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THE NOTION OF 'SELF' IN LOCKE'S PERSONAL IDENTITY THEORY

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Abstract

In Locke's theory of personal identity, he treated the idea of the self as distinct from the idea of man and human being. For some thinkers, like Mead, the self is not different from one's action and interaction. This argument is from those who expressed communicative action. Another school, especially the empiricist school was critical of the notion of the self. In fact, a blanket assertion made in respect of the self is that it is an illusion. A consideration of these varied perspectives about the self, call to question what exactly is the notion of the self? By what identity can the self be attributed? What is the epistemic and pragmatic nature and conception of the self? The attempt to provide answers to the above questions led to the consideration of some scholars' conception of the self. In all, the research discovered that the self is a mixture of innate characteristics and social construction. Thus, the self is neither purely transcendental nor wholly social. Using the method of analysis, the paper concluded that there is no clear-cut cognitive epistemic grasp about the nature of the self but relative and skeptic outlook.

Keywords: **Lockean self, personal identity theory, mind, self-consciousness, skepticism**.

Introduction

In the work, the research focuses on the idea/notion of the self. This is against the backdrop of the fact that the idea of personhood and personal identity plausibly rests on the idea of the self. It is not sufficient to debate about what personal identity is, without a clear and distinct understanding of what the idea of self is. The research therefore examines the idea of self across some philosophical and cultural backgrounds. This is to furnish a contextual explication of the notion of the self and to find out if Locke's speculation or theorization necessarily satisfies the conditions the self is postulated or assumed to possess. The point of departure of the research is by exploring the concept and the idea of the self from classical to contemporary epoch. This no doubt will clearly provide background information and useful insights into Locke's idea of the self and personal identity. The aim also is to expose the shortcomings inherent in Locke's conception of the self or person, especially given that the term has varied contextual and hermeneutic interpretations when considered across some world-views and belief-systems.

On the Meaning of the Self

The discussion of the self, of persons and of personalities, of consciousness and of the mind, is only too liable to lead to questions like "what is the self?" or "what is consciousness?" (Popper, 1983:100). The self is seen "as an individual person as the object of his or her own reflective consciousness. This reference is necessarily subjective, thus self is a reference by subject to the same subject (Self, 2019)." As Zahavi (2005) argued, the sense of having a self or selfhood— should not be confused with subjectivity. This is because the term subjectivity is a

central philosophical concept, related to consciousness, agency, personhood, reality and truth (Subjectivity, 2019). However, the definition of subjectivity may not necessarily imply the notion of the self. This is affirmative of the three common definitions of subjectivity thus: "something being a subject, narrowly meaning an individual who possesses conscious experiences, such as perspectives, feelings, beliefs and desires (Solomon, 2005:900). Secondly, something being a subject, broadly meaning an entity that has agency, meaning that it acts upon or wields power over some other entity, perhaps an object (Allen, p.131). Thirdly, some information, idea, situation, or physical thing considered true only from the perspective of a subject or subjects (Subjectivity, 2019).

From a philosophical perspective, the philosophy of the self seeks to describe essential qualities that constitute a person's uniqueness or essential being. Hence, the self can be considered as that being which is the source of consciousness, the agent responsible for an individual's thoughts and actions, or the substantial nature of a person which endures and unifies consciousness over time (Self, 2019). From Lockean perspective, in Conway's description, the self is seen as a product of episodic memory (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000:261). Episodic memory in this sense was coined by Endel Tulving in 1972, used to refer to the distinction between knowing and remembering. While the former conveys something factual (semantic), the later conveys a feeling that is located in the past (episodic) (Clayon, Salwiczek & Dickson, 2007:89). Thus, episodic memory means the memory of autobiographical events, (time, places, associated emotions, and other contextual who, what, when, where, why knowledge) that can be explicitly stated or conjured. It is the collection of past personal experiences that occurred at a particular time and place. An example is the ability for one to remember a past event, let us say, 5th birthday or college graduation. Episodic memories allow an individual to figuratively travel back in time to remember the event that took place at that particular time and place (Schancter, Gilbert & Wegner, 2009:185).

However, besides the concept of the self grounded or anchored on episodic memory, research upon those with amnesia— a kind of a deficit in memory caused by brain damage, disease, or psychological trauma (Gazzaniga & Mangun, 2009)— find they have a coherent sense of self based upon preserved conceptual autobiographical knowledge (Rathbone, Moulin & Conway, 2009:405). This "sense of self" which the Freudian tradition has subjectively called, is for Jungian analytic psychology, where one's identity is lodged in the personal or ego and is subject to change in maturation (Self, 2019). Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, the founder of analytical psychology hinted that "the self is not only the center, but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the center of this totality…(Jung, 1951)" More so, the self in Jungian psychology is "the archetype of wholeness and the regulating center of the psyche;… a transpersonal power that transcends the ego" (*ibid*). Accordingly, the self as an archetype cannot be seen directly but by ongoing individuating maturation and analytic observation, can be experienced objectively by its cohesive wholeness making factor (Jung, Von & Marie-Louise, 1998:98). In all, semantic and episodic memory both contribute to self that is not a unitary construct comprising only the individual as he or she is now, but also past and possible selves (Talaifar, Swann, 2019).
Examining the religious view of the self, there are two types of self commonly considered— the self that is the ego and the self that is sometimes called the "true self". The first self, the ego is also known or called the learned, superficial self of mind and body. This self is an egoistic creation. The second is contrary to the first and it is also sometimes called the

"observing self" or the "witness"(Hall, 1942:115). Whether these selves exist together in human beings or they take their turns pending which is willed or desired is a different argument altogether. However, the point must be made that human beings have self. This is the reason why humans are able to reflect or look back on themselves as both subjects and objects in the cosmic universe. Which in the end raises questions about who we are and the nature of our own importance (Charon, 2004:260).

It is difficult to have a holistic definition of the self in that the meaning one attributes or attaches is always culture dependent. Sundry comparisons, especially between western culture versus African culture or western culture versus eastern culture demonstrate that there are cultural differences among the self and the idea of the self. It is in view of this, the self is redefined as a dynamic, responsive process that structures neural pathways according to past and present environments including material, social, and spiritual aspects (Self, 2019). The major conceptual difference of the self across many cultures and environment is that in the west, the self is usually seen as abstract, private, individual, and separates itself from the rest of the group. Whereas in the eastern culture, the self is presented as open and flexible (Kanagawa, Suzan & Hazel, 2001:90), for the Africans hold a collective view of the self, different from western's individualistic outlook.

It should be pointed out from the onset that words such as 'self', 'person', 'soul' and similar words are not synonymous as some schools of thought may have us believe or accept. On the contrary, they have different meanings in sensitive English usage. For example, "soul" is often used, in contemporary English, with the implication that it is a substance which can survive death (whereas in German, the word "Seele" is used differently, more like the English word "mind" (Popper, 1983:100). The self has been given varied interpretations and meanings. According to Galen Strawson, the self is seen to be best described as a cognitive, i.e. 'distinctively mental' phenomenon. He asserted further that the mental sense of self comes to every normal human being in childhood and comprises the sense of being a mental presence, of being alone in one's head, with the body 'just a vessel or vessel for the mental thing that is what one really or most essentially is' (Butterworth, 1998:132). In this sense, the self is distinctively a mental phenomenon separated from the body. To describe the self as something cognitive is to subscribe to the *cognivists*' belief of the utter distinction of the self from the body and the theory of mind which sees mental states as absolutely internal to the mind.

The most remarkable question is not what the self is. Rather it is imperative to first and foremost find out if the self exists before asking question about what it is essentially. The first question to pose is, does the self exist? Some philosophers have remarked that self is nothing but illusion. Hume described it as bundle of impressions— some sort of thing we cannot and never catch or be aware of but Popper's (1983:100) remarks seem contrary and apt thus: "we are not only aware of being alive, but each of us is aware of being a self; aware of his identity through considerable periods of time, and though breaks in his self-awareness due to periods of sleep, or to periods of unconsciousness; and each of us is aware of his moral responsibility for his actions."

For Popper, unlike Hume, the self not only exists but is something we are aware of. This must be logically true to some extent if Hume's idea of the self is to be followed strictly. Logically,

one cannot give a vivid description of something one is not aware of. One must be aware that one exists before one can say or affirm that that thing is or is not. Admittedly, though arguable, Hume logically accepted the existence of the self before commenting on what it is. To have an idea of what a thing is or is not, is to affirm its existence either way. Hume in the long-run affirmed the existence of the self before denying it. Hume was aware of what the self is— hence he called it "bundle of impressions" but denied that one can have impression of one's self. By extension, Hume denied or doubted the existence of his own self. Consequently, it is somewhat strange to doubt that "people exist; and each of them is an individual self, with feelings, hopes and fears, sorrows and joys, dreads and dreams, which we can only guess since they are known only to the person himself or herself (ibid, p102)."

As obvious as the existence of the self may seem, Hume's denial is coming from his commonsense view and empiricist background. His empiricism no doubt led him to the doctrine and conclusion that all knowledge are derived from sense experience— we can know nothing except from sense impressions and the ideas derived from sense impressions. Hume, for instance, would ask from what impression is the idea of the self? There is no sense impression where the idea of the self can be derived, hence there is no such a thing as the self. He went on to argue against "some philosophers who imagine that we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our self",— unluckily all these positive assertions are contrary to that very experience, which is pleaded for them, nor have we any idea of self . . . For from what impression could this idea be derived? This question it is impossible to answer without manifest contradiction and absurdity . . ." (Hume, 1888:251).

Hume's denial has caused or led to problems and paradoxes of the self existence to say the least. There are firmed followers of Hume who hitherto believed that there is no such thing as the self. In what seems like a self-contradiction and absurdity Popper has pointed out that Hume himself has implicitly accepted through the back door the existence of the self or affirm its existence. Popper remarks thus: "yet Hume himself, in a slightly different context, asserts the existence of selves just as emphatically as he here denies it. Thus he writes in Book II of the *Treatise*: "it is evident, that the idea, or rather impression of ourselves is always intimately present with us, and that our consciousness gives us so lively a conception of our own person, that it is not possible to imagine, that anything can in this particular go beyond it." This positive assertion of Hume's amounts to the same position that he attributes in the more famous negative passage quoted before to "some philosophers", and that he there emphatically declares to be manifestly contradictory and absurd" (Popper, 1983:103).

Popper did not only point out the manifest contradiction and absurdity in Hume's notion of the self, he also provided passages in Hume's work that supported the idea of selves, especially under the name of "character" thus:

> But there are lots of other passages in Hume supporting the idea selves, especially under the name of "character". Thus we read: "there are also characters peculiar to different … persons… The knowledge of these characters is founded on the observation of an uniformity in the actions, that flow from them…" Hume's official theory (if I may call it so) is that the self is no more than the sum total (the bundle) of its experiences. He argues— in my opinion, rightly— that talk of a "substantial" self does not help us much. Yet he again

> and again describes actions as "flowing" from a person's character. In my opinion we do not need one in order to be able to speak of self (ibid., p. 103).

Popper went further to point out that the use of language to describe reality may not imply that those qualities are in-here in them. He alluded to 'ownership theory' which he said were incorporated in our language and that we do not have to accept as true the theories that are incorporated in our language. He puts it thus:

> Hume, and others, take it that if we speak of the self as a substance, then the properties (and the experiences) of the self may be said to "inhere" in it. I agree with those who say that this way of speaking is not illuminating. We may, however, speak of "our" experiences, using the possessive pronoun. This seems to me perfectly natural; it need not give rise to speculations about an ownership relation. I may say of my cat that it "has" a strong character without thinking that this way of talking expresses an ownership relation (in the reverse direction to the one when I speak of "my" body). Some theories— such as the ownership theory— are incorporated in our language. We do not, however, have to accept as true the theories that are incorporated in our language, even though this fact may make it difficult to criticize them. If we decide that they are seriously misleading, we may be led to change the aspect of our language in question, otherwise, we may continue to use it, simply bear in mind the fact that it should not be taken too literally (for example the "new" moon). All this, however, should not prevent us from always trying to use the plainest language we can (ibid).

How do we know ourselves?

It is germane to ask, how do we know that we are selves or persons other than bodies? Popper's narrative is not only apt but also ingenuous. It is instructive to note that our personalities or selves are not prior to experience. It follows that the knowledge of the self cannot be reached by method of extra-sensory perception or arrived at innately or transcendentally. As Popper (1983:109) remarks: "it seems to me of considerable importance that we are not born as selves, but that we have to learn that we are selves; in fact we have to learn to be selves." It seems that Popper's argument about learning to be a self is anchored on the fact that self-knowledge is logically prior to self-observation, and that self-consciousness develops by paying interest in and having a kind of understanding of the other persons. Here, the environment is keyed, as it constitutes the time and space of all objects. Popper's (1983:109-110) argument is put thus:

> How do we obtain self-knowledge? Not by self-observation, I suggest, but by becoming selves, and by developing theories about ourselves. Long before we attain consciousness and knowledge of ourselves, we have, normally, become aware of other persons, usually our parents. There seems to be an inborn interest in the human face: experiments by R. L. Fanz [1961] have shown that even very young babies fixate a schematic representation of a face for longer periods that a similar yet "meaningless" arrangement. These and other results suggest that very young children develop an interest in and a kind of understanding of other persons. I suggest that a consciousness of self begins to

> develop through the medium of other persons: just as we learn to see ourselves in a mirror, so that child becomes conscious of himself by seeing his reflection in the mirror of other people's consciousness of himself. (I am very critical of psycho-analysis, but it seems to me that Freud's emphasis upon the formative influence of social experiences in early childhood was correct) for example, I am inclined to suggest that when the child tries actively "to draw attention to himself" it is part of this learning process. It seems that children, and perhaps primitive people, live through an "animistic" or "hylozoistic" stage in which they are inclined to assume of a physical body that— it is animate— that it is a person— until this theory is refuted by the passivity of the thing.

The child learning about his environment must include persons as they constitute the most important objects. The child's learning is conditioned by time, thus: "the child learns to know his environment; but persons are the most important objects within his environment; and through their interest in him— and through learning about his own body— he learns in time that he is a person himself (ibid., p.110)"

Most importantly, "in order to be a self, must has to be learned; especially a sense of time, with oneself extending into the past (at least into yesterday") and into the future (at least into 'tomorrow')… so the self is, partly, the result of the active exploration of the environment, and of the grasp of a temporal routine, based upon the cycle of day and night" (ibid., 110-111). This seems to imply Hegelian type of consciousness or self where the self continues to evolve to achieve or attain his teleological goal.

On the case of the theory of "pure self" which Kant has exposed in his philosophical work to be real, which seems to suggest there exist two kinds of self— self prior to experience and self contaminated by experience has been denied by Popper as non-existence and at best a mistaken theory:

> … I do not agree with the theory of the "pure self". The philosophical term "pure" is due to Kant and suggests something like "prior to experience" or "free from (the contamination of) experience"; and so the term "pure self" suggests a theory which I think is mistaken: that the ego was there prior to experience, so that all experiences were, from the beginning, accompanied by the Cartesian and Kantian "I think" (or perhaps by "I am thinking"; at any rate by a Kantian "pure apperception"). Against this I suggest that being a self is partly the result of inborn dispositions and partly the result of experience, especially social experience. The newborn child has many inborn ways of acting and of responding, and many inborn tendencies to develop new responses and new activities. Among these tendencies is a tendency to develop into a person conscious of himself. But in order to achieve this, much must happen. A human child growing up in social isolation will fail to attain a full consciousness of self (ibid., 111).

What is obvious from this passage is that the self is partly a result of innate dispositions and partly the result of experience. Thus, the self is a mixture of innate characteristics and social characteristics. So, what we called the self is neither purely spiritual nor purely or wholly social. More so, where perhaps a human creature or being is to grow up to maturity or

adulthood in a solitary place, without social interaction and without any communication with his own kinds or species, is impossible to develop into a self. This view is akin to the social theory of the self, as seen in Hegel, Marx and Engels, Bradley and the American pragmatist G. H. Mead.

Social Theory of the Self

Hegel is apparently one of the philosophers whose philosophy and thinking are hinged on the doctrine of the self, especially self-consciousness. Hegel's (2017) philosophy of self-consciousness is found in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. He holds that the self is concerned with external or corporeal objects but it is characteristic of desire that the self subordinates the object to itself (satisfaction) and to appropriate it or even consume it. However, it is the case that this attitude of desire breaks down when it comes to other selves. Hegel argues that the presence of the other is vital to coming to self-consciousness. He also noted that "developed self-consciousness can arise only when the self recognizes selfhood in others and itself (hence, truly social or we-consciousness- of identity-in-difference). What is said here is that, the self necessarily depends on the other— a kind of social relation, for it to attain self-consciousness. The social relation of the self and the other is further articulated thus:

> The existence of another self is a condition of self-consciousness- yet the first spontaneous reaction when we are confronted by another is to assert our own existence in the face of the other. The self desires to annihilate the other (just as it does objects) as a means to triumphing of the self over the other (the self uses the other to satisfy itself). If such a move would be the literal destruction of the other, it would also defeat the self's own purposes. For self-consciousness requires the recognition of the selfhood of the other (the other must recognize me if I am to be self-conscious), and thus there occurs what Hegel calls a Master-Slave Dialectic at this level of coming to self-consciousness (ibid).

It must be said that Hegel's master-slave dialectics, also known as master-slave relationship or dynamics, explains the intricate nexus between one self and the other, a kind of superior-inferior correlation, where one dominates or imposes itself on the other and the inferior self sees his own true self in the other (master). This is clearly rendered thus: "one of the important and famous ideas introduced by Hegel (2017) in his *The Phenomenology of Spirit* is the idea of master-slave dialectic, relationship or dynamics. The issue at hand is self-consciousness and the way it is formed through meeting the other. The master is the one in the interaction who succeeds in obtaining recognition from the other in the sense that he imposes himself as the slave's value. The slave is one who sees his own true self in the other (master). Bradley's notion or doctrine of the self has its root in Aristotle's conceptualization of man as a rational or social animal.

George Herbert Mead is arguably one of the most influential thinkers/writers in the twentieth century, whose work on the development of the self and the objectivity of the world within the social realm has enormously shaped social philosophy and the psychology discipline. In his two most profound areas of writing; "Pragmatism and Symbolic Interaction", Mead argued that "the individual mind can exist only in relation to other minds with shared meanings" (David, 1982:5). He thinks that there is no distinction between consciousness and

action and interaction as well. Rather, consciousness is an integral part of action and interaction.

His most prominent idea is the emergence of the mind and self from the communication process between organisms. "This concept of how the mind and self emerge from the social process of communication by signs founded the symbolic interactionist school of sociology. Rooted intellectually in Hegelian dialectics and process philosophy, Mead, like Dewey, developed a more materialist process philosophy that was based upon human action and specifically communicative action" (George Herbert Mead, 2019). The emergence of mind or self in Mead's opinion is dependent on the interface between the human organism and its social environment. The argument is rendered thus:

> The emergence of the mind is contingent upon interaction between the human organism and its social environment; it is through participation in the social act of communication that individuals realize their potential for significantly symbolic behaviour, that is, thought. Mind, in Mead's terms, is the individualized focus of the communication process. It is linguistic behaviour on the part of the individual. There is, then, no "mind or thought without language;" and language (the content of mind) "is only a development and product of social interaction"(…). Thus, mind is not reducible to the neurophysiology of the organic individual, but is emergent in "the dynamic, ongoing social process" that constitutes human experience (ibid).

Furthermore, it is the case that mind, in Mead's view arises out of a social process, that is, through the social act of communication. This is an important aspect that is instrumental to his theory of mind and his social philosophy. It is argued that "his theory of mind, self, and society" is, in effect, a philosophy of the act from the standpoint of a social process involving the interaction of many individuals, just as his theory of knowledge and value is a philosophy of the act from the standpoint of the experiencing individual in interaction with an environment" (Cronk, 2005).

Mead further opines that the individual is a product of an on-going, pre-existing society, or more specifically, social interaction that is a consequence of a *sui generis* society. In the same way, he argued that the self arises when the individual becomes an object to themselves (George Herbert Mead, 2019). He averred further that we are objects first to other people, and secondarily we become objects to ourselves by taking the perspective of other people. It is by the means of language that enables us talk about ourselves in the same way as we talk about other people, and thus through language we become other to ourselves (Gillespie, 2006).

It therefore implies that language is important in the discussion and the argument of personal identity. How language is used to construe personal identity's debate, to a certain extent determines the veracity of the personal identity argument. When Locke says, for example, that a person is a thinking intelligent being who is conscious of himself as himself, this depends almost totally on the use of language. Similarly, the argument that we are human organisms and that organism's vegetative state explains or consists of a person's identity over time necessarily depends on the use and meaning we ascribe to language.

In all, George Mead (1967:178-179) sees the mind as the individual importation of the social process. The self, according to Mead is a social process. This implies that there are series of actions that go on in the mind to help formulate one's complete self. He noted that as gestures are taken in by the individual organism, the individual organism also takes in the collective attitudes of others, in the form of gestures, and reacts accordingly with other organized attitudes (Ibid., p.179). Mead explains the process as the "I" and the "Me". According to him, the "Me" is the social self and the "I" is the response of an individual to the attitudes of others, while the "Me" is the organized set of attitudes of others which an individual assumes (Margolis, 2001).

The Self as Physical Body

The contention that we are body and that the self is identified as physical body has been somewhat argued by Popper to be incorrect and misleading. He emphasized that we cannot simply identify our personal selves with our bodies since it is possible to distinguish between bodies and mind; and whatever the self is, is to a large extent independent of the body. He buttressed the point thus: "we learn to distinguish between parts of our body that are sensate and others (nail, hair) that are not. This is still part of what we may describe as the "naturally" developed world-view. But then we learn about surgical operations: we learn that we can do without appendix, gall bladder, parts of our stomach, without limbs, without eyes; that we can do without our own kidneys, and even without our own heart. All this teaches us that our bodies are, to a surprising and even shocking extent, expendable. And this teaches us that we cannot simply identify our personal selves with our bodies" (Popper, 1983:117).

For the psychological approach proponents, especially those who believe or associate consciousness with the self or personal identity, the seat of consciousness is the brain; the brain is referred to something that is physical, that is, as part of the body, though this remains arguable. Suppose the brain is the seat of consciousness, this means that consciousness transfers from one body to another is possible as it is possible to do brain-transplant— for example, an experiment that has been carried out to repair and cure or effect treatment in epilepsy patients. Let us assume the case of a patient who had a brain damage requiring surgery. Assuming or granted that the brain is physical and transferable to another person's physical body, this implies that the transfer will requires two bodies— *A* and *B*. The pertinent question therefore is, the eventual body that receives the body *B* will possess what identity? In other words, the brain is transferred from one body *A*, let us say the donor, the other body *B* that will receive it will be the receiving body- then what identity will the new body have-bearing in mind that it carries with it some parts of *A*'s body and some parts of B's body?

The supposed answer will be inconclusive. It will be difficult to reach or ascertain the actual identity. This is much easier if the brain was to be something mental. If B's brain is completely dead and it is replaced with A's, then the outcome remains as A because nothing has changed, except for the change of physical body which in this instant has no importance as far as identity is concerned. But this is a separate issue if part of A's brain was to be used to repair or fix part of B's brain. This means that the new object carries with it part of A and part of B. The identity of the new object will be determined by the amount of degree and weightings of dimension it has in relation to the old properties. In other words, what amount of A is in B and what amount of B remains when A was added? Nozick has attempted an answer to this. It is called the closest continuer theory.

The theory is expressed thus: "the closest continuer view presents a necessary condition for identity; something at t_2 is not the same entity as x at t_1 if it is not x's closest continuer. And "closest" means closer than all others; if two things at t_2 tie in closeness to x at t_1, then neither is the same entity as x. However, something may be the closest continuer of x without being close enough to it to be X. How close something must be to x to be x, it appears, depends on the kind of entity x is, as do the dimensions along which closeness is measured" (Nozick, 2003:97). Going by this theory, we can therefore resolve that the new object— call it C, is identical to either A or B depending on the weight of property C possesses in relation to either A's or B's properties. When C possesses 70% of A's property than B, then it can be said that C is the closest continuer of A. similarly, if C possesses 70% of B's property than A, then it can be said that C is the closest continuer of B. The circumstance where C possesses 50% of A's property and 50% of B's property, it is said not to be identical to neither A nor B. The closeness or identity of C to A or B can be explicated by the degree of causal connection.

Furthermore, "the closest continuer view holds that y at t_2 is the same person as x at t_1 only if, first, y's properties at t_2 stem from, grow out of, are causally dependent on x's properties at t_1 and, second, there is no other z at t_2 that stands in a closer (or as close) relationship to x at t_1 than y at t_2 does" (Ibid., p.99). Closeness in this sense implies not merely the degree of causal connection, but also the qualitative closeness of what is connected, as this is judged by some weighting of dimensions and features in a similarity metric (ibid.). Nozick examined and applied his theory to some relevant cases and concluded that "… I do not believe there is some one metric space in which to measure closeness for each of our identities. The content of the measure of closeness, and so the content of a person's identity through time, can vary (somewhat) from person to person. What is special about people, about selves, is that what constitutes their identity through time is partially determined by their own conception of themselves, a conception which may vary, perhaps appropriately does vary, from person to person" (ibid., p. 133).

Furthermore, Hume's claim that the self is illusion— stream of consciousness or bundle of experiences has been refuted on the grounds that there is the unity of the self. The unity of the self has been established by the fact that the individual organism— the animal— is a unit; also by the fact that each of the various ways of behaving— the items of the behaviourial repertoire— is a unit, the whole repertoire forming a set of mutually exclusive alternatives; and finally the central organ of control must act as a unit (or rather, it will be more successful if it does) Popper, 1983:128).

Conclusion

In conclusion, whether the self is something physical or not, demands much investigation. Many scholars are divided over this and much of their stands depend on their orientation and conception of what reality is. Philosophers who are oriented towards the belief that the whole of reality is matter would like to accept or see the self to be such. Also, many scholars who believed that the whole of reality is mind or spiritual will take the self as such. The argument that is more plausible and convincing is certain to gain more acceptability and attract wider audience and adherents. So far, we have been able to explore the nature of the self, its meaning and analyze some scholars' perception of the self. To accept Locke's conception of the self as consciousness and the contrary view of Hume leaves one in skepticism. More so, the different

hermeneutic interpretations and theorizations about the self provide less help in the clear-cut conceptualization of the cognitive understanding of the self.

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