PERSON, PERSONALITY, SELF, AND IDENTITY: A PHILOSOPHICALLY INFORMED CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

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Who is the person, or self, associated with personality disorder and its treatment? How are we to account for a self conceptualized in terms of schemas and representations, that at the same time—as self—scrutinizes these schemas and representations (as in cognitive therapy for personality disorders)? Five approaches to personhood are examined: metaphysical, empirical, transcendental, hermeneutical, and phenomenological. An elementary sense of selfhood is tied to all one’s experiences and activities; this sense of self is experientially irreducible and conceptually connected to a primordial form of self-relatedness. After examining these issues, I formulate four provisional conclusions: (a) the separation between person and roles (functions, personality features) is a modern fiction—persons are not neutral bearers of roles and functions; (b) the concept of personality in DSM-IV refers to nonhomogeneous behaviors such as feelings, moods, inclinations, temperaments, and habits, and these behaviors differ with respect to their distance to the core self; (c) there exists an enormous variety of ways of self-relating and this variety may affect the contents of the core self under certain circumstances; and (d) the concept of person may be primitive; that is, irreducible and referring to a background of unity and integrity.

There is a paucity of reflection on the nature of personhood in personality theory (Gabbard, 1997; West, 2003). Who is the person having a personality or a personality disorder? How is personality connected with personhood? What does it mean for the individual person to have a particular personality disorder or personality traits? These questions are not merely theoretical. For instance, does change of personality structure imply that one has turned into a different, or an other, person? The question may seem a little exaggerated; however, it is not far from what clinicians hear and what patients sometimes think and say. Not only may patients have concerns about losing control or being brainwashed in the course of treatment, they also sometimes affirm that they have changed into other per-
sons. Reports about these concerns emerged after the introduction of sero-
tonin reuptake inhibitors and were presented by Peter Kramer in his
*Listening to Prozac* (Kramer, 1993). Interestingly, some of Kramer’s pa-
tients reported that once they began medication therapy they became “who
they really were,” implying that while being in their initial state of person-
hood they already had some sense of their subsequent and more authentic
personhood, at least in such a form that it could be unpacked and recog-
nized at a later stage. So, are we talking about different persons, about
different states of personhood, or about different personalities? Or could
the alterations in personhood perhaps better be described in terms of a
change of self, or core self?

I take the notion of *person* here to denote the individual human being,
both in its singularity and in its quality of being a human person. *Person-
hood*, then, refers to being-a-person, whereas the term *self* refers to the
experiential side of personhood; that is, to the core self as (among others)
a form of basic self-awareness which at the same time reflects an elemen-
tary form of self-relatedness. In my use of the concepts of personality and
personality disorder I will not deviate from what usually is understood by
these terms.

The more-than-theoretical dimensions of the conceptual distinction be-
tween personhood, personality, and personality disorder also become appar-
ent in discussions about classification. Definitions of disorder articulate distinc-
tions between disordered and just improper behavior. Psychiatrists,
lawmakers, and the general public may differ with respect to the question
of where to draw the boundary between evil and ill. Psychiatrists some-
times feel urged to treat persons with behavioral problems who do not con-
form to the definition of any personality disorder. Societal pressure may
lead to an inclination among psychiatrists to emphasize the objectivity and
value neutrality of the profession, in order to maintain as clear as possible
distinctions between personality disorder on the one hand and person-
hood and personality on the other hand. These pressures may contribute
to a tendency to exclude the concept of personality disorder from psychia-
tric classification. For example, these issues play a significant role in Brit-
ish discussions about the distinction between mental illness and psychop-
athic disorder (Kendell, 2002).

This dynamic in the classification debate can be understood from a con-
ceptual point of view. Persons can be evil, disordered personalities cannot;
that is, moral behavior can be attributed to persons, not to characters or
personalities. This is the way our language works and most people take
this as evidence for a deeply ingrained, normative intuition about the way
(our) reality is structured. If only persons—and not personalities—can be
bad, then one can understand why professionals, by focusing on disorder,
attempt or hope to avoid moral evaluation of the patient’s behavior. While,
this may sometimes be a successful strategy in individual cases, in the end
it is doomed to fail. First, there are personalities that seem to represent a
form of intrinsic badness, such as sadistic personality and some forms of
antisocial personality (cf. Goldberg, 1996). Second, excluding all forms of evil behavior from psychiatric classification and treatment is only a theoretical option and would severely limit the efforts of the profession with respect to many other people, like those suffering from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and/or addiction.

THE REDISCOVERY OF THE SELF
I now raise two other, slightly more theoretical, issues urging for a clarification of the concepts: the recent resurgence of interest into the self and its identity (Leary & Tangney, 2003a; Kircher & David, 2003), and the unsolved and perennial question of whether there is an “I” or self apart from, or behind, the bundle of the schemas and representations for which the term self is used as a container.

First, the recent emergence of interest into the self and its identity may be seen as an expression of unease with current conceptions of personality. These conceptions usually focus on distinct dispositions and traits, without offering an idea of which capacity or agent binds all these dispositions and traits together. Leary and Tangney (2003b, p. 3), for instance, refer to previous decades as dedicated to the psychology of distinct functions and capacities like learning (1950s), attitude (1960s), attribution (1970s), and cognition (1980s). They signal a need for unifying constructs and for a dynamic, process-oriented, and relational conceptualization of personality. What, in particular, seems to be missing is the notion of a mental capacity for self-reflection and, hence, self-regulation. Leary and Tangney refer to the self as a “psychological apparatus” serving a “fundamental, essential quality” underlying attention, cognition, and executive functioning: “the capacity for reflexive thinking.” Mischel and Morf (2003) coin the term psycho-social dynamic processing system to refer to this self.

The vagueness of this concept of self is both a weakness and a merit. It is obviously a weakness for a concept to lack clarity and precision; however, this may not be so much of a problem when the notion of self is compared with successful scientific metaphors like stress, information, and network. The merit of the concept of self is that it helps to keep self-relatedness on the agenda of academic psychology and that it suggests wholeness. This may encourage interdisciplinary research and thinking.

The second topic concerns the question of whether cognitive theories of personality disorder and of personality disorder therapy can account for a self that adopts a position with respect to self-schemas and self-representations. This point needs some clarification. Cognitive theories of personality describe the person or personality as a more or less ordered collection of self-schemas and self-representations. These schemas organize behavior, affect, and cognition. The representations make us aware of how we perceive ourselves and give content to the attitudes toward ourselves and others. In cognitive therapy the patient is asked to scrutinize these schemas, attitudes, and representations by adopting an objective stance to-
ward them. This is, of course, difficult in itself, because these schemas, attitudes, and representations belong to what is innermost to us. Behind this looms a much larger, conceptual problem; that is, how to conceive a self that adopts such an objectifying attitude. On the one hand, such a self cannot be a different or second self, outside or beyond the schemas and representations it is asked to scrutinize. Such a conception would lead to infinite regress (i.e., to an endless series of selves behind previous scrutinizing selves). On the other hand, such an objectifying self cannot be completely identical to the self it has to investigate, for how would it be possible for a self to gain insight into itself when the investigating self fully coincides with the investigated self? Some distinction between investigator and the investigated seems to be required in order to make investigation possible at all.

THE ACTIVE AND THE EXPERIENTIAL SELF
Our last problem is old and has been shaped in numerous forms. William James, for instance, thought of a distinction within the stream of consciousness, a portion abstracted from the rest (James, 1890, vol. I, p. 297). Psychologists would later call this self the “core self.” The core self manifests itself in sensations, feelings, images, and, most notably, in a sense of continuity. It is not a thing in the world, or an inner entity, or mere fiction, but—reduced to its most elementary form—a collection of sensations and feelings. Therefore, the core self refers, first and foremost, to a core sense of self.

Two problems emerge with this picture of the self. First, it is unclear how feelings and sensations by themselves would be able to relate to schemas and representations, let alone to adopt an attitude toward something in the inner world. How could feelings and sensations ever bring about changes in the inner world of schemas and representations? Suggesting this is just wrong grammar. The sensations of the core self refer to a sense of constancy and continuity within the realm of experience. In its most primitive form the subject of these experiences behaves and is described as a passive recipient. Adopting an attitude, criticizing one’s schemas and self-representations, and trying to mould them in a suitable direction—these are all activities referring to an agent, or a person, or at least something that does the job. It is unclear how sensations could do such things, even if one does not endorse the rather passive view of sensations as presented here. Therefore, the Jamesian picture of a portion of the stream of consciousness perceiving other parts of the stream precludes the question of agency.

The second problem is the other side of this coin. If the self is described as an active agent instead of as a passive recipient, like in many recent approaches of the self, the uniqueness and individuality of this agent or self could become jeopardized. For instance, Leary and Tangney (2003b) talk about a “psychological apparatus” and Mischel and Morf (2003) about
a “psycho-social dynamic processing system.” In spite of the emphasis on
dynamics, malleability, and active construing, these approaches are in
danger of reifying the self by holding it for an inner entity (compare, for
instance, their use of terms like apparatus and system). This in its turn
easily leads to infinite regress. For, if the selfhood of experiences is de-
duced to the workings of an inner processing system, then the selfhood of
the processing system itself should be guaranteed. For this guarantee
there is no other option than the hypothesis of an other, higher order pro-
cessing system, which in its turn induces a sense of self in the first pro-
cessing system; with this the infinite regress is a fact.

CONCEPTIONS OF THE SELF

We are now at the heart of the discussion about the self. In the previous
section we discovered two selves: a core self, which is experiential and
consists of a set of feelings that are felt as particularly mine; and the self
as an agency that is capable of adopting an attitude toward the inner world
of images, phantasy, thoughts, feelings, and their underlying schemas.
The problem is how to combine, or integrate, these two views.

In the search for an answer I will first broaden the scope of the discus-
sion and review possible approaches to the nature of the self. Then, I dis-
cuss the notion of personal identity. After these explorations the issue of
agency in the midst of an experiential flux will be reformulated in terms of
a variety of forms of self-relatedness. I will again mainly concentrate on
conceptual issues.

It is my belief that there are basically five approaches to the self: meta-
physical, empirical, transcendental, hermeneutical, and phenomenologi-
ical (for a similar approach, see Zahavi, 2003; cf. also Strawson, 1999).
Within each of these approaches there may still be other variants.

In the metaphysical approach the self is seen as a substance, as an en-
during, active, and immaterial thing or entity. The self is here identical to
personhood, or, to being a person, or the soul. This approach dominated
Greek and Mediaeval philosophy, was rephrased by Descartes in his the-
ory of the mind as res cognitans, and still has its defenders in Neo-Thomist
circles (Moreland & Rae, 2000). More mundane forms of this approach are
present in folk theories of the mind and in current psychological explana-
tions of the self. The metaphysical approach has been criticized for a num-
ber of compelling reasons. It is speculative. It is inclined to reify theoretical
constructions. It runs into difficulties with respect to the body-soul (or
body-self) interaction. And it does not have a solution for the question of
how to tie first person pronouns and adjectives to abstract concepts like
mind or soul. How could Descartes’ thinking substance be a self, or myself?

The empirical approach has been most radically defended by David
Hume. It has many philosophical and psychological adherents today, es-
pecially in Anglosaxon philosophy of mind (Glover, 1988). Empiricists take
a position contrary to that of metaphysicians by denying any independent status to the self. There is no such thing as a self, just as there is no referent for the term I. Some empiricists reduce the self to a series of perceptions or to some experiential by-product of one’s states of mind. Others plainly deny the existence of a self and describe it as linguistic illusion (Dennett, 1991). Still others admit the term I by giving it the status of an indexical or index word (Ryle, 1949). Indexicals (now, here, I) are contentless terms that provide spatio-temporal anchor points for one’s propositions. The indexical I refers then to concrete persons in particular situations; yet all empiricists agree that there is no self apart from, within, or above the person. The empiricist approach has been criticized for its sceptical consequences. If the self is mere fiction, then we are left with a catalogue of more or less typical features of the individual. However, is it possible to isolate features that can serve as absolutely certain criterion for personal identity (see the next paragraph for a short discussion of criteria for personal identity)? Or, if not, would that mean the end of the notion of personal identity? The transcendental approach has a predilection for the term ego, or I, instead of self. The transcendental I, or ego, is the necessary condition of the possibility for experience at all. This ego is not a datum, but a necessary presupposition for knowing. What does this mean? Immanuel Kant, the main proponent of this approach, observed that every act of perception and thought is accompanied by a sense of self: it is me who thinks, observes, experiences, and so on. This me, however, cannot be observed. It is a quality of experience and of acts of thinking and perceiving which points to a fundamental presupposition: the presupposition of an I as point of reference of my impressions and sensations. This point of reference is a formal concept: that is, the ego as principle of identity and of continuity. There is no positive knowledge of this ego possible. Criticisms that have been levelled against the transcendental approach are that its notion of self is too abstract and that it suggests a contextless and ahistorical view of the I.

The hermeneutical approach has different faces (Phillips, 2003; Ricoeur, 1992). I take it here to refer to a framework of thinking in which the self is seen as narrative construction. The underlying idea is basically that man is a self-interpreting being and that self-interpretation is practiced by telling stories and by listening to stories of others. Human beings have, in other words, no immediate self-knowledge. They know themselves by appropriating what they express and/or perform. By doing so, they become a whole. The problem with the narrative approach is twofold (cf. Glas, 2003). First, by putting so much emphasis on wholeness and integrity it cannot account for the fact that there are parts of one’s life that cannot and never will be integrated, for instance, intrusive and painful events and acts for which one can only feel shame. Second, by concentrating on construction the narrative approach does not solve the conceptual problem at issue (i.e., how to account for a self that performs all the con-
struction and interpretation). If the self is the result of a process of construction, who, then, is the self that performs this construction? And if there is no such self, does this mean that the self is an epiphenomenon of a process that takes place behind the subject’s back?

This brings us to the final approach, which is phenomenological. Phenomenologists, at least phenomenologists of a certain kind, argue that each of the previous approaches ignores one important fact: the experiential reality of the sense of self. This sense of self is something that is given. It is not construed. Its underlying structure can be investigated. And it can be equated with the so-called first-person perspective. The expression first-person perspective refers to the fact that it is only me who can feel, perceive, and think in the way I am feeling, perceiving, and thinking (Nagel, 1986). It is the subjective correlate of Kant’s transcendental ego, the accompanying me or mineness of all one’s feelings, thoughts, and acts.

It is important to see that this me or self does not place itself beyond or over against the stream of consciousness. It is a first-person awareness of the stream while at the same time being part of it. The phenomenal self entails, therefore, consciousness of experiences in their “first-person mode of givenness” (Zahavi, 2003, p. 59). It is important to see the subtle difference with what has been said before about the core self. The core self was described as a bundle of perceptions, thoughts, and inclinations. The phenomenal self is not such a bundle, and it cannot be identified as such a bundle or as one of the elements of it because it only denotes a certain quality of mental contents, the quality of mineness.

The second step is then to equate this first-person-givenness of experience with an elementary form of selfhood. The term selfhood does not refer here to a differentiated image of oneself, but to the self-referentiality of human activities and experiences per se. Human beings can have no other pains than their own; their feelings and inclinations are theirs, at a fundamental level. This selfhood is also called ipseity (ipse = oneself) (Ricoeur, 1990). Ipseity refers to self-relatedness as a structural feature of human existence and indicates the essential mineness of my experiences.

We can now see why the concept of a phenomenal self could be of importance with respect to the question of how the two selves—the self as agent and the experiencing self—could be related. The phenomenal self is an experiencing self; in this experience an elementary form of self-relatedness (selfhood; ipseity) is revealed. This revelation of self-relatedness is not identical to agency; however, this structure of self-relatedness is so fundamental, that it could perhaps be used to rephrase the concept of agency and to alleviate the obsession for both self-initiation and self-observation.

Due to space considerations, I cannot pursue the philosophical implications of this suggestion here, however. If it bears any truth, self-relatedness could be seen as offering the dynamic background of virtually all human experiences and activities. Instead of being attributed to some internal mechanism (cf. the issue of self-initiation), the dynamism of self-relatedness could be accounted for in terms of a dependence of self-relatedness
on relatedness to others. Others, like my parents, have begun with me. According to Sören Kierkegaard (1849/1983), the self is a relation, which relates to itself, and, by relating to itself, is related to something, a power, outside itself. Being oneself is, instead of coinciding to oneself, responding to a difference in oneself—a difference between who I am and who I was; between who I am and whom I could become; between how others see me and how I perceive myself. Agency is then expressed as the way this difference, this otherness in oneself, is dealt with.

**PERSONAL IDENTITY**

Who is the person that is addressed in psychotherapy of personality disorder? This is the question that led my investigation. I have followed a path that is both suggested by clinical experience and by the recent burst of literature on the self in academic psychology; that is, a path leading to what has been called the core self. Some of the conceptual problems that are associated with this concept have been discussed above, and I have reviewed five philosophical approaches to the self that broaden the scope. Although none of these approaches offered a full and clear-cut answer to the question of the relation between the experiencing and acting self, the focus of the discussion became sharper. Before proceeding, one should briefly investigate another, more usual path—a path that is defined by the concept of personal identity (for, it is obvious, that the who of the patient is a person that has to be identified).

The concept of personal identity is usually divided into two forms: identity as singularity (numerical identity) and identity as a series of qualities that make it possible to identify the individual as belonging to a particular type or kind or class of individuals (qualitative identity). Singularity refers to uniqueness. Uniqueness in its turn is based on discreteness; that is, on the fact that there is only one who is me (him, her). Numbers are discrete entities and for this reason this form of identity is usually called numerical identity. Singularity does not refer, therefore, to something distinctively human. Tables, trees, and dogs are, as individual entities, also singular. Singularity is of tremendous importance in the identification of individual persons (fingerprints, DNA); however, it does not provide an answer to the question of what it is that makes a person a person. For this reason, the philosophical discussion about personal identity has primarily been concentrated on qualitative identity—on the qualities (features, characteristics) that are necessary and/or sufficient for calling a person a person. These qualities refer to what human beings share. They focus on sameness and similarity. Ricoeur (1992) has coined the term *idem-identity* for this type of identity. *Idem-identity* refers to sameness; *ipse-identity* to selfhood or self-relatedness.

Numerous attempts have been made to define the qualitative identity of persons. A discussion of these attempts would lead us far beyond what is relevant for our discussion about personality and personality disorder.
Criteria for personhood that have been proposed are, among others: bodily identity, brain identity, memory, and psychological connectedness or continuity (Noonan, 1990). Others, like Parfit (1984), have denied the relevance of the whole topic by stating that “what matters is not personal identity” (p. 217). Parfit and others show a predilection to support their arguments with thought experiments, from simple fission cases (fission of the two hemispheres and transplanting them in two other bodies) to highly complicated situations with teletransportation of brains and brain halves to other worlds (Hofstadter & Dennett, 1981). Other philosophers have criticized this method by pointing to the limitations of thought experiments (Wilkes, 1988).

The concern about criteria for personhood is typically an Anglosaxon debate, and is generally discussed using the conceptual tools of analytic philosophy. Participants to this debate are currently inclined to question the possibility of finding sufficient or necessary criteria for personhood. Continental philosophers, like Ricoeur (1992) and Taylor (1989), would say that this is no wonder. Asking for criteria for personhood is simply asking the wrong question. Any set of criteria at best defines what a person is, not who he is. To know what it is to be a person, is an issue that cannot be separated from the question about whom this question is raised. The search for criteria for personhood by analytic philosophers is executed from a third person perspective (i.e., from a perspective that describes persons as objects or as facts in the world); however, personhood is not a quality or feature belonging to a neutral bearer or owner of that quality or feature. In human beings the relationship between owner and feature is itself a defining feature. It is, for instance, marked by self-concern (a wisdom of Leibniz). Criteria of personhood bear relevance, because they pertain to me or him or her. In the search for the who of personhood, the first person perspective cannot be left out. Who I am is not a fact about me, but should be phrased in terms of from where I come and what I am up to. If this is true, we are back to the point where we left our discussion about the self. For questions about who the person is who is addressed in the psychotherapy of personality disorders, one is typically answered by referring to a self with a story and with core values and with shortcomings and with gaps in that story.

**DISCUSSION: SELF, IDENTITY, AND PERSONALITY**

Let me summarize where we are and try to draw some conclusions. I started with the question of who the person is in personality disorder and its treatment. This question was both epistemological and existential. Both aspects could in fact hardly be separated. Background issues, the rediscovery of the self, the problem of how to conceptually integrate the active and the experiential self, and philosophical approaches to the self and to personal identity were discussed. I now have to come back to personality and personality disorder. Who is the person in personality disorder?
What has been said so far is sufficient to question a dominant view of the human person. According to this view the person is a neutral bearer of functions, roles, attitudes, and inclinations. The person relates to these functions and roles in an instrumental way (Taylor, 1989). Self-knowledge is gained in a subject-object relationship in which the person occupies the position of subject, and the functions and roles occupy the position of object. Current theorizing, for instance, in cognitive-behavioral theory underscores this instrumental view, which itself is part of a much larger, technical worldview. I realize that this picture is overly schematic and one-sided, but in its one-sidedness it may help elucidate an important aspect of the current Zeitgeist—the separation between the person and her roles—which in its turn influences the way our professions are shaped and accounted for. Personality disorder has become a condition that has to be repaired.

Other conceptions of personhood have been discussed, most notably those that lay emphasis on self-relatedness and on a core sense of self. In my discussion of the phenomenal self it appears that even the most elementary forms of self-awareness can be conceptualized as entailing self-relatedness. I emphasized the dynamic nature of this self-relatedness and suggest that it is so fundamental that it could perhaps lead to another conception of agency.

The relevance of this conception in this context is that it could contribute to a view in which self-relatedness at the level of the phenomenal self forms the basis for a whole spectrum of modes of self-relatedness. Further investigation might then reveal that this spectrum of forms of self-relatedness shows a certain order. One might, for instance, discern a physical, an emotional, and a cognitive I-self relationship. Some forms of self-relatedness would then appear to exist in an implicit, others in a more explicit, form. Some would be totally embedded in the stream of consciousness; others would form islands in the stream. Some forms of self-relatedness would appear to reflect mature, others immature, stages of development. In the end there would arise a highly differentiated picture of ways of self-relatedness in which the dynamics of self-relating would express itself in the opening-up of functions, dispositions, attitudes, schemas, and so on.

What does this mean for the relation to one's personality? First, if the separation between the person and his roles should be seen as a modern fiction, then the separation between person and personality should also be reconsidered. This would imply, for instance, that it is simplistic to say that one is a person and that one has a personality. The separation between being a person and having a personality—and its concomitant dichotomy between evil and ill—suggests an instrumental view of the human person: A view in which the person describes his personality from a third person perspective and in which personality is discussed in terms of a project and of development and repair. As we have seen, however, the vocabulary of relating to oneself is much richer than this technical language suggests. Every sensitive clinician would understand what a well-
informed patient with borderline personality disorder would mean when she said: “I am Miss Borderline,” instead of “I have borderline personality disorder”.

Second, this reconsideration of the large variety of behaviors that the term personality refers to should be taken into account more systematically. Some of these behaviors are closer to the core self than others. Feelings of inferiority and shame, for instance, are closer to the core self than impulsivity or lack of frustration tolerance. Some criteria for personality disorder refer to habits and dispositions with stability over time, like impulsivity or orderliness; other criteria refer to moods swings and to fleeting feelings. The DSM-IV criteria for personality disorder are nonhomogeneous in this respect (APA, 1994). And all these criteria vary with respect to their distance to the core self.

Third, the way persons relate to their core self also varies considerably within the person, between persons, and depending on the circumstances. This variety of self-relating may in its turn affect the contents of the core self. Some of the dominant feelings and moods are only sometimes closer to the core self. There are times that the borderline patient feels he is rejected and abandoned and feels that this is a defining characteristic of his existence; at other times these negative feelings seem to have completely disappeared. The conceptual solution is then to call the core self itself unstable and to consider this instability as the defining characteristic. This conceptual meta-position, however, is not consequently maintained when the moods and feelings that manifest the instability are also included in the list of defining features, such as is the case in the DSM-IV definition of borderline personality disorder (BPD) (APA, 1994). Therefore, both the instability and the expression of this instability define what it is to have BPD.

There is an enormous variety of ways of self-relating. Some persons are more inclined than others to adopt an investigative attitude and to make their relatedness toward their inclinations and behaviors explicit. Some would like to adopt such an attitude, but are overwhelmed by negative feelings when doing so. Who the person thinks he or she is, depends on the way he or she positions herself. This positioning is embedded in a societal matrix and is determined by power relationships, biophysical and socioeconomic factors, and the fate of culture at large. There is, in short, no fixed, Archimedian point from which the relationship toward oneself is maintained.

This non-Archimedian view brings us, finally, back to the person. The question of who the person with personality disorder is, has been addressed from different viewpoints. At a fundamental level, basic self-awareness and self-relatedness are conceptually compatible. Ontologically this coincidence of self-awareness and self-relatedness remains a mystery. This was, in fact, the background of the emphasis on the givenness of this experience. On the other end of the spectrum—the perspective of the fully developed person—there emerged a picture of self-relatedness in a wide variety of complementary ways: with respect to functional modes (biological,
emotional, cognitive); with respect to the distance of one’s behaviors to the core self; with respect to one’s life history; and with respect to the position of the I as point of reference in the expression of self-relatedness (see Table 1). The most intriguing aspect of this enormous variety is, perhaps, that it takes shape against a background of unity and integrity which is more intuited and felt than conceptually grasped. Perhaps, one must say, with Peter Strawson (1959), that the concept of the person is primitive, that is, irreducible, not in the sense of some ephemeral quality, but as a reality which is undeniable or given. In the end, I think, personhood cannot be reduced to some basic experience or to self-relatedness as a formal characteristic; nor to conforming to a certain criterion for personal identity; nor to the complexity and structural coherence of a list of functions, capacities, and mental states. The mystery about the issue will probably never be completely solved, and better so, perhaps; however, mystery differs from confusion.

REFERENCES


