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Philosophical Viewpoints

Adolescence is a time to examine how we define ourselves; however, the concept of the “self” is the subject of expansive philosophical inquiry. What is the “self”? Is it one’s singular and true identity? Is it an illusion that prevents humans from achieving higher states of consciousness? How can we ascertain the nature of reality when our perceptions are subjective? In Senior Humanities, we explore the “self” as an essential philosophical unit by examining selfhood, subjectivity, individual perception, and memory in various Eastern religions and philosophies—including Zen Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Sufism--in conversation with Western notions depicted in works by Virginia Woolf, Lao Tzu, Kurt Vonnegut, Mary Oliver, Shunryu Suzuki, and Shakespeare, among others.