

30th World Summit on Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, Psychotherapy and Philosophy

March 18-19, 2019 | Chicago, USA

SCIENTIFIC TRACKS | DAY 2

CLINICAL AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY 2019, VOLUME 5 | DOI: 10.4172/2471-2701-C1-002

Suffering and multiple selves theory

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This paper seeks to integrate perspectives from psychology, cognitive science, and behavioral economics to address how multiple selves theory relates to the science of pleasure. Drawing attention to one's different selves can affect the experience of suffering, and more importantly, how and why someone may gain pleasure from pain. For instance, pain serves as a psychological anchor, emphasizing the awareness of

one's current self. This physical suffering may dissolve away the concerns of the future self, leaving the current self both intact and salient. However, under certain conditions, the current self can dematerialize in response to pain. This destruction of self creates an empty vessel of a human being, which can be filled with a new identity in extraordinary circumstances. Even without the complete destruction of self, reduced higher-level awareness could provide the current self with the possibility of seeking out entirely new abstract, conceptual representations. The

author ends by proposing three precursors, which outline when such transformative experiences may occur.

Biography

Lan Luo is currently a third-year undergraduate at Yale University who is triple majoring in Economics, Psychology, and Statistics & Data Science. His previous work experiences include systematically mapping the space of morality using machine learning, computational linguistics, and cognitive neuroscience, evaluating the impact of retirement on spending and consumption in light of prototypical life-cycle models that implicate consumption smoothing, evaluating cognitive ability in economic decision making as modulated by age, developing a case study on a financial intervention program in France, and analyzing census data with respect to policy decisions on trade bills.

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