

Albert Shalom

The Body/Mind Conceptual Framework and the Problem of Personal Identity: Some Theories in Philosophy, Psychoanalysis & Neurology.

Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press

International 1985. Pp. xxii + 511.

US \$22.50 (paper: ISBN 0-391-03576-2).

In the Introduction to *The Body/Mind Conceptual Framework and the Problem of Personal Identity*, Albert Shalom writes that the book 'can be conceived as being divided into two, very unequal, parts: a very long critical part, and a very much shorter proposal for a reorientation in the conceptual analysis of personal identity' (xix). Shalom tries in the balance of the Introduction to clarify the connection between the critical first part of the book and the synthetic second part. However, the attempt fails. Shalom's book does not consist of only a single pair of related parts. On the contrary, Shalom has assembled four separate and loosely related projects into a single book. The first project is a meta-philosophical statement about the importance and proper place of basic presuppositions in philosophical theories. The second project is a critical survey of major modern figures in the mind-body dispute. The third is an in-depth analysis of Freud's relevance to the mind-body dispute. Finally, the fourth project is a short proposal for a new conception of personal identity.

Shalom devotes Part One of his book to the meta-philosophical project. He argues, using the early Wittgenstein as an example, that philosophical views are products of 'basic presuppositions' (3). Basic presuppositions are background assumptions that determine how we conceptualize a problem. Although Shalom defines them more broadly than Kuhn's scientific paradigms, they correspond approximately to frameworks or conceptual schemes.

Parts Two, Three and Five of Shalom's book compose the critical project. In the ten chapters that make up these three sections, Shalom considers views of Wittgenstein, Strawson, Herbert Feigl, U.T. Place, J.J.C. Smart, David Armstrong, Norbert Wiener, Derek Parfit, Julian Jaynes, R.W. Sperry, and Thomas Nagel, as well as others. Shalom's explications of the views of these diverse theorists are mostly penetrating and illuminating. But, Shalom too often interprets his subjects as subscribing to 'science' as a basic philosophical presupposition. That is, he accuses them of believing that the method of the physical sciences constitutes the only valid way of approaching the mind-body problem or the problem of personal identity. Consequently, his criticisms are shallow and he recurs to his basic philosophical presupposition — that the individual subject constitutes 'an essential and inherent limit to the scientific enterprise' (5). This bias prevents Shalom from engaging most of these extraordinary thinkers on their terms and leaves his dismissals of their views wanting.

Part Four of Shalom's book contains his third project: a careful analysis of Freud's work and an argument for its relevance to the mind-body problem. Shalom gives a detailed account of the development of Freud's thought. He shows particular insight about the relation between the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* and Freud's later work. Shalom reads Freud as never having fully abandoned the attempt, begun with the *Project*, to found psychology on physiology. Consequently, the various psychological agencies of Freud's later work bear an ambiguous relation to the underlying physiology. Shalom demonstrates that Freud conceived of the psychical as a set of independent quasi-physiological agencies, each with its own drives and desires. Shalom argues that Freud's fragmented view of the self precludes a unified account of personal identity. Nonetheless, Shalom takes Freud to be the foremost modern thinker on the mind-body problem and bases his theory of personal identity on modified Freudian ideas.

The fourth and final project in Shalom's book comes in Part Six, which consists of the final four chapters. This is Shalom's own attempt at framing a theory of personal identity. Shalom has found each theory he considered in the critical project wanting in the same respect: subscribing to the mind-body duality as a basic philosophical presupposition. Conceptualizing the problem of personal identity in terms of mind and body prevents any of these theories from ever solving it. Shalom proposes, instead, to take personal identity as a basic philosophical presupposition. Shalom conceives of personal identity in terms of a potential for subjectivity inherent in physical matter. The laws of our physical sciences may be accurate in their descriptions of the physical universe, but they are not complete. The physical sciences cannot account for subjectivity.

The four projects in Shalom's book might have been better carried out in separate books, but they do relate in significant ways. Shalom takes seriously the project of uncovering and analysing basic presuppositions that he demonstrates in the first project. He uses it to explicate and critique the views of all the theorists he considers, including Freud, as well as in developing and situating his own theory of personal identity. Shalom's critiques of previous theories on the mind-body problem and personal identity do serve their

purpose: to demonstrate that the mind-body duality stands in the way of a satisfactory theory of personal identity. And Shalom's exegesis of Freud is not only worthy for its own sake but also foreshadows Shalom's own theory of personal identity.

Besides its other virtues, Shalom's book has become more relevant since its publication in 1985. It is an early and often unrecognized contribution to the current debate on consciousness. Like Searle, Shalom believes that machines cannot be conscious. But, Shalom founds and defends his position more carefully than Searle does. What is more, Shalom understands the historical origins of the debate, as he shows in the first five sections of his book. Shalom's book also compares favorably with more recent books on personal identity, for example John Canfield's 1990 *The Looking Glass Self*.

Aarre Laakso

University of California, San Diego