

# William Hazlitt on Personal Identity

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This paper includes a Japanese translation and an interpretive essay of two neglected texts of William Hazlitt (1778–1830): the main text of his first work, *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action* (1805), and the second part of his later essay “Self-Love and Benevolence” (1828). In these texts, Hazlitt not only attempted to refute the prevalent psychological and ethical egoism but also advanced, ahead of his time, a unique theory on personal identity and self-interest. According to him, our future selves are not real but constructed by our imagination; human beings are, by nature, disinterested; and selfishness is merely the product of habit and verbal confusion. I examine Hazlitt’s arguments and their metaphysical and practical implications in light of his other writings and recent philosophical scholarship.