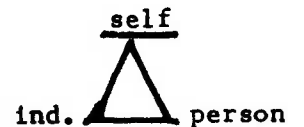


1. THESIS: These three words for describing a skinbag in its invisible dimensionality are—if we become sensitive—clues to contexts and therefore to clashing worldviews. Each instance of use of one of these words has conotata both cultural and personal.
2. AIM: This thinksheet tries to display some of the denotata/conotata of these three words, in the interest of increasing one's understanding/skill/people-helping usefulness, under Christian intentionality (i.e., the Christian world-picture/hope).
3. Of course street-language blurs the traditional distinctions between the three words, just as the "person on the street" seldom thinks about differences in shades of, say, green. The people-helper, however, should have both an etymological-historical understanding of these crucial terms and a technical-contemporary-personal discrimination in their use.
4. But technical confusion reigns, and that partly because few in the psycho-fields are language-trained, partly because psycho-schools have each its own jargon. In preparing for the '75S STM/Pastoral-Counseling Integration Seminar, I suppose I saw most of the literature proposing to converge psychotherapy and theology. Conclusion: term-chaos! This leaves me more free than I wish I were! I'd prefer to be told, lingua franca, what each of the three words mean, so I could get on with the business of converging psychotherapy and theology. As it is, I must begin earlier, with the language problem. I must try definitions under these parameters: (a) proximity to historic meanings, (b) currency with present meanings, (c) technical precision (viz., enough sharpness to fight off confusion). Hence, I proceed boldly though not dogmatically.
5. The natural world of the "self" (atman) is Oriental(Eastern)-Hindu-monistic meditation. Larry LeShan is a deracinated Jew, but it's natural in modern middle/upper-class America to have God defined as he does in his HOW TO MEDITATE (Little, Brown/74): "the best you discover inside yourself." Note that the personal pronominal adjective, "your-SELF," is structurally reflexive: in I-E's thousand languages you can't say "your-PERSON" or "your-INDIVIDUAL"—and therefore "self" is naturally introversial-meditative existentially and monistic-advaitistic (god-less, except atman/Brahma) ontically. Ergo, people who believe in them-SELVES and the SELF are atheists, pro-meditation/anti-prayer, antibiblical (whether they know it or not). My point is to put them down, in love: they can't get up till they're down....But some biblical images are in the "self" field; e.g., light-mysticism: salvation as illumination-on-waking-to-morninglight: "Awake, you sleeper, and Christ will illumine you!" (Eph.5.14; but note the "Christ"-subject control; and cp. the current PSY. TODAY self-ad: "Which of these signs would you hang on the door of your mind? 'Wake Me Up' or 'Do Not Disturb'?").
6. The natural world of the "individual" is dyadic, antimonistic, biblical, Occidental(Hellenistic Jewish/Christian). Etym. is ambivalent: "indivisible" (therefore, whole) and "inseparable" (therefore, part; but this, underdeveloped in word-history). Abraham in Haran is a "self"-person till (Gen.12) he is individuated by the divine call-command which separates him from all surrounding skinbags so that by his obedience he may become inseparable from God. Liv Uhlmann (29Jan75 NYT) hypertrophies this: she's lonelier when she wakes up with somebody in bed, so goes to bed with nobody.
7. The natural world of the "person" is society with its roles-masks (Etruscan, "phersu," Gk. "persona"): person-in-community. The "self" is Eastern, the "individual" is biblical-Enlightenment Western (heightened by the blissful/baleful effects of industrialism), the "person" is humanist Western—and currently dominant in the media, academe, and among "liberal" clergy.
8. Self-individual-person can be a useful hermeneutic.



("Self":
intensive,
qualitative,
reflexive
pronoun.)

