

# The rhetoric and introductory research writing philosophy essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Most people believe the vision system exists solely in the eyes. In reality, the eyes make up only a small part of the system. For instance, just as the camera is a small item in a large TV station, the eyes play a small part in vision. Like a camera, all the eye does is deliver a bunch of colored dots. It is in the brain that the real work of “ seeing” begins. So, what do we actually see? And, what is it that our eyes don’t see? Through the variations of darkness, there is light; but, what does that mean to the person who struggles with a mental illness?

A contributing factor to this paper will be the relationship between; the blind eye, the mind’s eye, the third eye; as well as the conscious and unconscious phenomena of the mind. The analyses that will be used in this paper will be based on the views of well-known authors. All of these sources are highly reliable and are thoroughly described in this research.

Martha Stout - Mental Illness

Oliver Sacks - Blindness

Robert Thurman/Karen Armstrong - Religious Beliefs

Thais Campos - Consciousness

I want to know why the mental processes, ranging from the supreme clarity of consciousness at moments of creative inspiration, through the dimness of the half-sleeping mind; to the complete darkness of the unconscious, accounts for a large part of man’ mental life. On the other hand, we have the term “ consciousness” what does this mean, and how do we describe this level of the mind? Why, is it so important for us to find an answer? We know <https://assignbuster.com/the-rhetoric-and-introductory-research-writing-philosophy-essay/>

that consciousness, is considered the highest form of mental activity, and is seen only in human beings. However, it does not exist in the newborn child, in certain categories of the mentally ill, in people who are asleep or in a coma. For philosophy, the main question is the relationship of consciousness to being, and the existence of the different levels of consciousness that remains a target for research by many sciences. I step back and wonder how the mind finds its way through the many varieties of mental illnesses; and, how observing the consciousness will easily relinquish this information that will help us to understand, where and how far do we travel when we blank out.

## **Introduction**

I have spent most of my life in a daydream state of consciousness and unconsciousness. I know that others notice that I have a tendency to be distracted, but they have no idea that usually I am gone even when I seem to be paying attention. I wander off for brief moments, and when I come back I have to grasp quickly what was said before I forget it, then I wander off again. This goes unnoticed because even though I am gone, whatever was said during the previous second or two, is still there for me to grab when I return. It is almost impossible for me to pay attention when somebody is telling me something that does not interest me. In that case, I go away and think about things unrelated to what is being said. I am gone into a 'never land' inside my mind and I just come back regularly to check and see that everything is going well outside, that is, that I don't get caught in the act of not paying attention to what is being said. I do not do this on purpose. I cannot avoid doing it, and most of the times I do not even realize that I am

doing it. When I am alone, for instance, when I am working on a writing topic of some sort, I am gone all of the time. I may think what I am going to write about when I get to the computer, and I might get some pretty good ideas, but it is useless, since by the time I get to the computer, I will have forgotten everything that I decided to write about, or forget in mid-sentence where exactly I was going with this idea pertaining to the topic of research. Lately, I have been taking a legal pad with me everywhere to write down my ideas. I also speculate a lot about what is going to happen in the future. I even talk with people in my mind, not only what I will say but also what they will reply. But of course, in real life it never turns out to be like I anticipated. I have tried several times not to go away. I can prevent it only for a very short period of time. It is as hard as trying to stay with our minds blank, that is, without thinking about anything. You can do it, but you have to concentrate not to think, and as soon as you lower your guard, you are doing it again. I have been diagnosed with Bipolar Depression, and I am not sure which is worse; the illness itself, or the medication that I use to help manage this illness.

### **Martha Stout: Mental Illness**

Martha Stout(2002) specializes in “ treating patients who have suffered psychological trauma; Stout uses her case studies to show that the ability to dissociate from reality, which functions as a life preserving defense mechanism during times of stress in childhood, can develop multiple personalities in order to contend with life’ many demands”(p. 380).

Dissociation also accompanies depressive disorders as well some of the medications that treat these disorders, will render the person’s mind

registering actual events in a daydream state without remembering what just took place. Most of us have days when we don't feel like ourselves. Some of us have moments, sometimes more than moments, when we feel disconnected from our surroundings, our actions, ourselves. The best example that I can give here is: Driving to the doctor's office, with no recollection of the drive from home. The summary that is given about the essay, " When I Woke Up Tuesday Morning, It Was Friday" by Martha Stout, says that the term divided consciousness refers to those times when we withdraw mentally from the world around us. Daydreams and other forms of subjective escape often help us to keep our mental balance by shutting out events when they threaten to be overwhelming.

The article " Chaos, Brain and Divided Consciousness" by author Petra Bob (2007), gives insight to how the mind works.

Chaos and self-organization seem to be particularly important for research of some fundamental problems regarding mind-brain relationship. Relevant problems among others are formations of memories during alterations of mental states and nature of a barrier that divides mental states, and leads to the process called dissociation. This process is related to a formation of groups of neurons which often synchronize their firing patterns in a unique spatial manner (P., 2007).

## **Oliver Sachs – Blindness**

In the " Mind's Eye: What the Blind See" by Oliver Sachs (2003), he is quoted as saying

“ For those who lose sight so early, the very concepts of “ sight” or “ blindness” soon cease to have meaning, and there is no sense of losing the world of vision, only of living fully in a world constructed by the other senses” (p. 305).

We are presented with a brief view of Oliver Sacks. Before even contemplating writing a book on being blind, he felt it was necessary to “ write about the mentally ill, in ways that foreground the humanity of those who are suffering from diseases that generate all manner of strange behaviors” (Sacks, 2003, p. 302). This summary of “ In the Mind’s Eye”, makes one wary of how scarily fragile the brain is. “ To what extent are we; our experiences, our reactions, shaped, predetermine, by our brains, and to what extent do we shape our own brains? Does the mind run the brain or the brain the mind? “ p. 303.

In *The Mind’s Eye*, Oliver Sacks explores the relationship between vision, recognition, and perception, and the amazing ways that the brain and spirit can adapt to disorders of vision. He gives case studies of persons who have lost their sight and have learned new ways to accommodate their “ seeing” with other “ senses” and the powerful possibilities of the human brain and mind. It is through his own experience with a cancerous tumor behind his right eye followed by blindness that he writes what is physically happening and shares his inner thoughts and the full range of his emotional reaction. We are all close to the brink of being someone else. For instance, a person who has had a mind-shattering stroke or head injury, one of many possible complications can arise from this stroke: There is death, paralysis, loss of memory, or you have become blind. Consider this, your thoughts, memories

<https://assignbuster.com/the-rhetoric-and-introductory-research-writing-philosophy-essay/>

and emotions, your perceptions of the world, and your deepest intuitions of selfhood, are gone. We take our fragile brains so much for granted.

Ultimately, Sacks tries to show the progress made in the knowledge of what centers of the brain are responsible for vision and its interpretations, but still lacks the knowledge of how things really work inside our heads.

We all depend on our power senses – sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. Each one serves a particular purpose and when we end up losing one of these senses, we become forced to replace that sense in order to elevate. So when an individual is physically blind they devise ways to adapt to their surroundings. Now when a person is mentally blind, they allow other people of authority around them to construct ways for them to live because they do not see the importance in “ self”. They trust everyone else before themselves. Needless to say, lose no time searching for a way to find your true self. It goes beyond knowing what your favorite food is or favorite color, but really getting to the essence of what you are about, therefore no one else can define you by making you blind to yourself and more importantly no one can trick you.

## **Robert Thurman, Karen Armstrong – Religion**

Spirituality is based on the experience of one person’s awareness, one culture’s awareness, and where life itself experiences universality. “

Awareness”, what does this term really mean? According to the Webster dictionary; aware or awareness is defined as, conscious (of), informed;

cognizant. In order to understand spirituality, we need to be consciously aware of the peace, and cognizant of the enlightenment that lies within this

peace. Have you ever found yourself looking at the sun shining through the  
<https://assignbuster.com/the-rhetoric-and-introductory-research-writing-philosophy-essay/>

white fluffy clouds in the sky and wonder if there is something more hiding behind them, something of a more spiritual nature? For example, is there really a heaven, and what about hell? In this moment of being immersed in the daydream state of consciousness, are we on the path to awareness? Could enlightenment feel like this? For one un-noticed minute, we have become part of the peace, and it is afterward, when we realize that we are just a paint stroke that is part of the masterpiece of life. We have become one glittery particle that connects to an infinite number of other glittery particles that make up the divine space, which is nothingness. To know this nothingness, is to know what awareness means. Yet, to experience this “spirituality” we need to become in tuned with our inner voice, our mind’s eye, our core consciousness known as our soul. However, this kind of understanding goes well beyond what our mind, intellect, and ego can fathom. In religious traditions this core consciousness is part of a more universal domain of consciousness referred to as God. Even a partial glimpse of this level of awareness, a person can experience joy, insight, and intuition: an awakening of love, and compassion. People in all cultures discovered that by pushing their reasoning powers to the limit, and by living as selflessly and compassionately as possible, they will that enables them to affirm such suffering with serenity and courage. In Karen Armstrong’s essay “Homo religious”, and Robert Thurman’s essay “Wisdom”, they explain their meaning of Nothingness, awareness, and enlightenment through religion, the “self”, the universe, and knowledge. It is through years of studying and learning, that both of these authors articulate their views/beliefs on the consciousness; the “sacred energy and show just how similar their beliefs are to one another.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-rhetoric-and-introductory-research-writing-philosophy-essay/>



## Self

When people believe in something with every fiber of their being, they make sacrifices and live their lives in ways that others on the outside looking in may not understand. Sometimes we need to step out of our comfort zones and do something that we normally would not do to find what is right for ourselves. Stepping out “ ekstasis” is a term used in *Homo Religiosus*, written by Karen Armstrong (p. 27). She writes of a universal principle of most religions, that implies, the only way to truly connect with the “ sacred energy” of the universe is to let go of one’s self totally and to put aside preoccupation with promoting one’s own ego and selfishness. However, when a person becomes selfless, that person is then open to what can truly be obtained by doing away with personalities, egos, and other obstacles that tend to limit one from true release; The Greeks referred to this process as kenosis or emptying” (page 34).

In the excerpt “ Wisdom” taken from the book *Infinite Life* (2009), Robert Thurman describes the meaning of “ selflessness” in relation to the Buddhist beliefs. Thurman (2009) writes, “ Selflessness” does imply that any one person is considered nobody. “ To find true “ selflessness” we must let go of self-preoccupation and self- centeredness” (Page 464). It is by letting go that the self can find true “ enlightenment”. Similarly, Thurman writes that the Buddha was happy not knowing who he was because this “ selflessness” made him more compassionate toward others. (Page 463) To know true “ selflessness” and “ enlightenment” we must remove the “ I” from our existence. Thurman (2009) goes on to say; “ that when we find true selflessness we discover a true connection between ourselves and others. In <https://assignbuster.com/the-rhetoric-and-introductory-research-writing-philosophy-essay/>

addition, we see everyone as equal to ourselves but at the same time different in their own ways” (Page 473).

## Universe

Karen Armstrong’s view is that, religion has always been a matter of doing rather than thinking. People were able to become more creative and draw on their inner self. Yet, “ it is through the experience of “ nothingness” that we discover the depths of one’s own being” (p. 36). Armstrong expresses the central concern of the self and its connections to the universe as a whole. Energy starts as a consciousness, a self-awareness that nearly every religion in the world experiences, and every scientific theory and or conclusion have based their beliefs on. Self-emptying connects the individual core within our mind and soul with the “ sacred energy” of the universe. This is when our senses are no longer our main focus, freeing us and also brings us closer to our soul and our deep thoughts. Nothingness puts creativity into people’s minds, because the presence of nothing means that there are no wrong ideas or beliefs. One of the ways that self-emptying connects the individual with the sacred energy of the universe can be explored, possible through the energy of deep meditation. Armstrong (2009) remarks that, “ You had to acquire the knack of thinking outside the ordinary” (p. 35). Thinking outside the ordinary is to prepare us for the nothingness, when through our spiritual purification; we will find the reason for our being, and our purpose.

On the other hand, Robert Thurman, author of “ Wisdom” shares his knowledge on the Buddhist tradition, and explains what he has learned throughout the teachings by the Buddha. It is with words such as: “

Selflessness,” and “ Enlightenment,” that we learn why this tradition is important to so many. What exactly is Enlightenment? And how does it differ from salvation? According to Thurman (2009), enlightenment means to look deeper into yourself, to find out what you’re existence means to life, finding the greatest answer, the moment that will finally free us from the unhappiness that one feels from everything negative in life, which keeps us a prisoner within our conscious mind and soul. Reaching enlightenment means to finally experience the quiet and oh so calming sense of peace: “ Being in the zone.”

## Religion

Armstrong suggests that through the history of past civilizations, religious beliefs have always been and still is the link that connects us all. Whether spoken through different tongues or through art, the message is the same: “ religious discourse should not attempt to impart clear information about the divine, and should help us appreciate the limits of language and understanding” (Armstrong, 2009, p. 38). However, it is the proof in religion throughout humanity that not only feeds our beliefs, but provides the essence of knowing that there is another dimension that could ultimately prove that there is a “ Supreme Being.” By exploring the basis of religion in human culture, Armstrong suggests that from ancient times to modern culture mankind’s beliefs have changed and evolved. Humans have gone from believing in many gods that govern our world to a belief in one superior being who created and controls all things. Armstrong also points out that by believing in a “ Supreme Being “ one loses the ability to understand the all-encompassing, wholly transcendent reality around them” (Pg. 38). This “  
<https://assignbuster.com/the-rhetoric-and-introductory-research-writing-philosophy-essay/>

being” is not one that is in the form of man, but instead encompassed all of what man could see, knowing that life was continual yet, more importantly, it was what he could not see. It simply was a matter of knowing that something bigger than man, in fact, does exist.

It is through the studies of Buddhism that Robert Thurman relates his experience in his essay, “ Wisdom.” Thurman speaks of his journey into enlightenment, selflessness, the Buddha, and nirvana. He explains that enlightenment is different from “ salvation” as salvation delivers us from harm, strife, and struggle. On the other hand, “ enlightenment” is realizing selflessness. Selflessness is the awareness that you are now more perceptive; aware, that you have “ opened up your wisdom, and you’ve realized that “ knowing who you are” is the trap, an impossible self-objectification” (p. 462). In contrast, this fascination with wanting to “ know thyself” or self-knowledge “ is actually a fundamental misunderstanding, a delusion”, this revelation is what became a defining moment for the Buddha, thus is at the core of the philosophy of Buddhism (p 466). “ The Buddha called his failure to know who he was “ enlightenment.” that selflessness kindles the sacred fire of compassion; “ the inner self is now energized with compassion and the infinite life becomes your ongoing work of art” (p. 463). This could mean, that helping others will become an art form, that will continue to blossom in various ways. It is through unselfish acts of love and kindness shown to all forms of life, that we feel happiness: “ enlightenment.” In Buddhism, the main focus is the mind. “ Enlightenment consists in realizing that Buddha-nature exists in everything and everyone” (Lieberman). Buddhism leads you beyond your body’s (awareness), senses,

breath, conscious mind, unconscious mind (nothingness) and then to the center of consciousness known as the soul within you, the main source of light and life within you.

## Knowledge

“ The meaning of religion has never really been understood. Religious truth has always been symbolic and its symbols will vary according to context; they will change as society changes, and understanding the reason for these changes. In order to learn the meaning of religion and what mysteries it has to offer; many cultures present their beliefs through forms of “ art, music, or poetry which is transformative” (Nielson, 2011). Karen Armstrong elaborates in great length and detail in her essay, “ Homo Religiosus,” that some of these places were in deep caves that had writings on the walls. For many cultures, keeping religion sacred was to keep religious beliefs secret and holy by hiding them in the catacombs and bowels of the earth. Karen Armstrong shares her knowledge of such art by sharing her experiences in the “ deep caves in the Lascaux labyrinth, she comments that there are about six hundred fresco and fifteen hundred engravings there” (p. 22). Art, such as these paintings on the walls of caves that date back thousands of years ago, have left mankind consistently asking the same ageless questions: Is there a god?; Why are we here? What is our purpose? And is there, life after life? People have come to realize that beyond the obvious for clues about the meanings and secrets contained in various art forms, religion is still man’s creation. Yet, the quest for spirituality is the eternal search for a supreme being, the divine and the connection that binds all living beings.

Armstrong sees religion as an expression of art. Still, with some of us, we can have an out of the body experience, in the conscious sense experience and never consider that this would be a privilege, the unknown or the self-emptiness revealing itself. Armstrong states that “ people become more alive and creative through experiencing nothingness, because it is comparable to a rebirth or rejuvenation of one’s entire being-both spirit and body” (p. 27). Life is all around, as is creativity. Armstrong goes on to say that nothingness, is the moment when one’s conscious mind and body becomes the “ sacred energy” that holds the breath of life that explains everything you had questions about. Yet, many times to experience this nothingness; a person needs to experience a tragedy, the death of a loved one, or face death themselves. In order to feel and understand the meaning of which we are, what is; and accept that there is nothing more, we need to experience nothingness, and understand enlightenment. Selflessness is to understand that you do not know your inner “ self.” the conscious thought that defines your spirit. Whereas, know thy self, defines the outside shell, your persona. This then will lead to discovering selflessness, which is the way to enlightenment.

#### **IV. Consciousness**

The self plays an important role on the Path of Consciousness because it is through the self and its many different aspects that we are aware of our emotional, energetic and vibrational reality. Through awareness of the material self, our third dimensional, human self-aspect, we are aware of our disconnection, fear and alone-ness in a vast Universe that we cannot control. But that is an illusion which lacks the element for transformation,

enlightenment. To become conscious within our highest self-aspects we can 'enlighten' the self, reminding us of our divinity and joining our human self into our spiritual self.

Yet, when we consider the many different aspects of the self, all of which can be expressed as different levels of consciousness, we can choose what we will be aware of and can then apply enlightenment to those areas. Our reality unfolds according to the self-aspect we choose to express. To create a different reality, we have to enlighten this self-aspect and raise its energy. How much enlightenment is required? It depends on which self-aspect we choose our intention for enlightenment and the desired outcome for our post-enlightenment awareness. Our intention for joy, peace and abundance will guide us to the level of enlightenment required to achieve those things. As we choose our path, our self-consciousness can express the highest, most powerful aspects of who we are and our enlightened being will manifest the heaven on earth that can be our path of consciousness.

### The Symbolic Meaning of the Lotus Flower

" Lotus Flower grows in the deep mud, far away from the sun. But, sooner or later, the Lotus reaches the light becoming the most beautiful flower ever. The Lotus flower is in many different cultures, especially in eastern religions, as a symbol of purity, enlightenment, self-regeneration and rebirth. Its characteristics are a perfect analogy for the human condition: even when its roots are in the dirtiest waters, the Lotus produces the beautiful flower" (Campos, 2010).

“ According to Buddhism, every person has the potential to become perfect and enlightened, and it is just a matter of time until each human reaches the light. Buddhists that it’s necessary to be reborn thousands of times, polishing one’s being through many incarnations, until one reaches nirvana - the highest state of consciousness that humans can access” (Campos, 2010).

### What Is Consciousness?

Consciousness is a state of being in the sense that without it, we would not be nor exist nor have such faculties that allow us to make choices.

Consciousness is our existence, our awakened moment. It is the reality between our now and the present. It gives us the awareness of being alive in the present. The science of the mind (religious and spiritual science) is where we look at the mind as an energy form.

### Conclusion

So, where is the mind? This is a question that still mystifies scientists and philosophers. It seems to be widely accepted in some camps that the mind exists as an external reality to our physical form under its own consciousness, yet it remains a part of who we are. Where it exists, no one knows. Yet, it is claimed to be part of the divine essence of universal consciousness. It is the higher self and the real you.