

AlephPlus Trial Edit

The concept of the Self, or *personal identity*, has spanned the history of philosophy as one of its most monumental and enduring questions. Certainly, modern developments in neurology, psychology, cognitive science, and philosophy of mind have done much to shape new perspectives on the subject. Yet in terms of which prior theories remain prominent, the Self-as-immaterial-substance and David Hume's *bundle theory* are indeed two.

With the first notion, the Person is considered an immaterial substance existing independently of corporal form, where personal identity is a phenomenon one comprehends directly. And yet, as bundle theory counters, the unity of consciousness can be explained only if the Self exists already. Thus, does Hume reject the idea of the Self's direct experience, believing instead that no such substance exists at all. Rather, to explain the unity of consciousness, no assumption of immaterial substance is required since this unity is elucidated via memory and psychological continuity. The Person is merely a collection of mental events linked to the nervous system (more specifically the brain) through a cause-and-effect relationship.

David Hume, for the first time in the history of Western philosophy, introduced and defended this viewpoint. Yet his was also a theory bearing similarities with the Buddhist ideal of *no-self*, in which the continual practice of intuitive meditation renders a realization of the Self as, in fact, non-existent. And it is through the realization of such insight that the groundwork for a moral life is to be laid.

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