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6

Self

Berthe Morisot, *Psyche* (1876). DeAgostini /Superstock

So this proposition, I am, I exist, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind. . . . But what then am I? A thing that thinks.[1]

—René Descartes

Though man is a unique individual,—he is equally the whole, the ideal whole, the subjective existence of society as thought and experienced. He exists in reality as the representation and the real mind of social existence, and as the sum of human manifestations of life.[2]

—Karl Marx

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Who are you? Compare the descriptions or profiles you would provide:
   a. On a job application.
   b. On a first date.
   c. On your Facebook page.
   d. In a talk with your parents, as you are trying to tell them what you have decided to do with your life.
   e. In a trial with you as the defendant, trying to convince the jury of your "good character."
   f. As the "I" in the statement "I think, therefore I am" (Descartes).
2. Explain who you are to a visitor from another planet.
3. Describe yourself as a character in a novel. Describe the gestures, postures, revealing habits, characteristic word phrases you use. Try to imitate yourself, by way of parody. What kind of person would you describe yourself as being?
4. Is it ever possible to know—really know—another person? Imagine what it would be like to suspect that you can never know another person's true feelings, that all his or her movements and gestures are intended to fool you and that you can no longer assume that what the individual means (for example, by a smile or a frown) is what you mean by the same outward movement. How do you feel about this?
5. What is involved in being a "human being"? What (or who) would be included in your characterization? What (or who) would be excluded?
6. You say to yourself, "I am going to move my arm." You decide to do it, and—lo and behold—your arm moves. How did you do that?

The Essential Self

With the concept of rationality, we found ourselves moving away from questions about pure reality and back to questions about ourselves and our own activities. Indeed, with the concept of subjective truth, we found a renewed emphasis on *personal* questions, questions about the self rather than questions about the world. So we find ourselves raising a new set of issues, questioning what seemed to us so clear and unproblematic before. What is the *self*? What is it to be a person? What do you know when you "know yourself"? What is someone telling you to do when he or she tells you "just to be yourself"?

FROM THE SOURCE: On Becoming Human
Confucius, from *Analects*, sixth century BCE

Through self-discipline and observing ritual propriety . . . one becomes authoritative in one's conduct. If for the space of a day one were able to accomplish this, the whole empire would defer to this authoritative model. Becoming authoritative in one's conduct is self-originating—how could it originate with others?[3]

Our conceptions of self, like our conceptions of God, religion, and the nature of reality, turn out to be extremely varied, different not only for different people and cultures but for each of us from time to time and in different contexts. For example, in Opening Question 1, you probably described yourself on a job application as an industrious worker, with so many years of school and so much experience, with a certain grade point average and a certain amount of ambition. In defending yourself in court, on the other hand, you probably thought very little of your achievements in school; rather, you tried to define yourself in terms of your good deeds, your good intentions, the number of your friends, and the fact that you tend to be gentle with children and animals. To see how bound up with their context such descriptions tend to be, we need only switch them, with shocking results. Imagine yourself giving an employer the information you would more appropriately give to a person on a date. What would your Facebook friends think if your postings only described your work experience

and grade point average, the sorts of things you might list in a job application? Potential employers, on the other hand, have sometimes been appalled by what they discover about job candidates on Facebook—does this mean that you *should* only put on Facebook descriptions of yourself and your activities that would be appropriate to mention at a job interview? Or consider how you would feel about a supposedly close friend who told you at great length only about his or her achievements in school. What we think of ourselves and consider to be significant about ourselves—and others—depends to a great extent on the context in which we are trying to explain who we are.

Yet most of us have an undeniable sense that, beneath the various descriptions of ourselves that we produce for various occasions, there is within us a "real self," a self that does not vary from context to context. In the Judeo-Christian tradition (and before that, in some ancient religions and in the thinking of the Greeks, among others), this invariant self, our "real self," has been called the **soul**. Philosophers have called the "real self" the **essential self**—that is, the set of characteristics that defines a particular person.

The experience of our real, or essential, self is familiar to us in a great many circumstances. For example, if we are forced to go to a party with people we don't like and do not feel comfortable with, if we are forced to behave in an artificial way, to talk in language that is more vulgar than usual or more sophisticated than usual, to talk about subjects that do not interest us at all, we might well describe our experience in phrases such as "I couldn't be myself" or "I felt like a phony." As another example, picture yourself filling out one of those dozens of questionnaires that are forced on you at so many junctures, requiring you to list your birth date, home address, sex, major and perhaps grades, military service, awards, marital status, and so on. A natural reaction to such forms is that they are irrelevant to knowing who you really are. They don't ask the "right" questions, and they leave out any reference to what you and your friends think is most important about you. In other words, they don't even begin to get at your essential self, the personal self that is the "real you." This chapter is about the nature of this "real you" and your relationships with other people.

As we have found in other philosophical investigations, the most obvious answer often disappears as soon as we begin to follow our thinking to its consequences, and what once seemed simple turns into a wide variety of answers that sometimes compete with one another. For example, one answer to the question "Who am I?" or "What is my real, essential self?" is the religious answer; you really are just a soul before God, and all else—your worldly goods and accomplishments, even your physical body and its various pleasures and pains—is insignificant, unimportant. Some people, on the other hand, think that to be a human being is to be just another animal, caught up in the process of staying alive and enjoying itself. A very different answer emerges from Descartes and many other modern philosophers; they say the real self is the conscious self—that is, the thinking self, the self that is aware of itself. A powerful contemporary view of the self insists that there is, ultimately, no set self, that "the self" is a process of creation that goes on as long as we are alive. Another view (this one from Buddhism) teaches us that the self is ultimately unreal, that there is no self at all, only an illusion of one. Finally, there are views that suggest that the self is not an individual entity but rather part of a larger Self or the product of an entire society. Your self, in other words, is not really your own, after all.

In this chapter we will consider some of these accounts of the nature of the self, beginning with the debate about whether the self can be identified with the body or with consciousness, and going on to consider the extent to which emotions are essential to who one is. In everyday contexts, we tend to refer to ourselves as both minds (with personalities) and as bodies (as when we say, "I was in the computer store"), and this raises a major philosophical question: how are our minds and bodies related to each other? Accordingly, we will proceed to consider various proposals regarding the connection between the body and the mind and the implications these answers have for what "the self" amounts to. Observing that many of these accounts fail to account for "the whole self," we conclude by considering alternative pictures of the self that might do justice to this broader idea of our identity, including Sartre's idea of the self as a choice, the no-self view of Buddhism, the multilayered self, the social self, and the relational self.

Self as Body, Self as Consciousness

But what then am I? A thing that thinks. What is that? A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions.[4]

—René Descartes

A person's **self-identity** is the way he or she characterizes his or her essential self. This includes both a general characterization—as a human being, as a man or woman, as a creature before God, as an American, as a Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or Jew, or as a member of any other large organization or group—and a particular description—as the tallest person in the class, as the winner of the Olympic gold medal in pole vaulting in Athens in 2004, as the person who is lucky enough to be married to J, and so on. Sometimes we make these essential characteristics explicit, but even when we don't, they almost always enter into our behavior and our attitudes toward ourselves. Most of us would not think of naming our height as part of our essential self-identity; but, in fact, if we think of the way we stand or walk and if we pay attention to our feelings when we are with people considerably taller or shorter than we are, it becomes evident that such seemingly unimportant characteristics may indeed enter into our conceptions of our essential self. So, too, a person's physical condition is usually a key ingredient in his or her conception of self and his or her self-identity, a fact that becomes obvious, for example, when a person has been ill for an extended period of time.

But to what extent should we equate the self with the body? Derek Parfit, a contemporary British philosopher, offers a science-fictional scenario involving the "teleporter" from the science fiction television series *Star Trek*, as a means of considering how we understand the relationship between self and body. The teleporter

is a computerized machine that conveys a person from one place to another without passing through the space between the two locations. It first "dematerializes" the person's body, turning it into an energy pattern. The teleporter then "beams" the energy to the new location and reconstructs the person's body, particle by particle. Now imagine, Parfit proposes, being transported from one location to another by means of the teleporter. When you arrive, are you still you, even though every one of your original particles was destroyed? Would you still exist (Parfit doesn't think so), or is what now exists a clone (Parfit's view)?

Keep in mind that over the course of our lifetime, we lose cells and new cells take the place of (at least most) of the cells we have lost. Would it make sense to say that at the point at which all of your cells have regenerated, you are actually a clone of the person you were when you were born? What if the teleporter malfunctions (as it sometimes does in certain episodes of the *Star Trek* series) and your original self gets left intact but a duplicate is reassembled, particle by particle, in another location? Does this mean that you now have two bodies, and that you are two places at once?

Even the idea of you "having two bodies" takes the self to be essentially something other than our physical nature. This is in keeping with much of the Western philosophical tradition and much of Western religious thought, which plays down such physical traits, emphasizing the more spiritual and mental aspects of our existence. Do your intuitions agree? Suppose, to choose an extreme example, your best friend turned into a frog. (Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and both versions of the film *The Fly* present similar cases, in each case with tragic results for the person transformed.) What characteristics would your friend have to retain in order for you to still consider this frog as your friend? The frog would certainly have to display signs of having your friend's mind, most clearly by continuing to talk, if that were possible; then you could recognize that it was indeed your friend, trying to communicate with you and explain what it is that he or she was thinking.

We tolerate considerable changes in a person's physical appearance as long as his or her mind seems to remain the same; in fact, we are used to stories, cartoons, and imaginative examples of a person turning into almost anything, from a frog to a cloud to any of a large variety of plants, as long as somehow the person's mind remains intact. (Indeed, the idea that the person has endured despite the physical transformation is the premise of *The Metamorphosis* and *The Fly*.) On the other hand, it takes very little alteration in a person's mental capacities for us to complain that he or she seems like a different person or that we don't know that person at all anymore.

The theory that the essential self of self-identity is the mind, or self-consciousness, can be traced back to ancient times, but its best-known defender is the philosopher René Descartes, who presented a simple but elegant argument that the individual self is the first thing that each of us can know for certain, and that this self, whose existence is indubitable (see Chapter 4, "Descartes"; Chapter 5, "René Descartes and the Method of Doubt"), is nothing else but the **thinking self**, the self that is aware of itself. But it was in Descartes, too, that we saw the origins of the dilemma that would lead to Hume's skepticism—the position that we in fact never know anything but our own ideas and experiences.

Now, with reference to the self, a related problem emerges—can we ever know that there is any other self besides ourselves? We find here, too, a stance comparable to Hume's skepticism about knowledge of the world; it is the position called **solipsism**, which says that indeed nothing exists but one's own mind. And like skepticism, solipsism is a position that most philosophers find intolerable. The problem is this: if one agrees that one's self should be identified with one's consciousness and that each person can know only his or her own consciousness, how is it possible to reach out beyond ourselves to anyone else? Our bodies can touch each other and make contact, but our minds cannot. We will return to this concern below, after discussing the basic view that the self is consciousness.

FROM THE SOURCE: The Sameness of Self

John Locke, from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1689

The identity of the same man consists in nothing but a participation of the same continued life, by constantly fleeting particles of matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized body. . . . For if the identity of soul alone makes the same man; and there be nothing in the nature of matter why the individual spirit may not be united to different bodies, it will be possible that those men, living in distant ages, and of different tempers, may have been the same man. . . .

To find wherein personal identity consists, we must consider what person stands for;—which, I think, is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it: it being impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive. When we see hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate, or will anything, we know that we do so. Thus it is always as to our present sensations and perceptions: and by this every one is to himself that which he calls self. . . . For, since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes every one to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational being: and as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that the action was done.[5]

The theory that the self is consciousness has several ingenious variations. The English philosopher John Locke, for example, argued that the self was not the whole of consciousness but a specific part of the mind—namely, our memory. Thus, the self is that part of the mind that remembers its past. This explains how it is that we think of ourselves as the same person over time, despite even radical changes. Our friend-turned-frog is certainly still our friend if the animal

members all the experiences it had as a person before its transformation. On ıe other hand, we could certainly be suspicious—at the least—if someone who aimed to be our friend could not remember any of the experiences we had ıared in the past. (There are, of course, cases of amnesia, or loss of memory; but hat is also true of such cases is that the person no longer knows who he or she , so it is not a question of having a different set of memories but rather of having ɔ self-identifying memories at all.)

FROM THE SOURCE: What Is It Like, to Be a Bat?
Thomas Nagel, from *Mortal Questions*, 1979

I assume we all believe that bats have experience. After all, they are mammals, and there is no more doubt that they have experience than that mice or pigeons or whales have experience. I have chosen bats instead of wasps or flounders because if one travels too far down the phylogenetic tree, people gradually shed their faith that there is experience there at all. Bats, although more closely related to us than those other species, nevertheless present a range of activity and a sensory apparatus so different from ours that the problem I want to pose is exceptionally vivid (though it certainly could be raised with other species). Even without the benefit of philosophical reflection, anyone who has spent some time in an enclosed space with an excited bat knows what it is to encounter a fundamentally alien form of life.

I have said that the essence of the belief that bats have experience is that there is something that it is like to be a bat. Now we know that most bats . . . perceive the external world primarily by sonar, . . . detecting the reflections, from objects within range, of their own rapid, subtly modulated, high-frequency shrieks. Their brains are designed to correlate the outgoing impulses with the subsequent echoes, and the information thus acquired enables bats to make precise discriminations of distance, size, shape, motion, and texture comparable to those we make by vision. But bat sonar, though clearly a form of perception, is not similar in its operation to any sense that we possess, and there is no reason to suppose that it is subjectively like anything we can experience or imagine. This appears to create difficulties for the notion of what it is like to be a bat. . . .

Our own experience provides the basic material for our imagination, whose range is therefore limited. It will not help to try to imagine that one has webbing on one's arms, which enables one to fly around at dusk and dawn catching insects in one's mouth; that one has very poor vision, and perceives the surrounding world by a system of reflected high-frequency sound signals; and that one spends the day hanging upside down by one's feet in an attic. Insofar as I can imagine this (which is not very far), it tells me only what it would be like for me to behave as a bat behaves. But that is not the question. I want to know what it is like for a bat to be a bat.[6]

The theory that self-identity is determined by memories has its curious difficulties. To take a far-fetched but thought-provoking example, suppose Mr. Jones has an emergency operation in which his injured brain is replaced by the brain of Mrs. Smith (just deceased). The resulting person has the body, face, and general appearance of Mr. Jones, but the consciousness, memories, and knowledge of Mrs. Smith. Who is the resulting person? It doesn't seem to make sense to say that it is Mrs. Smith, but neither does it make sense to say that it is Mr. Jones. The example becomes even more complicated if you picture yourself in the position of Mrs. Smith, who awakens after a mysterious lapse in consciousness to find herself with the body of a man; would she know for certain (as the self-consciousness theory would suggest) that she still is, indeed, the same person? Or has her self-identity broken down entirely here?

FROM THE SOURCE: On Descartes
Monty Python, English comedy troupe
(first television appearance 1969)

Detective-Inspector René "Doubty" Descartes absentmindedly flicked grey-white ash from the sleeve of his only vicuña jacket and stared moodily across the pigeon-violated rooftops of Whitehall. "I muse," he thought. "Therefore . . . The ginger telephone shrilled its urgent demand. Descartes, rudely awakened from his reverie, snatched the receiver to his ear.

"Descartes here," he posited.

"Sorry to interrupt, sir." The familiar tones of Sergeant Warnock floated down the line. "Sergeant Warnock here."

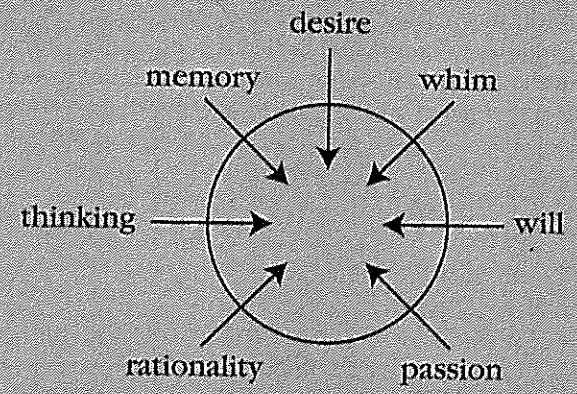
"How can you be sure?"

"I think I am Sergeant Warnock, therefore I am Sergeant Warnock," replied Sergeant Warnock confidently. Some of Doubty's thinking was beginning to rub off.[7]

Questions of self-identity give rise to paradoxes of this sort, for what they show us is that our sense of self-identity is far more complex than it seemed at first. If a single characteristic was all there were to the essential self, then self-identity would be that characteristic, no matter what else changed. If memory alone gave us our self-identity, then any being with the same memories, even in a different body, even a frog's, or even in two different people, would be the same. But we tend to have serious reservations about these cases, and the reason is that we can see that many different aspects of a person enter into our concept of self-identity. "I think, therefore I am," in all of its variations ("I remember, therefore I am who I am") is too simplistic to capture the whole of our sense of ourselves.

APPLY THE CONCEPTS: Alternative Conceptions of Self as Consciousness

Which is most essential to you?



Adapted from: Bergmann, F. *On Being Free*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979.

The Self and Its Emotions

Although the views that the self is defined primarily through thinking and memory have dominated most self-consciousness theories, other aspects of consciousness might also define the self. Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, for example, defined the self in terms of the passions. He thought that one's most important mission in life was to cultivate the self by cultivating one's passions, in particular, a passionate commitment to God.

Other philosophers have suggested alternative, nonreligious goals in the project of building a self. Friedrich Nietzsche, for instance, insisted that we organize our various traits on the model of an artwork, with every part contributing to the aesthetic value of the whole, and philosophers ever since Aristotle and Confucius have urged us to cultivate our ethical sensibilities, our virtues. (See Chapters 8 and 11.) But the idea of cultivating our passions or, as we would say, our emotions, is subject to a serious objection. Our emotions are often thought to be irrational. (Kierkegaard thought that this was one of their virtues.) It is common knowledge that our emotions sometimes make us misperceive the way things really are and motivate us to do things that, with just a moment's clear thinking, we certainly would not do. But the idea that emotions are irrational—and therefore the self that is cultivated through them would be irrational too—is itself subject to objection. Not all emotions are irrational, and thus the self we create through them is not (or not entirely) irrational either.

FROM THE SOURCE: The Passionate Self

Søren Kierkegaard, from *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 1846

It is impossible to exist without passion, unless we understand the word "exist" in the loose sense of a so-called existence. . . . Eternity is the winged horse, infinitely fast, and time is a worn-out nag; the existing individual is the driver. That is to say, he is such a driver when his mode of existence is not an existence loosely so called; for then he is no driver, but a drunken peasant who lies asleep in the wagon and lets the horses take care of themselves. To be sure, he also drives and is a driver, and so there are perhaps many who—also exist.[8]

A long tradition sees the emotions as foreign to the self or as an inferior part of the self. Freud, for example, located emotions in the *id* ("it") as opposed to the *ego* ("I"), suggesting that they threaten the integrity of the self rather than being part of it. Plato had a more modest view. He thought that the emotions are the spirited part of the soul that needed to be governed by reason. (He suggested the famous image of a charioteer reining in the unruly horses of appetite and emotion.) Aristotle had a more conciliatory view; he insisted that emotions are an essential part of the good life—that is, having the *right* emotions in the right circumstances. And that means that the emotions are not separate from the self or soul, but essential constituents of it.

FROM THE SOURCE: Passion and Reason

Reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions.[9]

—David Hume

As if every passion did not contain its quantum of reason.[10]

—Nietzsche

Nevertheless, the opposition of emotion and rationality continues to cast doubt on the desirability of emotion in the cultivation of the self. The eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher David Hume, for example, defended the radical view that "reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions," thus turning the Platonic view (that reason should govern the passions) upside down. But the opposition of emotion and rationality remains. Are they in fact opposites? Or does every emotion, as Nietzsche writes, "contain its quantum of reason"?

The question is, what is an emotion? It is commonly thought that emotions are *feelings* and that feelings by their very nature are unintelligent and irrational. Perhaps we should say that they are nonrational, without any intelligence at all. This view, however, has been often challenged. Recent research and thinking

about emotions have dramatically changed this picture. Today we talk about the "intelligence" of emotions, and good evidence shows that, without emotion, we would not be capable of rational decision making. Individuals who have brain lesions that interfere with normal emotional activity are not more rational, but instead are incapable of making sound decisions. Emotion is what enables us to determine which considerations are more important than others. Our emotions give us insights, even knowledge. Sometimes, as Blaise Pascal said, "the heart has its reasons, of which reason knows nothing." Moreover, the very idea that our emotions "make us" do such and such is under scrutiny. To a larger extent than we usually realize, we are *responsible* for our emotions. Psychologists talk of everyday efforts we make to "regulate" our emotions; and probably in our own experience, we have had experiences of nursing an emotion (anger, for example) by dwelling on thoughts that intensify it (for example, recollections of slights and annoying features of the target of anger).

Modern debate about the emotions begins with the philosopher-psychologist William James, who wrote a famous essay called "What Is an Emotion?" James argued that emotions are feelings, but a very specific kind of feeling. They are the feelings caused by changes in the body—for example, the heart pounding faster, hormonal changes, changes in skin sensitivity—that in turn were caused by some upsetting perception.

FROM THE SOURCE: Defining Emotion

William James, from "What Is an Emotion?" 1884

Our natural way of thinking about these coarser emotions is that the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression. My thesis on the contrary is that the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion. *Common sense says, we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep. . . . The hypothesis here to be defended says that we feel sorry because we cry.*[11]

James was immediately challenged by others, including fellow pragmatist John Dewey, who argued that the variety of emotions was much more impressive than such simple physiological changes would indicate. The differentiation of emotions could not depend on mere feelings of physiological states, but required some reference to the situation and the person's engagement in it. So anger, for instance, is not just the feeling of energized aggression, but the perception of, for example, someone who has been offensive or insulting. Love is not just a soft mushy feeling, but necessarily directed at someone who is its object, one's beloved. This aspect of emotions, by which they are directed to the world, is called their intentionality. Every emotion, it is now thought, consists of both feeling and intentionality, typically together with an impulse to action as well.

Thus, Aristotle defines anger as "an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight directed without justification towards what concerns oneself or towards what concerns one's friends." Anticipating the modern notion of intentionality, he adds that anger is always "felt toward some particular individual, e.g. Cleon, and not 'man' in general."[12]

MASTER THE CONCEPT: Intentionality

Intentionality is "aboutness." Emotions and other mental states are always about—or "directed toward"—things, people, or states of affairs. (The term *intentionality* comes from the scholastics and is derived from Latin *intentio*: "I point at, I turn my attention to.") Intentionality is sometimes taken to differentiate the mental from the physical, as only mental states (and mind-related matters such as representations and language) have it.

FROM THE SOURCE: Drop into the Magical

Jean-Paul Sartre, from *The Emotions: A Sketch of a Theory*, 1939

Emotion is a certain way of apprehending the world. . . . An emotion is a transformation of the world. . . . We try to change the world, that is, to live as if the connection between things and their potentialities were not ruled by deterministic processes, but by magic. . . . We shall call emotion an abrupt drop of consciousness into the magical.[13]

But if emotions essentially involve an engagement with the world, this in turn requires a certain modicum of intelligence. One has to recognize that a situation or a person is offensive, that a person is lovable, or that one is oneself blameworthy (for example, in guilt and shame). But recognition implies both the possibility of getting it wrong and the possibility of getting it right. Thus, an emotion is rational when one accurately recognizes and evaluates the situation or the person. An emotion is irrational when one gets it wrong, perhaps because one is deceiving oneself about the true nature of the case. Of course, an emotion could be irrational for other reasons as well. One might accurately recognize the situation but be imprudent in expressing the emotion. Overtly getting angry with one's boss or professor (during the term), for example, is usually a bad idea.

Emotions play an important role in shaping our identity. A person's identity is not determined just by what he or she knows or remembers or how he or she thinks. A person's identity is also determined by what he or she *cares* about. It is determined by which emotions are most prevalent and how they get expressed. Who we are depends, at least in part, on how we feel about things.

The Egocentric Predicament

Given our seemingly intimate knowledge of ourselves, we might wonder whether we can ever really know if the experiences we have in our minds in fact correspond to the world outside us—the problem of skepticism we discussed in the preceding chapter. This problem also gives rise to the awful possibility of *solipsism*, which we introduced at the beginning of this chapter as the view that only one's own mind exists. What, then, of other people? This odd question has been designated by philosophers as the **egocentric predicament**: *egocentric* because it begins with the claim that the individual self is at the center of all our experience, and *predicament* because it is indeed an intolerable idea that we cannot ever get beyond our own self to know the existence of others (or of the external world). In recent Anglo-American philosophy, the same problem has been called the "problem of other minds," which is, essentially, "How can I ever know of the existence of any mind other than my own?"

This curious problem begins with an assumption we have taken for granted throughout most of this book: we know our own mind directly and beyond any doubt. (There may be—according to Freud, for example—certain aspects of our mind that are unconscious, or unknown to us, but even Freud accepted the claim that we *generally* know what directly is in our mind, which is why the idea of unconscious mental processes became such a startling discovery.) Descartes's "I think, therefore I am" is essentially a statement of this direct and indubitable knowledge we have of our own consciousness; but even Hume, who rejected the existence of the self, and Sartre, who thought that the self is created, began with this assumption. ("Consciousness is transparent," wrote Sartre. "It has no corners and nothing in it can hide from us.") But if we know our own conscious mind directly and without any doubts, it does not follow that we know other people's minds directly at all. We have to *infer* what other people are thinking or feeling; we have to figure it out. How can we do this?

A standard answer, first formulated as a theory by John Stuart Mill over a century ago, is that we know what is going on in other people's minds—indeed, that we can figure out that other people have minds at all—by **analogy**. An analogy is a comparison in which certain similarities are pointed out with the conclusion that there must therefore be other similarities as well. For example, if someone draws an analogy between a college and a business (because, let's say, both need some principles of good management), we may expect other similarities to appear as well: the fact that both produce something that is purchased by consumers, for example, and the fact that both employ a workforce whose responsibility it is to produce the product as efficiently as possible. But, of course, there are **disanalogies**, too, comparisons in which the apparent similarities break down. Knowledge, for example, isn't like most products; any number of people can have the same knowledge, whereas only a limited number of people can share a particular automobile, television set, or toothbrush.

The argument that we can know of other people and their minds by analogy proceeds according to the comparison between our bodies and other people's bodies or our own faces and gestures and other people's faces and gestures. Our bodies, faces, and gestures are quite obviously similar; this similarity is the basis of the analogy. You sometimes frown; another person sometimes frowns. You sometimes wince in pain; the other person sometimes winces, too, and in much the same circumstances in which you would wince. Now, you know that when you frown it is usually because you disapprove of something or because you are worried about something. You know, therefore, that your mental state is correlated with certain features and movements of your body. You also see that the other person has similar features and makes similar movements with his or her body, and so you infer from these similarities a further similarity: namely, that the other person is feeling or thinking as you are when that person's features and movements are similar to your features and movements. That is, you know that, in your own case, your mental states (M) and your bodily movements (B) are correlated like this:

M:B ("M is related to B.")

You also know that the other person's bodily states are similar to yours:

M:B::x:B ("My M is related to my B as the M of another person, x, is related to that person's B.")

What you must infer, then, is the *x*, and what you infer, of course, is the other person's M. By analogy, from the similarities between your bodies and the correlation between your mental states and your body, you infer that the other person has similar mental states. The other person, too, has a mind.

This argument seems persuasive until we consider the possibility of disanalogies. Is it possible, for example, to imagine a being with human form who does everything that I do and in the same circumstances, but who does not have a mind? Many philosophers have argued that robots could be like this; they can be programmed to behave just as we do and designed to look just like us, but they have no mind (at least no conscious mind). (Some people turn the argument about robots the other way, too: because robots can be made to behave as we do in similar circumstances, the argument goes, robots may have the same thoughts and feelings we do.) But at least this much is clear: we can imagine without difficulty that the people who surround us are not in fact human and do not have minds. I cannot doubt the existence of my own mind, according to Descartes. But I can, by this argument, doubt the existence of other minds. Because we can never get into the position of another person to see if indeed he or she has a mind, how can we ever check our analogy? How can you ever know that you yourself are not the only conscious being, the only mind, the only self, in the universe? On the one hand, this solipsistic conclusion is obviously absurd; on the other hand, the argument that we know of other people and their minds by analogy seems to leave it, at least in theory, an open question. What has gone wrong here?

One possibility is that the argument from analogy goes wrong in the very place we most expected it to be unquestionable, in its very first premise, in the idea that we know our own mind directly and beyond any doubt. Let's take another look, therefore, at the assumption we have so far nowhere questioned. Are we indeed "directly" and indubitably aware of our own minds? Is the

existence of our own self indubitable, whereas the existence of all other selves is an open question? What is the presupposition of this seemingly unassailable assumption, "I think, therefore I am"?

A number of philosophers have suggested that the proper formulation of Descartes's famous slogan ought to be just "There are thoughts." Descartes was not justified, they have argued, in assuming that if there are thoughts, there must be a thinker. But this of course is just what we have been assuming, too, in talking about the individual self. Each of us, the assumption goes, must have a self. We will return to this assumption later on when we discuss alternatives to the theory of self as consciousness.

The Mind-Body Problem

The identification or the location of the self in consciousness, as opposed to the identification of the self with our physical body, raises a tantalizing and very difficult metaphysical and scientific question: what is the relationship between our minds and our bodies; how do they interact? You remember that Descartes believed that mind and body were two different *substances,* but substances, by their very nature, cannot interact. What's more, Descartes insisted that he could conceive of his mind existing without a body, and it was clear that human bodies could exist (for example, as corpses) without minds. If mind and body are separable in this way, what is going on when they are conjoined? This question is referred to as the **mind-body problem.**

Descartes never solved this problem to his satisfaction, and the elaborate metaphysics of Baruch Spinoza and Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz were, in part, attempts to solve it for him. If substances cannot interact, then it must be that either (1) mind and body do not interact, or (2) mind and body are not separate substances. Leibniz defends the first option, arguing that mental events and physical events only *seem* to interact. They in fact stand in "preestablished harmony," like a film and its soundtrack (not his analogy). The two are perfectly coordinated and seem to be causally related, but in fact they are two separate "tracks" on the same tape. Spinoza chooses the second option, suggesting that mind and body are not in fact distinct but rather are two different attributes of one and the same substance. His theory, accordingly, is sometimes called *dual aspect theory*—that is, mind and body are two different aspects of one and the same substance (according to him, the only substance).

These metaphysical speculations seem to us somewhat quaint, but they can be readily translated into extremely troubling questions with which contemporary science and philosophy continuously struggle. Mind and body may or may not be two different substances, but in our experience mental events (for example, a pain) are very different from the physical events occurring in the brain. Moreover, the question of how an occurrence in the body might cause an experience in the mind (or vice versa) seems to be as much a mystery to us as it was to Descartes.

Since the seventeenth century, however, there have been some momentous advances in science, and the terms of the question have altered accordingly. First, it was only in the twentieth century that we gained any substantial knowledge about the workings of the brain and the central nervous system. Second, and even more recently, advances in computer technology (only dimly envisioned by Descartes and some of his contemporaries, notably Pascal) have provided a promising analogue to the traditional mind-body problem. These recent discoveries have tended to shift attention to updated versions of Spinoza's solution to the mind-body problem—his idea that mental events and physical (brain) events are not in fact so different but rather intimately related, perhaps even identical.

Yet the old questions remain, and it is by no means clear exactly what it means to say that a mental event and a physical event are identical. Indeed, one can still find defenders of each of the five traditional solutions to the problem, once discussed in the metaphysical language of substances but now debated in the contemporary terms of neurology, cognitive science, and computer technology:

1. Mind and body in fact do interact; physical events (a pin in the finger) do cause mental events (a pain) and mental events (deciding to go to the store) do cause physical events (walking toward the store) (Descartes). The question is how they do this.
2. Mind and body do not interact; mental events and physical events occur simultaneously, perhaps coordinated by God in a "preestablished harmony" (Leibniz).
3. There are no mental events (the materialist solution). There are only brain processes, and "mental events" are just descriptions of these brain processes from the unusual perspective of the person who has the brain.
4. There are no physical events (the idealist solution). Brain processes, too, are only ideas in the mind.
5. Mental events and physical events are in fact the same thing viewed in different ways (Spinoza's solution).

All five solutions are clumsy and obscure, though most of them still have adherents. There are still a great many **dualists** around—that is, those who continue to argue that mental events and physical events are wholly separate, and there are still committed idealists. Today, views about the mind-body problem, however, tend to fall into one of three general categories, each of them a version of the thesis that mind and body are not really separate substances. Not surprisingly, Spinoza is often invoked as the ancestor of all such solutions. The three types of solution, each to be discussed in turn, are behaviorism, identity theory, and functionalism.

Behaviorism

The claim that there are no mental events may initially sound nonsensical, but great philosophers (and psychologists), driven to desperate lengths by Descartes's problem, have sometimes chosen this solution as the most palatable alternative. One sophisticated theory denying that there are any mental events, coupled with

the insistence that there are only various patterns of behavior (some of which we label with mentalistic names such as *belief, desire,* and *anger*), is called **behaviorism.** This view had strong adherents in the early to middle twentieth century, and although its popularity has declined, there are still some behaviorists who flatly insist that there are no mental events, or at least, no such events that can legitimately function in a scientific theory.

The crude behaviorist might simply deny the existence of mental events, but it is obvious to anyone who thinks that thoughts exist in some sense, at least while he or she is thinking them. (Thus Descartes's famous "I think, therefore I am," in which he denies that it is possible to think and intelligibly deny that one is thinking.) The modern behaviorist is more subtle. Of course mental events "exist" after a fashion—that is, we have experiences that we call desires, beliefs, emotions, moods, impulses, and the like that are real and undeniable—but they don't exist in the way that most people think they do. Philosophical behaviorist Gilbert Ryle, rejecting Cartesian dualism, which he describes as positing "the ghost in the machine," also denies the existence of "mental" events in the sense of "occult," that is, "mysterious," inner occurrences. What we call *mental,* he claims, is a pattern or a disposition to behave in certain ways. To name a mental event is actually to make a prediction about a person's behavior. Thus, to say a man is thirsty is not to name some unseen event in his mind but rather to predict that he will get a drink as soon as he can. To say that a person is in love is not to name a feeling but to predict a familiar sequence of activities, from agitation in the presence of the loved one to writing long letters in the middle of the night. That some reality corresponds to what we call mental events is not denied; but this reality is relocated, no longer in some mysterious place called "the mind," but in the perfectly tangible body of an acting organism.

MEET THE PHILOSOPHER: Gilbert Ryle (1900–1978)

Gilbert Ryle was an Oxford don, the author of *The Concept of Mind* (1949), and a leading proponent of philosophical behaviorism. According to Ryle, mental-type terms in fact refer to *dispositions to behave,* not to "ghostly private occurrences." A disposition is a tendency that can be triggered in certain circumstances. "Glass is brittle" refers to a disposition such that glass, when struck, will shatter into tiny pieces. "People fall in love" refers to a disposition such that men and women, when together in certain circumstances (called "romantic"), will begin to act ridiculous, a prelude to spending their lives together.

MASTER THE CONCEPT: Behaviorism

Behaviorism is the view that all talk of mental events should be translated into talk about tendencies to behave in certain ways.

For some mental events, behaviorism is perfectly reasonable. For example, a person's intelligence is not anything he or she experiences; it is a tendency to perform well in certain kinds of tests. A person's motives—we know since Freud—might not be known at all, but we can tell what they are by the acts they motivate. Behaviorism runs into more of a problem with such sensations as pain, seeing bright light, or hearing a tune in the key of C. We can agree that these sensations may be manifested in dispositions to behave in certain ways—wincing, putting on sunglasses, or starting to whistle—but we will probably insist that there is still something irreducibly mental that lies behind these dispositions, that behaviorism can't be the whole story. Much of what we call the mind may indeed be better understood as dispositions to behave in certain ways. But some mental events seem to be *felt,* and with them the mind-body problem emerges once again, as tough as ever.

Identity Theory and Eliminative Materialism

For many years, the increasingly refined research in neurology has made clear something Descartes and his friends could not have known: specific mental events are correlated with specific brain events. This picture is made much more complicated by the fact that several alternative brain events may be linked to the same sort of mental event, and in the case of brain damage, it is even possible for new mental pathways to be related to mental events that had previously been associated with others. Nevertheless, we now know that there is a strict correlation between mental events, from simple pains to raging ambition, and certain processes in the brain. The mind-body problem is evident here: How are these connected?

Correlation is not the same as connection. Two things can be correlated (the mayor of New York eats lunch every day at exactly the same time that the mayor of San Diego eats breakfast) without having any connection. Correlated mental and brain events might be like that, but if they were that would make any scientific understanding of the mind from the physical (as opposed to psychological) standpoint impossible. Perhaps mental events and physical events do cause one another, but then we are still faced with the question of how such different things can do so. The **identity theory** cuts through all such questions and says that mental events (pains, for example) and brain processes are *the same thing.* They have different properties, which deserve different descriptions ("It hurts" versus "The sodium level is back down now"), but they are nevertheless the same. Here is another case of identity:

Water is H_2O.

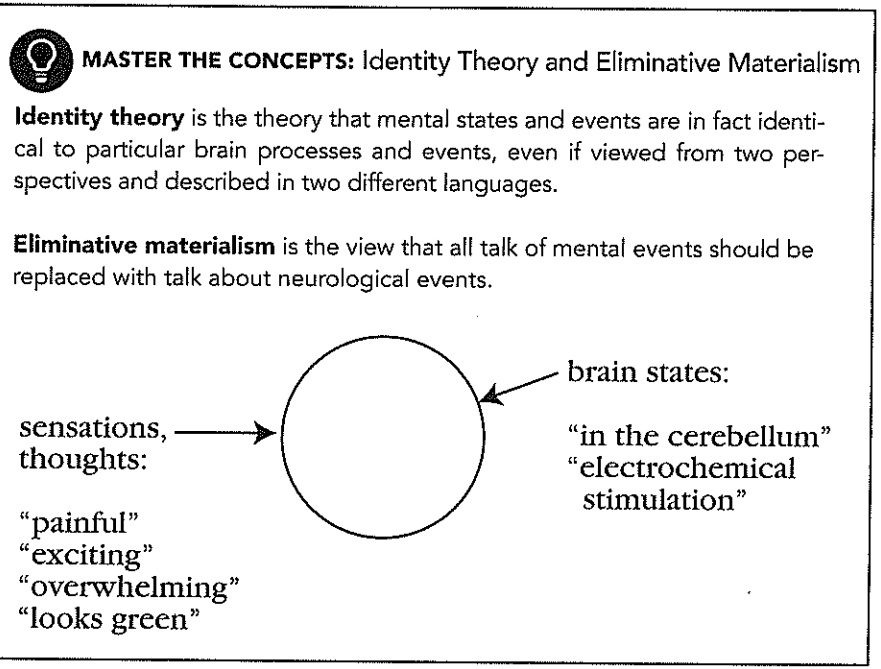
Now, it is clear that a description of water—as "wet," as "cold," as "filling the basin"—is quite different from the description of hydrogen and oxygen atoms and the way they combine to form a certain molecule. Nevertheless, it makes perfectly good sense to say that water is H_2O, even if the properties of water—as we normally describe it—and the properties of the molecules—as a scientist would describe them—are different.

Identity theory is still much debated. It solves the mind-body problem, but it raises other questions just as perplexing. For example, it is usually argued that two things are identical only if they have *all* properties in common (a principle propounded by Leibniz and sometimes called *Leibniz's law*). But it is clear that pains and brain processes do not have most properties in common; for example, we can locate a brain process at a certain place in the brain. There is no such exact localizability for pains. (But then again, if you are in Seattle, it is clear that your headache is not in Portland.) On the basis of such arguments, some theorists have rejected the identity theory. They would say that water and H_2O *can* be described in the same terms, even if they often are not, but that there is no way to describe a pain in the language of brain science and no way to describe a brain process in the language of sensations.

Still other theorists have suggested that the terminology we use to talk about pains and other mental states is just a curious remnant from the old days, when people knew much less about brains. In the future, they suggest, we will drop the language of sensations and perhaps talk comfortably about something such as "having an F-stimulation of my cerebral cortex, process 4.21-B." The view that our everyday talk that makes reference to mental events is actually referring to physical, or neurological, states and that we should replace the former with the latter is called **eliminative materialism**. Eliminative materialists argue that we have absorbed misleading ideas about mental events (the "occult" ideas that Ryle dismissed) through our language, which enshrines many primitive notions about the world. Now that we have learned more about the physical processes that are involved in what we call "mental states," however, we should endeavor to replace our everyday mentalistic language with more precise neurological terminology.

Today, even most behaviorists tend to defend the view that what we call mental events are really a special category of physical events. The main difference between behaviorists and eliminative materialists is that the former claim that our mentalistic terms really refer to patterns of behavior (much of which is observable at a distance and describable in everyday terms such as "carried the catalogue to the counter"), while the latter claim that these terms really refer to neurological states (which are more difficult to observe but more describable in precise terms than everyday external behavior).

Critics of eliminative materialism have questioned the view's supposition that the mentalistic terms we use are really pointing to the same thing that neurological language describes. When we use everyday mentalistic terms in everyday life, saying, for example, that a person "desires" or "intends" something or is in a certain mood, we are not usually making scientific or quasi-scientific statements about that person's physiological circumstances, but referring to how that person is disposed to act or concerning ourselves with how the world appears from the other person's first-person point of view. We might, for example, want to know how a person feels (perhaps to determine whether we have pleased or insulted him or her). It is not clear that our neurological descriptions, which are always third-person accounts, can substitute for mentalistic talk if we want to know what an experience is like from the standpoint of the person who has it. Whether we go the route of adopting neurological description in our everyday life, the central claim of identity theory is this: what we call a mental event is not a special type of event but just a particular way of describing some brain process.



Functionalism

Dissatisfaction with both behaviorism and identity theory and the rejection of all the old dualist theories of mind and body, coupled with recent discoveries about the workings of computers and the manufacture of artificial intelligence (AI), have led to another proposed solution to the mind-body problem, called **functionalism**. Behaviorism stresses the importance of behavior, but it cannot account for the nature of such sensations as pain and does not talk about the brain and its functions at all. Identity theory emphasizes the sameness of mental events and brain events, but it does not address the question of why this one particular organ should have such remarkable properties. One might ask, what is so special about the brain? Does the possibility of mental events depend on the special material of the brain? Or might various kinds of material (brains, but also computers) support mental event processes?

The **functionalist** answers these questions by insisting that the brain is not the only type of physical basis where minds and mental events can occur.

The brain is special because it is such a marvelous piece of machinery—or "hardware." But other pieces of hardware not made out of brain material may someday do just as well and may have minds to match. Thirty years ago, skeptics were confidently insisting that no computer could ever win at chess; now computers are beating chess masters. Today, skeptics say that no computer will ever feel or think for itself; ten years from now, they may be apologizing to an indignant laptop.

Functionalists consider mental activity to be identical to certain processes, but they claim that the *function* is what counts as having a mind, not the material in which the function takes place. There is no reason to suppose that a computer exactly duplicating the human brain and capable of its various functions could not be built, and if it could, this computer would have a mind. In principle there is no reason, apart from practicality, why one could not build a brain out of paper clips and rubber bands, so long as it included all the circuits needed to perform all proper functions. Functionalists solve the mind-body problem by saying that having a mind is equivalent to performing certain functions (for example, absorbing certain input and responding with certain output), and that although some kind of body is needed for these to occur, the exact kind of body does not matter so long as it can subserve the relevant functional roles. Whether or not a particular body can support mental functions will depend on the relationships among its parts; but the same kind of relations can in principle occur in bodies made of very different material.

Although both functionalism and identity theory try to solve the mind-body problem by asserting that the one thing is the other, their basic claims are quite different. The identity theorist claims that mental events simply *are* physical events, specifically events localized in the brain. The functionalist claims that mental events are functional *processes*, and these can occur on the basis of bodies of various types, brains being only one of these types.

Functionalism, it might be noted, still leaves open some questions. How do pain and other sensations fit in? Does the theory of functions explain how it is that one sees red or hears a melody? And might not a confirmed dualist come back once again and ask, "I agree that there is an impressive correlation between certain functions and mental events, but how does that explain how the one *causes* the other?" The functionalist asserts that mental activity is identical with performing certain functions. But couldn't it be that pains and great ideas are not identical to anything but themselves and that their place in a material universe is still a mystery our immaterial minds can't quite grasp?

MASTER THE CONCEPT: Functionalism

Functionalism is the theory that mental activity consists of certain functions of the brain—which might well be duplicated in nonbrain material. There is nothing necessarily unique about the brain.

Against the Mind-Body Problem

Functionalism, its advocates argue, is a great advance in the efforts to solve the mind-body problem because it expands our vision to consider increasingly complicated processes of the brain (and its computer analogues), replacing older, more atomistic image of some comparatively simple event in the brain causing (or being identical to) some discrete mental event. But this same argument can be expanded further, and several philosophers in America and Europe have argued that the whole idea of reducing the mind-body problem to questions about the brain is a step in the wrong direction. We cannot understand human consciousness, the argument goes, apart from the *whole human being*. The dichotomy of "the mind and the body" is already a mistake, given this way of thinking, for what we are is *embodied consciousness*—not a mind *in* a body—and to argue about interaction and identity is already to misunderstand the terms that we use to describe human beings.

This argument against the mind-body problem is also a powerful argument against many of our favorite ideas about the self. To think of the self as an isolated individual consciousness, aware primarily of itself, is, according to similar arguments, a serious misunderstanding of selfhood. The self must be conceived of in terms of the *whole person*. (The position is sometimes called *holism*, accordingly.) In ancient times, Aristotle argued for such a view of the self as nothing less than the *complete* person; today, too, many philosophers argue that nothing less can give us an adequate understanding of the self. The self is not just consciousness aware of itself but the flesh-and-blood person who is part of a family and a community and a soldier or a shoemaker or a politician. One is a self not just for oneself, but with and for other people as well. We will proceed to consider various theories of the self that address broader notions of what it is to be a whole person.

Other Theories of the Self

The Self as a Choice

> *What they [existentialists] have in common is that they believe that* existence *comes before* essence. . . . *man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards. . . . to begin with, he is nothing.*[14]
>
> —Jean-Paul Sartre

If self-identity is defined by our answer to the question "Who am I?" one possible answer is "Nothing yet, still in progress." If one sees the self not as an inner soul that is in us from birth (or perhaps from conception), but rather as a *product* of our actions and thoughts, then self-identity is something to be *earned*, not an already existing fact to be discovered. Thus, the existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) would say that all those theories that take the self to be found in consciousness are misconceived. The self is not simply thinking,

nor is it memory of the past. The self lies always in the future; it is what we aim toward, as we try to *make* ourselves into something. But this means that as long as we are alive there is no self—at least, no fixed and finished self. The self is an open question.

FROM THE SOURCE: The Integrity of Your Own Mind

Ralph Waldo Emerson, from "Self-Reliance," 1841

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. . . . Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.[15]

MEET THE PHILOSOPHER: Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)

American transcendentalist **Ralph Waldo Emerson** has influenced scores of important writers and artists, including philosophers **Friedrich Nietzsche** and John Dewey.

The first reply to the idea that the self is our own creation is usually that it neglects the fact that we are in fact a certain person with a fixed identity from the moment we are born, and facts continue to define us all through our lives. Consider, as an example, a person who is born in the year 1959, born female, born blond, born of a Scandinavian family, born poor; all these facts define this person and have nothing to do with "becoming." At the age of three, the child is injured at play and loses a finger; at the age of eight, the child luckily finds herself in a class with a sympathetic and inspiring teacher, who interests her in science and starts her off on the road to a brilliant career in chemistry. At the age of twenty-seven, she by chance meets a fellow on an airplane; they fall in love and are soon married. He is kidnapped and killed by terrorists. She is hounded by the press, and a popular writer turns her story into a best-selling book. She retreats to her chemistry laboratory, thinks about her life as she runs her experiments, and comes to realize that it all consists of accidental facts—the fact of her birth, her childhood accident, walking into a certain classroom, taking a certain airplane flight, and so on. Those facts are herself. There seems to be nothing else.

Sartre's response to this portrait is that it leaves out an essential dimension at every turn. What is missing is choice. What is left out is the possibility, at any point in this story, of saying no to the facts as they stand. In Sartre's words, "a person is always responsible for what one has made of him."[16] A person with an injury cannot wish away the injury, but he or she can make of it a badge of courage, a stigma of shame, a cocktail party curiosity, an excuse to stay out of the army, a handicap to be overcome. A person who is born blond and Scandinavian can be proud of that fact, embarrassed by it, or indifferent to it. One falls in love (something which itself has an enormous amount of choice built into it), but one can choose to ignore it, turn it into a tragedy, turn it into a marriage, even turn it into a joke of sorts.

Sartre called this dimension of our existence that enables us to choose what to make of the facts of our lives **transcendence**. We can always transcend, or go beyond, the facts that are true of us, or what Sartre called our **facticity**. Transcendence means that the self is defined not by the facts about us but by what we make—and continue to make—of these facts. But because we can change our minds throughout our lives about what to make of these facts (even those that are true of us for the whole of our lives), the self—which is the outcome of these interpretations and the actions based on them—is an unfinished process until the end of our lives. Only with death do our interpretations and our actions come to a halt.

MEET THE PHILOSOPHER: Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980)

French philosopher **Jean-Paul Sartre** gained celebrity in his own time as a novelist, playwright, revolutionary journalist, and lifelong companion of feminist philosopher and writer **Simone de Beauvoir.**

To see what Sartre means by *transcendence*, consider, for example, a student who had once been extremely ill as a child and now (in college) intends to be a doctor. The facts of his illness are simply true; he cannot now do anything to change them. But he is obviously using those facts to motivate and justify his decision for the future, to become a doctor to cure other children who are afflicted as he was. But suppose in his senior year he becomes caught up in local politics, finds that he enjoys this, and, furthermore, that he does quite well in his new activities. He postpones his plans to go to medical school and spends a year campaigning for a political ally. Then he runs for office himself and wins, postponing medical school for another four years. His political career flourishes. Answering reporters when they ask, "How did you get into politics?" he finds himself remembering his childhood talent for negotiating and arguing well. What happened to the importance of his childhood illness? The fact of it remains true, of course, but it is no longer of significance for him; it no longer fits into the political project he has made for his life. Now suppose that at the age of forty-three he loses a critical election. His political career is finished, and, not surprisingly, he remembers his old ambition to become a doctor. The fact of his childhood illness is reinstated as a crucial fact about his life, and his projected self is once more a medical self, not because of the facts, but rather because of his renewed intentions.

FROM THE SOURCE: Choosing Oneself

Jean-Paul Sartre, from "Existentialism and Humanism," 1946

Man simply is. Not that he simply is what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives of himself after already existing—as he wills to be. . . . Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism. . . . Man is responsible for himself, not . . . only for his own individuality, . . . he is responsible for all men. . . . Man chooses himself . . . in choosing for himself, he chooses for all men.[17]

Sartre's view is that there is no "real self" other than the self that we make for ourselves. Certain facts are true of us, of course, and we cannot make them untrue. But we can make of them what we will, albeit that what we are able to make of them is also limited by the facts of our circumstances. Even prisoners, Sartre said, are free to make of their imprisonment what they choose; imprisonment can be injustice, martyrdom, an excuse for not doing anything, a challenge to escape, a symbol to the world, a way of amusing oneself, or just plain boring. But this also means that there are no "correct" choices; in Kierkegaard's language, the "right" choice is a subjective truth, true for the person who makes it but not necessarily true for anyone else. The self is what each of us chooses *for ourselves*, our projection into our future, our intentions to *become* a particular kind of person. But as we never wholly achieve this—for even when our ambitions are fulfilled we can always change our mind, formulate new ambitions, and so on—the self never really exists in full. It is always at best our image of what we want to be, to which we strive with more or less success and persistency. And this striving, this sense of oneself as always incomplete and responsible for itself, is the **authentic self.**

FROM THE SOURCE: Bad Faith: Are You Ever Just What You Are?

Jean-Paul Sartre, from *Being and Nothingness*, 1943

Take the example of a woman who has consented to go out with a particular man for the first time. She knows very well the intentions which the man who is speaking to her cherishes regarding her. She knows also that it will be necessary sooner or later for her to make a decision. But she does not want to realize the urgency; she concerns herself only with what is respectful and discreet in the attitude of her companion. . . . If he says to her, "I find you so attractive!" she disarms this phrase of its sexual background. . . . But then suppose he takes her hand. . . . We know what happens next; the young woman leaves her hand there, but she does not notice that she is leaving it . . . she is at this moment all intellect. . . . And during this time the divorce of the body from the soul is accomplished; the hand rests inert between the warm hands of her companion—neither consenting nor resisting—a thing.

We shall say this woman is in bad faith.[18]

If the authentic self for Sartre is something created, rather than somethin found, then the traditional theories that say that the self simply is are not onl mistaken but, in a very important sense, self-deluding ways of not recognizing ou responsibility for creating the self that we create. Sartre calls this denial of responsi bility for one's self **bad faith.** Bad faith (French: *mauvaise foi*, pronounced moh-va FWAH) includes trying to excuse yourself from responsibility for what you are an what you will become by pretending that your life has been defined by the facts (b your facticity) instead of recognizing that you can try to make what you wish c those facts. Bad faith, in other words, is the negative side of having to create you self; it is the rejection of this responsibility—in effect, giving up even before you tr

No Self, Many Selves

There is nothing that can be called an "ego," and there is no such thing as "mine" in all the world.[19]

—The Buddha

In reality, every self is far from being a unity; it is a constellation of selves, a chaos of forms, of states and stages, of inheritances and potentialities. Man is an onion made up of a hundred layers, a texture made up of many threads.[20]

—Hermann Hesse

We have assumed throughout the whole of our discussion so far what woul seem to be the most indubitable and undeniable thesis, that every person ha one, and only one, self. But this assumption, too, can be challenged, and at leas one of the major religions of the world—Buddhism—rejects as an "illusion" th very idea of the self.

The rejection of the self can be found in Western philosophy, too. In hi *Treatise of Human Nature,* the skeptic David Hume turned his critical attention t Descartes's and Locke's claims to have found the self within consciousness, and h said, with his usual irony, that he found no such self in himself; all he found was complicated cluster of different experiences and ideas, but nothing that could b called a self:

> *There are some philosophers who imagine that we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our* self; *that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and we are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity. . . . But . . . for my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call* myself, *I always stumble on some particular perception or other of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch* myself *at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.*[21]

As a consistent empiricist, Hume therefore concluded that we aren't reall justified in talking about a self because the concept can't be related to somethin encountered in experience.

Jean-Paul Sartre, as we have seen, also rejected the idea of the existence of the self in the traditional sense. One way of reinterpreting his philosophy is to say that he, too, denied that we can find any self in ourselves, that for him the self, if it is not an illusion, at least always escapes us, always lies ahead of us in the future.

But let's take these arguments several steps further. Hume's skepticism is essentially a negative thesis: he could not find what most philosophers too confidently refer to as a self. But the negative thesis can be turned into a positive thesis, and this is what happens in Buddhism. For the Buddhist, not being able to find the self is not a philosophical inability; rather, seeing through the illusion of the individual self is the highest form of enlightenment and the most important single conceptual achievement. The self, in this view, is itself a false idea, a dangerous notion that cuts us off from the rest of the world, from the entirety (which Mahayana Buddhists call the "Buddha-nature"). The idea, then, is that our real self-identity is not individual *self*-identity at all but rather our unity with the whole of the universe. But this is to say that, in our sense, there is no self, that the self is an idea that has been imposed on us by our tradition and appearances instead of a fact that is true of us or of a soul inside of us.

The Buddhist view of self was formulated in opposition to an alternative view that was offered by Hinduism. As we will discuss further in Chapter 11, according to this Hindu view, we do have an identity as an individual, embodied self, but this is not the real self. The real self is a transpersonal self, a self that is the same within all individuals. This is yet another way of considering the self: the individual is an illusion, but the self is not.

The rejection of the individual self in favor of an all-embracing cosmic sense of self appears in Western philosophy, too. The nineteenth-century German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel also rejected our emphasis on the personal, individual self. He showed, in his *Phenomenology of Spirit,* that our true self-identity is indeed a universal self-identity—all of us as One—which he called "Spirit" (Chapters 2 and 3). For Hegel, too, the individual self is an illusion fostered by our society's particular way of thinking, and our true identity breaks through these limited boundaries to include all of us together.

FROM THE SOURCE: The Unimportance of the Individual

G. W. F. Hegel, from *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1807

At a time when the universality of Spirit has gathered such strength, . . . the share in the total work of Spirit which falls to the individual can only be very small. Because of this, the individual must all the more forget himself . . . less must be demanded of him, just as he in turn can expect less of himself, and may demand less for himself.[22]

The rejection of the idea that each person has a distinct self leads to an even more astounding conclusion, found in some of the other philosophies of both East and West as well, which has been defended in the writings of the German author Hermann Hesse. According to this view, there are indeed selves, but not, as we have assumed, one self per person. Each of us is a multitude of selves. We may be different selves in different circumstances, and it is only a philosophical mistake that makes us think that we have to tie all of these selves together into a single coherent package, as a single self.

In a striking image, Hesse tells us that "man is an onion," with hundreds of different layers (selves). The traditional Western view, on the other hand, is that man is a peach, with a solid, single pit in the center (the soul). But if you peel away the layers of an onion, you know that you find more layers; when you reach the last layer, there is nothing more, no pit, no core, no soul. There are only the layers, the many roles we play in different parts of our lives, the many selves, which is to say, no individual "self" as such at all. (A similar view of the self is implicit in Confucianism.) A person is defined by the various roles he or she plays, and the model of self is Hesse's onion, not the peach with its pit.

The rejection of the atomistic self in any of these senses is not just a philosophical trick; it quickly becomes a way of life. Most of our plans and our behavior are based on the assumption that we have to *be* somebody or that we ought to make something of ourselves. But according to the views just discussed, this picture of the individual as the unit of selfhood breaks down, and self-realization becomes instead the recognition of being part of something much greater than one's (individual) self, or, in Hesse's view, the realization of the multitude of selves that are in us all.

The Self as Social

Man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity.[23]

—Aristotle

No doubt, each of us has a conception of our self as an individual self, and we do indeed have some sense of having an authentic, or real, self beneath the roles and postures we are taught to adopt in work and society, which sometimes make us feel uncomfortable, not ourselves. But we have concluded too quickly that our real self is an individual self and that the social roles we play and the conventions we learn in society are distortions and distractions from our true self. Indeed, this is a very old view; it is central to the Christian teaching that the inner soul before God is the real self and that our social position and power are, by comparison, of no real significance. Descartes taught this view when he declared that the real self is oneself as a "thinking thing," as opposed, for instance, to a social being, a son, a father, a daughter, a mother, and so on. The French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau set forth the same thesis again in the mid-eighteenth century when he declared with vehemence that natural, individual human beings are good and innocent until society "corrupts" them, and we in America are still sympathetic to this philosophy, that what is natural and individual is essentially good.

MEET THE PHILOSOPHER: Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a stormy Enlightenment philosopher from Geneva, Switzerland, who fought throughout his life with virtually all his friends and supporters. An extremely troubled and unhappy man, he found in his solitude a conception of humans as basically and naturally good, before the conventions and artificialities of society "corrupted" them. His writings were often censored, and at times he had to flee arrest. He died in total poverty, but only a few years later, his ideas became the philosophical basis for the French Revolution.

Paradoxically, the image we have of ourselves as *individuals* is an image that we have been taught collectively, by society, precisely because we are not mere individuals. Consider a common view in our society, that the general welfare will best be served by everyone pursuing his or her own interests. This is a premise that is still much debated, of course, yet it serves in particular as one of the assumptions behind **capitalism** and is certainly central to much of American thinking. We should note that this is a very recent idea; indeed, it would not even have been considered plausible until the middle of the eighteenth century, when Adam Smith postulated it in his *Wealth of Nations*. More typically in the Western tradition, the idea that personal interests should be subordinated to the good of society held sway. The point to be made again is that, although most Americans emphasize the importance of individuals (and individual initiative, individual interests), this is an idea created and promoted by a specific kind of society. Our confidence that we are individuals in the way we think we are, in other words, is based on our having been brought up in a society that understands selfhood in a particular (modern) way. And if today we see our individual existence as indubitable, that is itself a matter that deserves philosophical curiosity and investigation.

FROM THE SOURCE: Harmony Rather Than Agreement

Confucius, from *Analects*, sixth century BCE

Exemplary persons seeks harmony not sameness; petty persons, then, are the opposite.[24]

MEET THE PHILOSOPHER: Adam Smith (1723–1790)

The view that a society of individuals, each working only with his or her own interests in mind, might collectively serve to improve society as a whole and increase the general welfare was not seriously proposed as a theory of society until 1776, when Scottish thinker **Adam Smith** published his epoch-making *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith is universally considered to be the "father of capitalism" and the first great spokesman for laissez-faire ("leave alone") economics. Smith hypothesized that an "invisible hand" would guarantee the overall good of society through the workings of a free and competitive market. But such a market itself was not possible until modern times, when the medieval suspicion of "usury" and profit seeking was replaced by the recognition of money making as a legitimate activity and the desire of the individual—by way of supply and demand—were allowed to determine what was produced and in what quantities.

Even in early Christianity, despite its emphasis on the individual soul there was a powerful emphasis on the spiritual community, within which that soul could discover itself and through which it could earn its salvation. Before Christianity, Judaism was far more concerned with the integrity of the Jewish community than with the isolated identity of its members; indeed, Jewish identity was identity in the community and nothing more. Until modern times, our idea of individual identity would have been unintelligible. Today, too, when we think about the question "Who am I?" we are all too likely to forget that we are something more than our individual characteristics and talents, more than an isolated atom cut off from the community within which our existence, our characteristics and our talents acquire their significance. What does it mean to be "attractive" or "good-looking," for instance, outside of the context of a particular society? What does it mean to be "smart," "charming," or "fun to be with" except among other people who have similar conceptions of these traits? What does it mean to be "trustworthy" or "generous" except within a community in which these traits make sense and are generally praised? In other words, most of the characteristics we ascribe to ourselves as individuals already presuppose the existence of other people and our living with them.

This observation can be repeated at a deeper philosophical level, too. Recall Descartes's argument that we are indeed directly and indubitably aware of our own self, our own mind, prior to our knowledge of the existence of other people. We pointed out that Descartes's claim that we have indubitable self-awareness is questionable; we may be aware of thoughts, but it does not follow that we are aware of the self, the "I" that thinks. How do we recognize thoughts, however? It can be argued that we recognize thoughts only because we have words and concepts that allow us to. (Ancient peoples, some archaeologists claim, did not have such words and concepts and so could only refer to what we call "thoughts" as "voices," presumably from the gods.) But where did we get these words and concepts? From our language, which we could have learned only within a community of other people who taught us the language, who gave us these concepts, who taught us to say, in effect, "I think, therefore I am"—and not to doubt it.

What this means is that we know of our own existence only because we have been taught by our society to recognize our own existence. But this also means that the existence of other people is not in question; it is not a doubtful belief that needs to be backed up with a problematic and probably inadequate argument from analogy. The existence of others, along with the existence of ourselves, is in fact one of the *premises* of our thinking, not one of its doubtful conclusions. Thus the German existentialist Martin Heidegger says that we are originally part of

a community "with others"; the challenge is to learn within this context how to be an individual, how to be "authentic."

Similarly, Hegel wrote that we find our true identity in "Spirit." Making a more political point, Karl Marx tells us that we are essentially social beings and gain our identity only within a society (of a particular kind) and, ultimately, within the whole context of humanity. (He called us "species-beings," beings who live and work not just for ourselves, but for the whole.) So we all find, as we push our thinking further, that no matter how important our existence as individuals may seem to us, this individual existence gains its significance only through the picture of ourselves in a larger society and through our relations with other people.

MEET THE PHILOSOPHER: Martin Heidegger (1889–1976)

Martin Heidegger was a German existentialist who has had a profound influence on many philosophers around the globe. His best-known book is *Being and Time* 1927). The concept of "authenticity" (or "authentic self") has become popular largely because of his work.

FROM THE SOURCE: The They-Self (das Man)

Martin Heidegger, from *Being and Time*, 1927

Everyone is the other, and no one is himself. The "they" which supplies the answer to the question of the "who" . . . is "nobody." . . .

The Self of everyday Dasein [human being] *is the they-self, which we distinguish from the* authentic self, *that is, from the self which has been taken hold of in its own way.*[25]

MEET THE PHILOSOPHER: Karl Marx (1818–1883)

Karl Marx is usually thought of primarily as a social reformer and revolutionary. In fact, he was an accomplished philosopher and one of the leading economic theorists of all times. He studied in depth the writings of **G. W. F. Hegel** (who had died just before Marx started college in Berlin) and borrowed Hegel's concept of "dialectic" as a way of understanding social evolution, through conflict and resolution. But where Hegel's main concept was "Spirit," Marx emphasized the more material aspects of human life—the need for food, shelter, and security, for instance. Nevertheless, Marx also stressed the spiritual needs of individuals, especially art and creativity and the appreciation of nature. (He did not include religion among these spiritual needs, however.)

FROM THE SOURCE: The Social Nature of Individuals

Karl Marx, from "Private Property and Labor," 1844

Just as society itself produces man as man, *so it too is* produced by him. *Activity and consumption, both in their content and in their* mode of existence *are* social *activity and* social *consumption . . . only here does nature exist for him as a bond with other* men. . . . *The individual is the* social being.[26]

The Self and Relationships

The essence of the relations between consciousnesses . . . is conflict.[27]

—Jean-Paul Sartre

Man is a network of relationships, and these alone matter to him.[28]

—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

The vision we have of ourselves determines the relations we will have with others. Poets and philosophers have often written that love begins with self-love, and social critics have pointed out that hate often begins with self-hate. But it is a matter for serious reflection that in our self-absorbed, individualistic society so much is written and said on self-realization and individual self-identity, while somewhat less has been written, at least on the same level of self-conscious philosophical profundity, on the nature of our relations with one another. Of course, we know the reason for this: our Western conceptions of self are such that we tend to think that our real or essential or authentic self is ours and ours alone, while relations with other people are secondary to selfhood and, in some sense, external. We talk about "reaching out to someone"; our poets and psychiatrists tell us about the plight of our loneliness, each of us having been born into the world alone and trying desperately to find refuge with another person through love.

But if the self is social, then all of this way of putting things might very well be misguided; rather than reaching out to people, we may need to realize the bonds that are already there. And it is simply false that each of us is born into the world alone; it is a matter of biology that even our first grand entrance is staged with at least one other person (our mother), and often the delivery room is rather crowded. The question then becomes: what is the nature of these bonds between us, with which our conception of selfhood begins?

The bonds between us are of a hundred varieties, of course—love, hate, dependency, fear, admiration, envy, shared joy or suffering, kinship, parenthood, patriotism, competition, sexual attraction, team spirit, being in jail together, running on the same political party ticket, and sitting next to each other in class. Each of these deserves its own analysis and understanding. But in general, we can break our conceptions of relationships into two very broad views: "us versus them" (or "me versus them") on the one hand and "we" on the other. The first presumes some basic difference, even antagonism, between us and them;

.he second presupposes a shared identity (within which, of course, there can be ıny number of differences).

The us-versus-them view can be illustrated, as an extreme case, by most vars. There are wars, perhaps, in which one or both sides retain some sense of tinship with the other, but even in most civil wars the other side is conceived of ıs "the enemy" and is often depicted as inhuman, barbarian, and uncivilized. On more personal and less belligerent scale, the us-versus-them view emerges at east temporarily in competition with strangers (for the same job, for the same eat in a bus, or at a track meet). In every case, the emphasis is on the differences ıetween sides; the presumption is usually that one person's gain is very likely nother person's loss, and the self-identity of one is defined independently of or ı opposition to the other.

The second view, however, takes mutual identity to be primary and differnces to be secondary. There is a presumption of cooperation: what helps one ⁄ill help the other, and self-identity is defined by this mutual identity. A familiar xample is the sense of shared identity we have when we are playing on the same eam. There are differences between us, of course; we play different positions, nd we have different skills and different personalities. But what is primary is ıe team; indeed, we have all seen how a team falls apart when individual playrs begin to think more of their own performance than of the performance of ıe team. A second example would be love, whether the love of a mother for er child, the love of a married couple, or the love of a person for a country. ove, too, is the presumption of a shared identity; a person defines self-identity ı terms of the relationship (at least in part), and it is assumed that one person's ıterest is the other's, too. (Even when this is not the case, one person typically kes up the other's interest as his or her own.)

These two views have deep roots in philosophy. The first can be seen quite early, for example, in the "problem of other minds" and the "egocentric precament" of the solipsist, for whom all other people are literally other, actuly unknowable and unreachable. There is more than a hint of solipsism, for ample, in those social speakers who urge us to "escape our loneliness" and each out to someone." The presupposition of this popular (American) message that we begin alone and that we desperately try to overcome this aloneness. But ıagine telling that to the seventh child in an enormous tribal family. The truth that our sense of loneliness is not universal or part of the human condition, but ı inevitable consequence of our extremely mobile and individualistic society. ıd yet, as we have seen, we tend to take the view that the isolated individual self not only the real self, but the only thing of which we can be absolutely certain. ot surprisingly, our view of relations with other people therefore tends to be at knowing and relating to other people is a problem.

This view was brutally argued, for instance, by Jean-Paul Sartre in his book ing and Nothingness (and in many of his novels and plays). Relations with oths, Sartre argued, are essentially conflict. But we can see how he must conclude at this is so. He began by defending a conception of self that is strictly indidual, in which each of us tries to create ourselves in a certain image and to authentic to ourselves. Other people, accordingly, tend to be external to this creation of self; or they serve as the instruments or raw materials for the creation of self; or they may become impossible obstacles to the creation of self. For example, other people often restrict our abilities by making their own demands and setting up expectations, and they therefore tend to interfere with our freedom of self-creation. In a relationship between a man and a woman, Sartre argued, this mutual interference and antagonism reach their pinnacle; sex and even love are but weapons in the competition for independent self-realization. Each person tries to force the other to agree with his or her conception of self. Thus, all our relations are essentially conflict, even when they seem to be perfectly pleasant and mutually agreeable. (It is worth noting that Sartre qualified these views later in his life and that he himself had a lifelong relationship—sometimes romantic—with Simone de Beauvoir.)

This tragic view of relationships, however, is based on a conception of the isolated individual self, which has its problems. If we turn to the second conception of relationships, the "we" view of already existing bonds between us, we solve some of these problems and discover a much less tragic conception of relationships. We refer to this second conception, for example, when we declare that "we were made for each other," in the sense that, before we met, the connection between us had already been established. Similarly, people say "marriages are made in heaven." As a sociological theory, this is seriously challenged by current divorce statistics, but as a philosophical viewpoint, it has much to recommend it. From the moment we are born, we establish and reestablish bonds with others, not just particular people, but *types* of people. Thus, one adult or one teacher replaces another in our lives; one friend takes the place of another, and one boyfriend or girlfriend seems remarkably like the last.

This is not to say, of course, that we are incapable of particular commitments or of sticking with a single friend or spouse, but it is to say that our relations with others are *types* of bonds that we carry from one person to another, some of which we have from infancy. Thus, Freud was not being perverse when he insisted that every man falls in love with his mother and every woman falls in love with her father. The bonds and expectations and likes and dislikes that one learns as an infant stay with us through life, usually much modified and even reversed in some significant ways. But, according to this view, we are not isolated individuals searching desperately for other people; we already have networks of relationships, which are fulfilled in different ways at different times by different people. Our conception of ourselves—our self-identity—is determined in turn by these networks, without which we are ultimately nothing.

FROM THE SOURCE: How Two Become One: Aristophanes

Plato, from The *Symposium*, fourth century BCE

And so, when a person meets the half that is his very own, . . . then something wonderful happens: the two are struck from their senses by love, by a sense of belonging to one another, and by desire, and they don't want to be separated from one another, not even for a moment.[29]

A marvelous illustration of this second view of relationships, as "made for each other," is a short story told in Plato's dialogue the *Symposium*. Asked to tell his fellow dinner guests about the nature and origins of love, the playwright Aristophanes invents a wonderful fable, in which we were all long ago "double-creatures," with two heads, four arms, four legs, and enormous intelligence and arrogance (or what the Greeks called *hubris*). To teach humans a lesson, Zeus, the king of the gods, struck the creatures down and cleft them in two—"like an apple," Aristophanes says—so that each resulting half-person now had to walk around the world, looking for his or her other half. That is the origin of love, Aristophanes concludes, not the search of one isolated individual for another, but the urge to reunite with someone who is already, as we still say, one's "other half." The fable is pure fiction, of course, but the point is profound. Relations with others do not begin when people first meet; they began, in a sense, with the very beginning of our species. The complete self, in other words, is not just the individual person. It is people *together* and, sometimes, in love.

CLOSING QUESTIONS

1. When a person says, "I think such and such . . ." is there necessarily reference to a self there, or is the word "I" simply a function of grammar? Would it make sense to say, as Bertrand Russell once suggested, that "It thinks in me" or "There is a thought here" instead?
2. In his play *No Exit*, Jean-Paul Sartre has one of his characters exclaim, "Hell is other people." What he might have had in mind is that people interfere with each other to such an extent that hell might simply be people torturing each other forever with their comments and their gestures, just as we torture each other here on earth. Do you agree with this picture of human relationships? Why or why not?
3. If a teenager commits a crime and is sent to reform school for a few years, what justification might the individual have, twenty years later, in explaining, "I am an entirely different person now"?
4. Which aspects of your self (or self-identity) do you attribute directly to your upbringing in a particular family, in a particular society, or in a particular neighborhood, city, or other environment? Which do you attribute to "nature" (that is, to instincts and inherited characteristics)? Which aspects of your self (if any) would you say are entirely your own, independent of other people and your biological nature?
5. If you were told (perhaps in a science fiction story) that a certain "person" was a robot, how could you tell if this were true?
6. Does your race signify an essential part of your self? Why or why not?
7. Does your sex constitute an essential part of your self? Why or why not?
8. Marriage is sometimes described as a union of two people. Sexual coupling aside, what does this mean?
9. Does a newborn baby have a self? What kinds of theories and considerations would you bring to bear on this question?
10. Could a computer have a sense of humor? What would it have to do to have one? What would it have to do to convince you that it had one? (Would it be enough to print out "Ha Ha" and shake around a bit?) If the computer lacks a sense of humor, does it necessarily lack a "self"?

KEY WORDS

analogy (p. 194)
authentic self (p. 206)
bad faith (p. 207)
behaviorism (p. 198)
capitalism (p. 210)
disanalogies (p. 194)
dualists (p. 197)
egocentric predicament (p. 194)
eliminative materialism (p. 200)
essential self (p. 184)
facticity (p. 205)
functionalism (p. 201)
functionalist (p. 201)
identity theory (p. 199)
intentionality (p. 192)
irrational (p. 190)
mind-body problem (p. 196)
self-identity (p. 185)
solipsism (p. 187)
soul (p. 184)
thinking self (p. 186)
transcendence (p. 205)

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