identity as atomic, or non-analytic, or whatever.

Eolas: or self-negating concepts

Oswy: Well, I can see you don't think it is but many would beg to differ.

Eolas: these aren't self-negating

Eolas: I can't imagine who...these are not even competing concepts

Shingles: all paradoxes are artifice though, aren't they? They don't actually occur outside of concepts

Oswy: Most metaphysicians Williamson, EJ Lowe and others.

Eolas: the only thing that competes here is the idea that we're rigidly defining things in ways that no longer make sense

Simulat: Oswy - what's your opinion about my point that the paradox rests on trying to decide a boundary that isn't there?

Eolas: that's my point Sim; I'd go farther though; not only is there no boundary between these particular ships, I don't see how they're even on the same continuum

Renald: Oswy... under those definitions, identity almost never actually exists.

Eolas: yeah.... personally - the most accurate thing I can think to say about these ships

Oswy: Simulat As I said you can have broad or narrow boundaries. If you say He is bald and he isn't and then you are confronted with the in-between case the man with 30,000 hairs. Do you say well there is no boundary so what or do you try somehow to decide if he is bald or not?

Renald: After all... Theseus himself probably had to make repairs to his ship.

Second Philosophy

Eolas: is that both have aspects of Theseus' history and are part of the mythology and the legacy, but neither can be called "his" ship, as one is not a ship and one he never touched

Eolas: that's not a paradox though Oswy

Simulat: Oswy - I used to know a guy who was bald except for a small patch at the back - he let that patch get long and draped it over his whole head - was he bald ? :-)

Eolas: haha

Renald: Did Theseus deposit parts he himself replaced in the same warehouse?

Eolas: he was delusional :P

Simulat: :-)

Eolas: I think probably *not* Renald

Oswy: The paradox in the hairs case is that if you remove one hair from a man with 60 thousand hairs he is not bald. if you remove one from a man with 10 hairs he is bald. So at some point he had to become one or the other and the rule about removing one hair no longer applies.

Shingles: he had a high widows-peak

Eolas: having a perfunctory understanding of life in ancient Greece makes me assume that Theseus just reused his spent wood for fires and other things; carving toys for kids, etc.

Oswy: Simulat that's the very question we might expect to be able to answer

Eolas: "warehouse" isn't really a concept we have until we have surplus of stuff is it?

Renald: Eolas, in that case, was Theseus' Ship itself Theseus' Ship?

Eolas: it was until he died

Renald: But it had been changing before then.

Eolas: then it was whoever he gave it to's ship; so, he still owned it did he not?

Shingles: it was Theseus' ship because it was the ship that Theseus sailed, Renald

Renald: I know, I'm just thinking about the warehouse's claim being based in continuity of material.

Eolas: it's Theseus' until such a time he ceased to own the ship

Renald: But it wasn't probably, Shingles. When Theseus died, it was not the ship he built. Or bought.

Eolas: what's your point Renald

Renald: Which is not to say I don't think the warehouse has a claim.

Shingles: yes we spent much time early on about continuity of material, ren

Eolas: he owned all the rebuilds; he owned all subsequent incarnations of the ship - he sailed on said incarnations

Eolas: and when some deckhand busted a cabinet - and the cabinet was replaced, he owned that; it was all Theseus' until such a time as it was no longer legitimately in his possession

Renald: So what establishes continuity of THAT ship is just Theseus' ownership?

Eolas: of course

Renald: hmm

Eolas: it's just a bunch of wood otherwise; if he owned multiple ships over the course of his life; that we know about

Eolas: then we say "these are the ships that Theseus once sailed on and owned"

Eolas: and they all *were* his ship at one time, but none are now

Steve: I think it is pretty clear from the discussion that the truth of identity claim is undecidable

Oswy: Except you're right Renald, there are many ships here all under the imprint of Theseus. We have a splaying of identity that I find very unsatisfactory.

Eolas: which is why I kept saying neither; nothing *is* currently Theseus' ship as he is quite dead and of what "was" known to be his ship

Steve: the issue on which ship is genuine is a power issue

Renald: Oswy, Eolas, under the strict rules I assume people like Williamson espouse, I'd have to say neither, also.

Steve: the government legitimates its claim; like genuine vs counterfeit coin

Renald: My point was that even the "original" ship itself changed, depending on how one defines its identity.

Second Philosophy

Eolas: yeah, Steve, I don't think either are claiming that they have the exact ship he sailed on though are they?

Oswy: Renald I think Williamson is not saying neither. He is saying one is and the other isn't but we are forever ignorant of which it is. Listen to Philosophy Bytes where he explains this.

Steve: might be made by same person only the context of legitimacy is different

Eolas: I think Williamson is probably wrong

Renald: Forever ignorant is equivalent to non-existent, for me.

Steve: even if the counterfeit is exactly identical

Eolas: this is, again, why I specified the claims either company could use to advertise their respective attractions

Shingles: my, what big shoes you have, Eolas

Oswy: Right well I am off. Good debating with you all hope it was rather lighter and more fun in a way than more deeply serious debates. Will see you all in a couple of weeks; away next Sunday.

Eolas: one is the continuously repaired/rebuilt version of a ship Theseus once owned... and the other is pieces.

Eolas: how so Shingles?

Shingles: 'All the better to kick you in the nuts with, shingles'

Eolas: hahaha

