

Historical Origins of the Modern Mind/Body Split

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It is argued that a radical relocation of subjectivity began several thousand years ago. A subjectivity experienced in the centric region of the heart, and in the body as a whole, began to be avoided in favor of the eccentric head as a new location of subjectivity. In ancient literature, for example in Homer's epics, the heart and various other bodily organs were described as centers of subjectivity and organs of perception for spiritual experience and communion with others and the world. Mind and body were integrated. But also in the early historical record, as in the Old Testament, the heart and body were increasingly described as rebellious and rejected as impure. Head and heart, mind and body, became estranged. The body was judged an unsuitable, impure vessel for spiritual experience. This change in the location of subjectivity presaged the later development of Platonic, Gnostic, Christian, and Cartesian distinctions favoring mind over and against the body. It may also have contributed to some of the characteristic psychological and pathological processes (e.g., psychosomatic illnesses, repression, narcissism) currently attributed to the psychology of the modern Western, and specifically, North American self.

While the history described below is speculative in many respects, in part due to a lack of historical data about psychological processes characteristic of ancient individuals prior to 500 B.C.E., this history is not meant to be definitive but rather a heuristic stimulus toward further investigation into the historical origins of the psychology of modern Western and, specifically, North American individuals. The split between mind and body that has characterized the psychology of the modern individual may be the symptom of a process begun several millennia ago. Understanding this split, both in its historical development and in its modern form, may provide important new insights for modern psychology, psychopathology, and psychotherapy.

The use of historical data to explore psychological processes, while controversial and currently somewhat questioned, can be justified by the usefulness of the product. This form of research is necessarily speculative and subject to various substantive criticisms, but on the other hand to ignore this data seems to me irresponsible, a symptom of the modern era's inappropriate dismissal of history as a relevant fund of this kind of knowledge.

There are two hypotheses to keep in mind about the data presented below. The first is that originally, at some time in prehistory, all individuals experienced an integrated subjectivity in the heart and body as a whole but gradually lost touch with this form of awareness as subjectivity moved into the head. The second hypothesis is that the heart and body were always estranged from the head and the integration of head and heart, mind and body, was only attained by those who experienced a type of religious conversion or became successfully engaged in certain types of religious disciplines (e.g., initiation rites, personal and/or collective religious quests).

Both hypotheses suggest that traditional histories of consciousness are primarily about the psychology of the majority, of those individuals whose subjectivity was limited to head-consciousness and who therefore were estranged from a more unified consciousness that included their bodies. It is further suggested that the psychology of this majority of individuals, who presumably suffered from internal conflict associated with if not caused by a split between mind and body, was shaped by often misdirected and unsuccessful efforts to relieve this suffering through belief in, and dedication to, various religious systems and disciplines.

Some of the historical information supporting the above hypotheses is interpreted as referring to a unified consciousness, a healing of the estrangement of mind and body. This information primarily consists of descriptions of the psychology of spiritual and philosophical leaders as well as their hints and remonstrances directed toward those who were suffering and wished to be healed of their loss of unity or integration, though few understood their suffering or its solution in this manner.

Historical differences in psychological functioning are more easily detected when comparing literature separated by millennia, for example, comparing the (primarily religious) literature describing the psychological experience of ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Jewish individuals (prior to about 500 B.C.E.) with literature describing modern individuals (since about 1700 C.E.). The "Homeric" Greek heroes (e.g., those portrayed by Homer in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*) were described as experiencing the location of all psychological processes in specific areas of the body (as opposed to the head) [Bremmer, 1983]: "The Homeric hero both feels and thinks with the *phrenes* or midriff [diaphragm], whence the later *phronesis*, thought or wisdom" (Peters, 1967, p. 100). More often, however, the location of thought and feeling was referred

to as the *heart*. It is argued below that this subjectivity of heart and body found in ancient literature has no equivalent in modern psychological literature. This consciousness of the heart, that is only rarely and vaguely referred to in contemporary descriptions of “religious” experience, provides important clues about the historical origins of what has since been referred to as the psychological split between mind and body of modern individuals.

The many references in ancient literature supporting the existence of a unified consciousness of mind and body, a *heart-consciousness*, cannot be described as compelling and often appear, from a modern perspective, to be more of a metaphoric than literal reference to the subjectivity of the heart. But there is also no question that references to the heart in some of the literature from several early “Western” cultures (Egyptian, Hebraic, Greek), in the period roughly before 500 B.C.E., imply a subjectivity that is significantly different from psychological descriptions of modern individuals. The relative infrequency of references to a heart-consciousness, especially of references that in modern terms would be characterized as “secular,” may be due to this form of subjectivity being taken for granted (just as modern literature does not often refer specifically to the head as a center of subjectivity).

In summary, the psychology of ancient individuals (before c. 500 B.C.E.) can only be indirectly and incompletely surmised from the available literature for several reasons: insufficient descriptions of psychological experience, language usage and cultural differences that are no longer understood, and the consequent impossibility of accurate translation. Nevertheless, even within these severe limitations, it remains a valuable exercise to explore translations of this literature for clues and suggestions about the origins of the psychological functioning of modern Western individuals.

The following quote from Archilochus (680–640 B.C.E.), a Greek mercenary soldier, has both metaphoric and literal implications that distinguish it from modern psychological discourse:

Heart, my heart, so battered with misfortunes far beyond your strength, up, and face the men who hate us. Bare your chest to the assault of the enemy, and fight them off
Keep some measure in the joy you take in luck, and the degree you give way to sorrow.
All our life is up and down like this. (Lattimore, 1960, p. 3)

Here, it seems, is a *shared* identity as well as an affiliation and discourse that gives the heart provenance in regard to certain qualities, such as courage and emotion. The metaphoric usage is unusual but comprehensible in this translation. In what follows, however, instead of assuming that this language is a form of poetic license, the literal implications of this discourse are explored — that the *heart or chest region*, but not necessarily the actual organ of the heart, was experienced by some exceptional, if not all ancient individuals, as a kind of co-equal identity and especially as an organ of perception facilitative of religious experience.

In contrast to the hypothesized integrated heart-consciousness that will be described below, the literature describing modern individuals exclusively locates psychological processes in a transcendent, nonphysical *mind* located in the *head*. The subjectivity of the head tends to *objectify experience* and *judgmentally distance itself* from all ingredients of consciousness (bodily sensations, inclinations, and often emotions) that do not qualify as self-generated thought (i.e., mind). While self-generated thought is “owned,” most of the rest of experience, and particularly that experienced via the body, is “dis-owned” (i.e., more or less objectified as other). This *head-consciousness* tends toward the assumption of control over experience and favors disintegration and individuation, setting up artificial distinctions and barriers between itself and the rest (objectified and rejected portions) of the psyche, the body, others, and experience of the world in general.

In psychological descriptions of the modern Western individual the body is relatively mute. It is described as the location of “drives,” “instincts,” and desires as well as physical pleasures and aches and pains. Modern North American individuals, for example, are more concerned with the appearance and utility of the body than with its experience and tend to objectify the body in regard to its attractiveness and capabilities. The body is included in self-awareness but individuals rarely attribute subjective experience to bodily locations, despite the still common use of metaphors that imply the inclusion of the heart and other parts of the body in psychological experience.

In the modern era, although emotions and sensations are still experienced in the body, this shared sense of awareness is notably limited by the sense that the location of the “I” of consciousness is restricted to the head. The unmediated experience of the body remains relatively unconscious. When the statement is made that “I” feel or “I” touch, for example, an abstraction is being expressed by a self-construct. Bodily experience is first translated into language and evaluated according to its compatibility with the self-construct. The self-construct then “owns” (one etymological root of the word self is *possession*) or disowns (e.g., represses, denies, or ignores) these bodily experiences. Acknowledged experience of the body is “possessed” by head-consciousness and bodily experience incompatible with the self-construct is dispossessed.

While it remains unknown how the psychology of individuals in ancient civilizations should be described, it is argued below that, at least for some ancient individuals, psychological experience was a relatively unmediated awareness shaped by where it was experienced in the body and by the imagination of an empathic attunement with the source of stimulation. Stimulation from an other provoked a sympathetic imagination of the embodiment and perspective of the other or object (as in animism) rather than filtering the stimulus through an analysis of its meaning for the individ-

ual experiencing it. In other words, understanding through the body was a sympathetic intuition of the experience of others and objects rather than an egocentric analysis of experience. In this sense heart-consciousness was not only integrative of the totality of subjective experience, but also integrative of the imagined empathic experience of all living things and objects perceived in the world. In religious terms, to experience heart-consciousness was to experience what was referred to as the soul, anchored in the body but evoking what was referred to as spirit, an experience of mind or being that is inexplicable in modern language. The integrated psyche both creates and is created by something new, the psychospiritual organ centrally located in the heart.

Whether or not these speculations are accurate, given the differences in descriptions of the psychological experience of various ancient peoples (summarized below) in comparison with modern psychological discourse, the assumption that these descriptive differences reflect qualitatively different forms of awareness of self and other seems worthy of further exploration. In what follows it is argued that between two historical periods, prior to about 500 B.C.E. and the modern era beginning about 1700 C.E, the location and quality of self-awareness was gradually, but over this extended period radically, altered by the *migration of subjectivity from heart to head*.

According to the hypotheses explored below, the psychology attributed to modern Western individuals is the culmination of a long period of an upward migration of self-awareness from the body to the head. If heart-consciousness can be equated with pre-modern use of the word soul, then it becomes easier in the context of this discussion to understand religious language. Even the relatively recent usage of English language reveals that many of the meanings of the words heart and soul are identical. It is likely that originally the term *soul* referred to a subjective awareness that was located and experienced in the *heart* and various other parts of the body as well as the head. But this meaning was altered over time, divorcing the soul from the body and its original location in a unified consciousness centered in the heart. This interpretation is substantiated by a comparison of the meanings of the words heart and soul in English. According to the Oxford English Dictionary [OED] (1971), among various meanings of the word heart are the following:

Considered as the center of vital functions; the seat of life; the vital part or principle; hence in some phrases = life As the seat of feeling, understanding, and thought Mind, in the widest sense, including the functions of feeling, volition, and intellect . . . spoken of as having ears, eyes, etc., meaning those faculties of the mind, understanding, or emotional nature, that have some analogy to these bodily organs The seat of one's inmost thoughts and secret feelings; one's inmost being; the depths of the soul; the soul; the spirit The seat of the mental or intellectual faculties. Often = understanding, intellect, mind The moral sense, conscience . . . (pp. 159-160)

Compare this to the meanings of the word soul:

The principle of life in man or animals The principle of thought and action in man, commonly regarded as an entity distinct from the body; the spiritual part of man in contrast to the purely physical The seat of the emotions, feelings, or sentiments; the emotional part of man's nature Intellectual or spiritual power; high development of the mental faculties The essential, fundamental, or animating part, element, or feature of something The spiritual part of man considered in its moral aspect or in relation to God or His precepts (OED, 1971, pp. 460–462)

In most of these usages the soul and heart are equal terms, referring to the same psychological element. At the same time, they have become opposites, one referring to the bodily part, the other to a disembodied, spiritual part of the same psychological experience (e.g., emotions, mind, conscience). Many of these meanings, especially those where heart and soul are equated, are no longer current, dating from pre-modern usages. There is a long history of the cleavage between the words heart and soul, for example beginning in dualistic religions (e.g., Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Gnosticism) and philosophies (e.g., Platonism, NeoPlatonism). But it is suggested that these perspectives were at least partly generated in response to and were a product of the head-consciousness that first began to appear in the historical record of the earliest civilizations and much of their literature: becoming common and accepted usage in more recent history, especially in the modern era.

Current metaphoric uses of the words heart and soul, to refer to desire, emotions, depth of consciousness and commitment, or even to religious devotion, are only a faint and ultimately misleading recollection of the ancient uses of these words. Use of the word soul as a reference to identity in pre-modern literature alluded to a relatively more embodied location of self-awareness. In contrast the word self as a reference to identity currently refers to a consciousness more or less limited to the head. But the degree and significance of the difference in the meanings and experiential references of these two words gradually became unclear as the modern era approached and as use of the word soul to designate identity was replaced by use of the word self.

The History of Heart-Consciousness

It is suggested below that when individuals in early civilizations “thought” with the heart, the word thought had a different definition. The thought of the heart not only included a coming into a relationship with, or felt perspective toward something, but an intuitive imagining of the internal experience of the other or object, especially including its place in and perspective of the world. In contrast, in the modern era, thought is located in the head and refers to external experience and to the imaginative egocentric manipu-

lation of abstractions for the purpose of defining, objectifying, and controlling experience. The modern individual understands the perspective of the other more often than not through *projection*, the attribution of one's own perspective onto others. This often results in a narcissistic need to objectify and control others and the world in order to force them to mirror one's own thought.

Unlike modern languages, ancient languages were grounded in a bodily perspective and sensuous experience. Early Greek designations for parts of the psyche were located in the heart (*kardia*, *ker*, *etor*), chest (*thymos*, *noos*, *menos*), and lungs (*phrenes*, *prapides*) [see Bremmer, 1983, pp. 55–63]. Various parts of the body were described as the preferred organs and means of perception and knowing and the subjectivity of the body was not internally separated from experience through the mediation of conceptual and evaluative processes. Awareness was less dependent upon translation into and filtering through language, belief systems, and self-interested evaluative processes.

It is likely that relationship or emotional attitude and the sensible responsiveness of the body, including taste, smell, and touch, as well as other intuitive and empathic faculties currently outside of the experience of most modern individuals, were the substance and grounding of piety, thought, and reason. The perspective of this heart-consciousness, based on what to modern individuals would include a reintegration of head and body and expansion of awareness into the imagined subjectivity of others and the world, was probably not only additive but transformative of awareness in a way that has so far proven to be inexplicable in modern secular language. Being inexplicable, integrative experiences of mind and body have historically tended to be translated into religious terminology, a language that has obscured more than it revealed when used to describe and communicate these experiences. The unitary perspective that results from this integration has continued to be qualitatively different from anything within the current range of normal psychological experience. Despite this obscurity in the historical record and lack of a current secular lexicon with which to articulate this integrated form of consciousness, the qualitative difference between head- and heart-consciousness is made more clear when use of the word heart is explored in the history of religious literature.

References in religious literature to the heart, implying its location as the subjective center of awareness — as a reference to identity and to an integrated form of consciousness in the same way that the word soul was used — can be found in ancient Egyptian (Jacobsohn, 1968), Jewish (Werblowsky, 1970), Greek (Bremmer, 1983; Simon, 1978), and Roman (Meier, 1986) literatures as well as in the medieval Islamic (Corbin, 1969), Hasidic (Hurwitz, 1968), Eastern Orthodox Christian (Kadloubovsky and Palmer, 1963), Amerindian (Black Elk, 1953), and Tibetan (Kongtrul, 1987) literatures. For

the ancient Egyptian the heart was “. . . the seat of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding; it is the link between the physical body and the spiritual body” (Ellis, 1988, p. 24).

On earth I walk daily before the gods, but in the house of heaven my feet are still. There is no need for haste. My heart is a lyre that hums. My lungs fill with the breath of fire. A cool breeze encircles me. I rest in god's bosom here, while on earth my hands are busy. And when work is done, I return to the heart afire, center of the universe, peace, unto god. (from the *Book of the Dead*, Ellis, 1988, p. 54)

In the ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, a compilation of funerary texts from 3000 B.C.E. to 300 C.E., a deceased male addressed his heart as “mother” and “father,” the seat of his being (Budge, 1969, 1973). After death the heart was pictured as removed from the body in order to be weighed on a scale with a feather on the other side. The feather represented *ma'at*, truth, and may have assessed the fidelity of the heart toward manifesting what today is vaguely referred to as “soul” or “spirit.”

Observed and recorded by Thoth, whose Greek equivalent was Hermes, the language of the heart, its lightness or heaviness, softness or hardness, openness or closedness, unerringly revealed the spiritual state of the soul. The question to be answered before Osiris by weighing the soul was whether the individual had been able to inhabit the heart, that is, had truly lived in a union of heaven and earth, or had never become embodied, having lived instead as a ghost-like, disembodied shade that had never been able to quicken and enlighten the body.

May a man grow great enough to inhabit his heart May his heart be wide enough to hold the hearts of others May his heart become an altar unto god. (from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Ellis, 1988, pp. 120–121)

In the Old Testament the heart was the seat of consciousness and the major figures of early Jewish history “spoke from the heart” (e.g., Abraham [Gen. 17:17], Esau [Gen. 27:41], David [Isa. 27:1], Hannah [Isa. 1:13], Jeroboam [1K 12:26], and Daniel [Dan. 1:8]). To “set the heart” upon something was to consider or think about it (e.g., Isa 41:22), and the ancient Hebrews thought (1K 8:47), meditated (Ps 19:14; Ps 49:3), intended (Jer 30:24), and willed either spiritually with the wise and open heart (2Ch 9:23; Ex 35:34; 1K 12:33) or perversely with the froward heart (Pro 6:14, 11:20, 17:20; Isa 57:17).

Heart referred in part to what we currently call “mind” (Nu 16:28, 24:13; Neh 4:6; Job 8:10; Pro 16:9; Ecc 7:4; Jer 3:16, 31:21, 32:35) and the ego, self, or “I” (Neh 5:7; Est 6:6; Pro 24:32). The clean, pure, upright heart was opposed to the hardened, stony, vain, and egotistic heart. The consecrated or

spiritual heart was free (2Ch 29:31), perfect (1Ch 28:9, 29:9), enlarged (Ps 119:32), whole (Ps 119:2, 10, 34, 58, 69, 145, 138:1), illuminated (2Pet 1:19), and a gift from God:

Yet to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear. (Deu 29:4)

And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the Lord, and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart. (Jer 24:7)

Although the New Testament referred to the heart less frequently, it remained the primary spiritual organ, especially for Jesus. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mat 5:8), but Jesus was grieved by the sons of men whose hearts were hardened (Mar 3:5) and who were "... blind in their hearts" (Mayotte, 1997, p. 52). Although they "... honor me with their lips ... their heart is far from me" (Mat 15:8).

For the heart of the people has become dull [literally, "waxed gross"], and with their ears they scarcely hear and they have closed their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn again, and I should heal them. (Mat 13:15 and Acts 28:27)

Christians, to whom God "... gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge" (2Co 1:22) "... are the letter of Christ ... written ... on tablets of human hearts" (2Co 3:3). "God has sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts" (Gal 4:6) "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts" (Eph 3:17). "May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ" (2Th 3:5), and "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts" (1Pet 3:15).

But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. (1Pet 3:4)

Christian mystic literature was often more heart-centered than traditional dogma because it was usually the expression of a personal, affective spiritual experience as opposed to the head-centered pedantry of theological prescriptions for spiritual striving. For example, the medieval mystic Henry Suso (1295–1366 C.E.), a student of Meister Eckhart, described the way to salvation as proceeding through the heart, which symbolized, among other things, "... the inmost being of man, the noble divine part of him, the 'ground of the soul,' the divine spark, God's own image in man, the 'high nobility of his rationality'" (Nygren, 1969, p. 615).

The Fathers of what has come to be generally referred to as the Eastern Orthodox Church practiced what they called the Prayer of the Heart. This prayer referred to a discipline focused on moving the location of subjectiv-

ity, or mind, from head to heart. According to these Fathers the most important spiritual struggle for the Orthodox Christian was to enter the heart and remain there on guard, keeping it secure against desire, sin, and Satan. If this struggle was successful, then “. . . God appears to the mind in the heart, at first as a flame purifying its lover, and then as a light which illumines the mind and renders it God-like” (Kadloubovsky and Palmer, 1963, pp. 24–25).

In reading about this religious practice, it becomes clear that these Fathers were describing a different form of normative consciousness than is commonly experienced today. For example,

You know that in every man inner talking is in the breast. For, when our lips are silent, it is in the breast that we talk and discourse with ourselves, pray and sing psalms, and do other things. (Kadloubovsky and Palmer, 1963, p. 33, fnt 2)

According to this statement, for “every man inner talking,” which I take to be “thought,” no doubt manifested in a different form than currently experienced, occurred in the chest or heart region. In contrast subjectivity or “mind,” no doubt also experienced in a temporally and culturally unique way, was more specifically located, as is now commonly accepted, in the head. The “inner talking,” referred to in ancient literature as the thought of the heart, is no longer experienced in modern consciousness.

Submission to God was central to the differentiation of Islam from its predecessors, the “people of the book” (e.g., the Old and New Testaments), and a heart-centered mystical tradition differentiated Sufism from Islam (Corbin, 1969). For the Sufi Ibn Arabi (1165–1240 C.E.) the heart was the organ of spiritual perception, producing the light by which true knowledge and comprehensive intuition became possible. The heart of the Sufi was a mirror, the “eye” by which God knew Himself: “The mystery of the Divine Essence is no other than the Temple of the heart, and it is around the heart that the spiritual pilgrim circumambulates” (Corbin, 1969, pp. 279–80).

Through the active imagination of the Sufi the “. . . heart projects what is reflected in it (that which it mirrors); and the object on which he thus concentrates his creative power, his imaginative meditation, becomes the *apparition* of an outward, extra-psychic reality” (Corbin, 1969, p. 223), which only mystics (Sufis) were able to perceive.

If the heart is the mirror in which the Divine Being manifests His form according to the capacity of this heart, the Image which the heart projects is in turn the outward form, the “objectivization” of this Image. Here indeed, we find confirmation of the idea that the Gnostic’s *heart* is the “eye” by which God reveals Himself to Himself. (p. 224)

According to Jami (1414–1492 C.E.) the duty of the Sufi consists in realizing unity with God.

Unification consists in making the heart single — that is, in purifying and divesting it of attachment to aught except God, both in respect of desire and will and also as regards knowledge and gnosis. (Nicholson, 1975, p. 83)

The Problem of Spiritual Striving

From the above history it may be surmised that Jesus was proposing a return to the heart-consciousness that had already by his time been almost entirely suppressed. But if so this reform was too radical a reversal of Jewish culture and Hellenistic civilized values, as subsequent events proved. Within a century after his death Jesus' message had already been misunderstood by the Christian Fathers, and was further distorted four hundred years later by Augustine (354–430 C.E.) into a type of Platonism that advocated a modified form of the idealistic seeking of transcendence rather than embodiment of soul. Even though equating religion with love, Augustine proposed seven ascending stages on the road to perfection and emphasized the idea of a path to be followed from which the Christian must not turn aside:

. . . the law may show us where the road lies, but the important thing is that we should keep our destination in view, that we should run straight for the goal of perfection, and not turn aside from that line . . . The wicked man is the man who turns aside, for that is the mark of evil. (Evans, 1990, pp. 159–160)

Augustine, however, took both sides on this issue that came to a head in the Pelagian controversy (Lind, 1999), when he proposed a definition of *original sin* based on a critique of self-interested striving interpreted as the temptation of the Devil or Lucifer, beginning with Eve and Adam, to usurp God's place in the determination of one's state of being and destiny. To clarify the problem of striving Augustine described Christian love as *agape*, the compassionate serving of others, as opposed to the more or less heretical NeoPlatonic and Gnostic *eros* (i.e., striving to achieve an intellectual "knowing"), that according to those who opposed this perspective as heretical (Nygren, 1969) was based on a *superbia* (pride) that encouraged egocentric striving as the means of "return" to a former state of spiritual transcendence.

Christian *agape* was associated with the heart and Gnostic *eros* was associated by some of its critics with the head or with an upward, self-interested striving for transcendence, the former an affective receptiveness and compassion and the latter an erotic and wilfull seeking to know and become the

ideal. *Agape* was centered in the now and with things as they were, whereas *eros* was preoccupied with change and transformation, with things as they "ought" to be or as they formerly had been in an ideal pre-existence.

Whether or not this is an accurate description of the terms *agape* and *eros*, the difference highlighted by Augustine suggests the important distinction between an inflationary, self-serving seeking of transcendence versus affective receptiveness, acceptance, and compassion as a preferred way of being. The contrast between compassionate acceptance versus self-interested striving for spirituality was a central issue in early Greek culture. Differences of opinion on this issue in early Christian communities (strongly influenced by Hellenistic and particularly Roman thought) contributed to the controversies that led to the separation of Roman and Greek Orthodox Christianity and the later separation of Protestantism from Catholicism. For example Luther (1483–1546 C.E.), in response to a treatise by Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536 C.E.) on free will that defended the liberalism and humanism of the Catholicism of the late Renaissance in the early 16th century, made clear his conviction of the impotence of spiritual striving in *The Bondage of the Will*:

Man, before he is created to be man does and endeavors nothing toward his being made a creature, and when he is made and created he does and endeavors nothing toward his continuance as a creature; both his creation and his continuance come to pass by the sole will of the omnipotent power and goodness of God So, too, I say that man, before he is renewed into the new creation of the Spirit's kingdom, does and endeavors nothing to prepare himself for that new creation and kingdom, and when he is recreated he does and endeavors nothing toward his perseverance in that kingdom, but the Spirit alone works both blessings in us Thus he preaches, shows mercy to the poor, and comforts the afflicted by means of us. But what is hereby attributed to "free-will"? What, indeed, is left it but — nothing! In truth, nothing! (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 268)

Despite early Church and later Protestant suppression of the ideology of seeking, the upward-oriented seeking of transcendence characteristic of head-consciousness remained a central element in Christianity and finally triumphed at the beginning of the modern era as the contrary, more heart-centered and other-oriented perspective of the dependence of the seeker upon the compassionate intervention of God was increasingly ignored and denied. Paradoxically the late medieval and especially liberal Protestant tendency (as in Methodism) toward the assumption of grace and of sanctification of the will eroded the need for the support of traditional religion as the modern individual began to assume what were formerly considered to be god-like powers. When those traditions that had constrained seeking were devalued by modern culture, Christianity and especially Protestantism undermined its own authority by going along with these liberal and humanistic trends. Modern individuals began to openly assume control of their destiny and of their ability to achieve salvation through seeking perfection of

the self-construct. Head-consciousness became triumphant as it claimed to be the apex of evolution, and egocentric striving proceeded to transform the world and society into its own likeness.

Some of the psychological characteristics attributed to modern individuals imply that we are *erotic* seekers (of spirituality, self-realization, wealth and power) [Lind, 2000], and it is suggested below that this tendency toward self-interested striving and narcissism in general, labelled as impious less than two hundred years ago (Lind, 1999), is fundamental for an understanding and tracing of the historical migration of self-awareness from the other-oriented heart to the self-centered head.

Historical Considerations

Since experiential knowledge of the earlier form of natural heart-consciousness was already becoming rare by the beginning of recorded history and the heart and body had already become estranged and untrustworthy (impious, "froward," covetous, errant), there was no general direction of return or renewal for the new civilized consciousness that seemed to take hold. The majority of the religious prescriptions for recovering the lost heart-centered soul were Platonic/erotic or other forms of transcendent misdirections, leading away from reintegration rather than toward it (Lind, 1999).

Nearly all modern forms of traditional religion (apart from "pagan" and "folk" or "popular" religions) began when symptoms of loss of soul had already become evident, as can be seen, for example, in Greek literature and Jewish historiography. The preoccupation with secular idealism (philosophy) that first became apparent in early Greece may also have been provoked by an urge to understand the loss of heart-consciousness (still evident, for example, in the *Iliad*), to give this loss meaning, and to find a direction for a return to reintegration or recovery of soul or an integrated consciousness of mind and body. Much of Greek philosophy was a compensatory reaction to this loss of integration and a symptom of the growing dominance of an abstract, head-centered consciousness (Lind, 1999).

For example, Greek philosophers differed in their views about the location of subjectivity. Empedocles located the seat of perception in the heart; Aristotle described the heart as the *arche* (principle, starting point) of life, movement, and sensation, and for the Epicureans and Stoics the rational faculty was in the chest. A competing theory locating the seat of perception in the head originated with Pythagoras and later advocates included Plato (in the *Timaeus*) and Plotinus (Peters, 1967). These head-centered philosophies, especially Plato's, encouraged a striving for ideals that was antithetical to the heart-centered philosophies, for example Epicureanism, in which the seeking of ideals was criticized because it resulted in suffering. For Epicurus, the *empty*

striving of the seeker was the chief impediment to *ataraxia*, the suspension of ethical and judgmental processes that resulted in peace of mind (Nussbaum, 1994).

In some of these philosophies the cause of the disturbance of the passions was attributed to the head, as in errant belief systems, whereas the opposing philosophies, accepting errant passions as a given, blamed the body for disturbances in the head (errant thoughts and desires) and advocated the *transcendence* of passions and of the body. As early as 6th century B.C.E. Solon of Athens warned his contemporaries of a similar tendency toward beguilement by hope into empty striving for perfection:

But here is how we men, be we good, be we evil, think. Each keeps his own personal notion within until he suffers. Then he cries out, but all until such time we take our idiot bequilement in light-weight hopes, and one who is stricken and worn out in lingering sickness has taken measures and thinks he will grow healthy, and one who is a coward expects to turn into a warlike hero. Another, ugly, thinks of the day when his looks will charm They all rush off on their various business Danger, for all, lies in all action, for there is no telling which way the end will be after a thing is begun. (Lattimore, 1960, pp. 19–20)

This preoccupation with idealism (Solon's lightweight hopes), both religious and secular, was associated with a compensatory striving for understanding, change, growth, and power. An overzealous seeking was harnessed in the service of recovering psychological stability, certainty about and control over one's fate and gradually, over the course of Western history, this upward-oriented striving for transcendence became the new type of conscientiousness and self-control found in descriptions of the modern self (Lind, 1999, 2000).

The emergence of this new self-interested seeker at the beginning of the modern era in the West, summarized by Boorstin (1998), Lind (1999), and Taylor (1989), was fostered by ideologies (capitalism, democracy, child-rearing techniques) and institutions (educational, vocational, media) designed to reliably produce this new type of identity in all members of society. By the late 18th and more clearly by the 19th century, the psychology of the ego-centric individual became the universal ideal in Western cultures. The result was a psychological structure and dynamic designed to facilitate the seeking of "self-improvement" according to ever-changing guidelines (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton, 1985; Roof, 1999), in many ways the exact opposite of the hypothesized natural, integrative tendency and self-acceptance characteristic of the heart-consciousness that preceded it. For example in late 19th century rural America a young boy in school made the following declamation to the applause of admiring adults:

I have determined to be somebody when I come to be a man. I don't think I can ever consent to be tied down to a yard stick or watch the tiresome motions of a sawmill. I'll

clime (sic) the ladder of fame. I may go away up, and then come down "kerspat." But what of that, we are bound to have our ups and downs in this world any way. (Tyack and Hansot, 1982, p. 27)

From Soul to Self

Until the 16th and 17th centuries the soul, not the self, was the term used to refer to identity. By this historical period the distinction may have been mostly verbal, but modern use of the term *self* to refer to one's own identity was a fairly recent outcome of the historical change in self-awareness described above. The Christian objection to preference for the term *self*, based on its association with the sins of pride and covetousness, is evident in the following quote from the Puritan divine Richard Baxter (1615–1691 C.E.):

The very names of Self and Own should sound in watchful Christian ears as very terrible, wakening words, that are next to the names of sin and satan . . . Is not SELF the great idol which the whole world of unsanctified men doth worship? (Holifield, 1984, p. 58)

In early Christianity the concept of self referred to the personality, the outward indications and attributes of the individual, whereas the soul (heart) referred to inner spiritual/psychological affective experience, an emotional (loving, hateful, prideful, resistant, contemptuous) relationship with others, the world, and sometimes with divinity. The self-construct referred to the individual's presentation or imposture of the soul, usually thought of as appearing in the face and in the external appearance and demeanor of the body. As mediator between soul and other, the face expressed (and concealed) the soul and was the (opaque) window through which others believed they could view the soul. The self-construct, as face, as representation of soul, was associated with the head. Over time the self-construct lost its meaning as mediator and representative of the soul and instead began to recognize itself, with the help of others, as the focal point of identity.

By the later medieval period, when the first signs and symptoms of modern individualism began to appear, the appropriate term of reference for identity became a contentious issue, as reference to one's own person gradually changed from a preference for use of the word *soul* to a preference for the word *self*. This change of terminology was indicative of the, by now, long history of the migration of self-awareness from heart to head, from an inner subjectivity (soul) to an outer disposition (the self-construct as actor and expressive, social representative), and toward an increasing distrust and avoidance of the affections in favor of abstract thought and the order of reason, culminating in the split between mind and body of the modern individual inherited from Platonism and Christianity.

The relevance of the internal soul, its centrality as an identity anchored in the body, faded into an ideal abstraction, divorced from the body, as its presence began to be obscured for several reasons. Among the most important of these was the rebellious and adversarial nature of heart-consciousness in reaction to its increasing suppression and dissociation, so that paradoxically it provoked even more purposeful misrepresentation, the mediator of the soul becoming its impostor, concealing the (impious, unlawful, unethical) intentions of the heart. As the heart was increasingly avoided, suppressed, and contained (i.e., tamed, civilized), and ideally even forgotten, its outward-oriented former representative began to take over the role of identity.

Since this newly dominant subjective location of consciousness in the head and face only dealt with representations, conditioned intellectual and interpretive thoughts and communications — the “self-expression” of a head-consciousness — no immediate, unmediated experience could occur through it. Cultural conditioning completely determined an egocentric interpretation and evaluation of experience.

The soul (heart), now only a forgotten or idealized potential, became metaphorically imprisoned by the construct of the self (as its imposter) and by a judgmental conscience, by a subjectivity detached from immediate experience, expression, and relationship. All experience became fictional (Bentham, 1959; Spence, 1982; Vaihinger, 1925), based on interpretive fantasies subject to the limitations of a narcissistic myopia, cultural belief systems, ethical evaluations, and language (Lacan, 1977), indistinguishable from the machinations of a *poseur*.

These changes continue but have crossed a crucial threshold within the last few centuries, resulting in a modern individual that is radically different and completely estranged from the hypothesized earlier form of consciousness identified with the heart/body/soul. The conditioned psychodynamics of the modern individual, based on internal division, objectification, and conflict (e.g., self-monitoring, self-control, and self-improvement) by their very nature prevent the remembrance of this earlier form of consciousness. The self-construct, enslaved to the conscience and its ideals, creating as a byproduct the unconscious into which the rejected remainder is repressed, has become the protagonist of internal division and conflict. The resulting mutually exclusive part-selves cannot be reunited through the very processes that create and maintain their separation and mutual conflict, that is, by a head-consciousness seeking perfection or transcendence rather than reintegration, but only by something like a reversal of these tendencies (Lind, 2000).

From an evolutionary point of view it may be argued that these developments are the prelude to a new adaptation or type of differentiated consciousness. Whether or not this proves to be true, the tragic loss of soul, the

rarity of integrative experiences, makes this point irrelevant for the modern individual suffering from internal conflict. Recent history suggests that modernity may not survive this evolutionary leap or sacrifice for the sake of an ideal future and state of consciousness that, even if eventually achieved, will be a legacy for others. In relation to the almost universal suffering that results from the many consequences of head-consciousness, an evolutionary rationalization of these developments is merely another symptom of the problem.

Finally, it is sometimes valuable to look at a cultural and psychological context from the outside, from the point of view of a distinctly different culture and psychological perspective. It is valuable to see ourselves, so to speak, through the wisdom of other cultures whose history and ways of being pre-date the modern era. Thankfully there is at least one example of how modern Western individuals appeared (in 1930's America) to a representative of the (heart-centered) soul, revealed in the conversation Carl Jung had with Ochway Bianco, then chief of the Taos pueblos in New Mexico:

"See," Ochway Bianco said, "how cruel the whites look. Their lips are thin, their noses sharp, their faces furrowed and distorted by folds. Their eyes have a staring expression; they are always seeking something. What are they seeking? The Whites always want something; they are always uneasy and restless. We do not know what they want. We do not understand them. We think that they are mad." I asked him why he thought the whites were all mad. "They say that they think with their heads," he replied. "Why, of course. What do you think with?," I asked him in surprise. "We think here," he said, indicating his heart. (Jung, 1965, pp. 247-248)

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