

Consciousness, the self, and personality theory: a critical survey of

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Consciousness, the Self, and Personality Theory: A Critical Survey of Theories of Philosophical Arguments and Modern Psychological Personality Theories.

This paper will concern itself with some main philosophical arguments and dilemmas and how they correlate with modern psychological personality theories. This survey will include dilemmas about the mind and body, the concept of the self, and inner and outer reality. Also, it will discuss six personality theorists and their scientific and philosophical developments. Psychology, science, and philosophy are interconnected and rooted within each other. In the book *Metapsychology*, the author, Sam Rakover, states that "Scientific knowledge grows and changes with time, and all three of the subsystems of science-the philosophical, the theoretical, and the experimental- are constantly developing" (Rakover 7). These developments are systematic processes. Psychology must engage in pursuit of explanation and causality. As well as how the mind interacts with the body. Gathering information, drawing conclusions and finding valid theories; as well as understanding biological and social problems, constitute psychology's philosophical background. The concept of the self is a large factor in the study of personality as well as philosophy. The self, generally speaking, includes subjective experience and conscious awareness. In the book *Philosophy of Mind* the author speaks about self-consciousness, "... the possession of the concept of the self and the ability to use this concept in thinking about oneself" (Guttenplan, 213). This unique quality of human beings allows for the question of thoughts, beliefs, desires, emotions, intentions, memories; along with the responsibility of these qualities, makes us truly unique. The problem with this way of thinking is that it leads to us

thinking we are more than our bodies. That a person is something more than just the physical body. Another problem with our supposed uniqueness is that we 'seem' to have a will, drive, and intention. Samuel Guttenplan continues by saying " persons are self-motivated beings with a considerable degree of autonomy over and above a material body" (Guttenplan 214). This led Renee Descartes to postulate that the only thing he couldn't doubt was his thinking existence, that there is a soul a non-material part of human beings that couldn't be denied. Since our bodies don't make decisions the self must have more than a human body. The pure ego. David Hume had a different idea about the self in relation to experience. In a book of readings called Self and World, Hume is quoted as saying " The idea of the self as an entity that owns experiences should be replaced with the idea of the sum of those experiences themselves" (Ogilvy. 107). One can not know about oneself without experience to show it. He believed that nothing about the self could be concluded without experiential content. The identity of a person is successive perceptions. The self is not any one impression. He is quoted in the book of readings as saying " memory does not so much produce as discover personal identity, to give reason why we can thus extend our identity beyond our memory" (Ogilvy 108). He, however held the Cartesian way of thinking that mental items are the objects of thought in an interior realm. This view invites the inner observer to witness these. Immanuel Kant, in the same book of readings expanded on Hume's ideas, he wanted a differentiation between objectivity and subjectivity attempting to prove that "... there are certain concepts whose application within experience is presupposed by the very possibility of experience" (Ogilvy 144). It is the

judgments that must conform to self-consciousness. There is room within experience for the thought of experience. John Locke's view includes a more temporal idea. The idea that "the sameness of a rational being