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The Philosopher's Stone

Philosophical Discussion Group, Armstrong State University

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The Philosopher's Stone

March 23, 2017

Fear, Arrogance and Being

Vol. 19, No. 5

Invited or Caught in Being You Are -- Wednesday, April 12th @ 4:30 pm in Gamble

Fear, Arrogance and Being

By: Lakin Crawford (jc5456@stu.armstrong.edu)

What if human history has been humans so desperate for the location of self meaning in objective concepts or categories that we have failed to actually exist? By "exist", I mean that which allows us to consider our physical biology, not our bodies themselves. What if history is only the capitalism of the self? The capitalism of the self is a series of intellectual competitions in which humans have desired the meaning of existence so terribly that it has become an endless void of hunger for self-validation in much the same way that capitalism creates an endless hunger for consumption of the physical.

I look at myself sometimes and ask: Why you? Why was I put inside of you? Why should I even think that I am I? It seems so selfish to me at times to desire such comfort in having my own individual identity. I feel desperate when I make objectives in order to become a distinguished individual apart from others. It is like trying to be the person you think you need to be for the one you are trying to be in love with. Consider the difference between sitting one day and having a spontaneous, overwhelming feeling that causes one to write a letter of how deeply one feels towards another as opposed to thinking that the other, you are trying to impress romantically, will be satisfied with a letter you are only writing in order to be validated by them.

Identifying myself has made me tired, cynical, and skeptical. The continual effort at identification is tiring because when I do try to objectively define myself, I can sense some sort of arrogance exacerbating my physical being as

if this objective identification is some sort of harmful substance that guilt's my soul. These felt symptoms are also dependent on the fear that I may not be acting in the best interests of my peer's morals. Isn't that absurd? I feel forced to objectively please others so that I become a manifestation of their desires rather than becoming what I think I personally desire were I independent of the other. The desire to find my own identity isolated from my peers is dependent on the identity that is created by my consideration of what is pleasurable to my peers. But shouldn't I take pride in who I am, not who I perceive they want me to be?

In this initial confidence, should I not surround myself with those who are isolated but confident as well? Maybe so, but I now wonder whether or not it is good for me to be so confident and prideful of myself while in ignorance of the selves around me. Cynicism now takes hold of my consciousness in that I suspect I am just another being among others who are only looking out for their own self interests. This direction is accompanied by the thought that the concern for others emotions (usually assumed to be natural) is foolish or false because they, like me, only care about themselves. At this point, fully developed arrogance emerges from the initial confidence in so far as a property of affirming one's identity requires the determination of others identities by thinking that they will become cynical too by consciously or unconsciously thinking that humans only desire what is best for themselves.

Would this consideration of myself be a negation of the previous consideration of

myself which sought out validation from others?

Or have I equally affirmed my interests in both of these mentalities—the fearful and the arrogant? In any of these situations I have tried to become something. Even when someone tells me not to try to be something, I am still trying not to try. So how then, does one simply be without fear? A logical answer to this question is that all proposed final answers are ultimately byproducts of human desire which does not end. Hence, the proposed answers will not end. In other words, solely living in an objective realm can become an endless cycle of dissatisfaction. This is not to say that there is no importance in objectively living, but what is meant is that allowing an objective sense of living to overtake and consume the majority of one's thought is animalistic as opposed to what we try to form as a definition of human nature.

So our central question is: where is the balance of self-affirmation that does not end in either (a) self annihilation caused by being overly considerate of what I think to be my peer's desires of me or (b) the cynicism of thinking that all humans must objectively seek their own self-interest?

G.W.F. Hegel on Servitude, Lordship and Being

Hegel describes different modes of self-consciousness and being in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). One of many dialectical modes of being he describes is called the “master-slave” (or “lordship-servant”) dialectic.

The fear of the servant consciousness and the arrogance of the master consciousness can only emerge once one self-consciousness is faced with another.

“Self-consciousness is faced by another self-consciousness; it has come out of itself. This has a twofold significance: first, it has lost itself, for it finds itself as an other being; secondly, in doing so it has superseded the other, for it does not see the other as

an essential being, but in the other sees its own self” (111).

“...one is the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself, the other is the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another. The former is master, the other is slave” (115).

The servant self fears its annihilation by the objectification from the other master self and also from itself.

“We have seen what servitude is only in relation to lordship....For this servant consciousness has been fearful, not of this or that particular thing or just at odd moments, but its whole being has been seized with dread; for it has experienced the fear of death, the absolute Lord. In that experience it has been quite unmanned, has trembled in every fibre of its being, and everything solid and stable has been shaken to its foundations” (117).

The arrogant master self asserts itself powerfully by thinking of the fearful servant self as an “object” or “thing” which now is no longer seen as an independent consciousness and which then can no longer provide the recognition from another consciousness that the master consciousness craves.

“...what the master does to the other, he also does to himself...In this recognition, the unessential consciousness is for the master the object...the object in which the master has achieved his lordship has in reality turned out to be something quite different from an independent consciousness” (116-7).

Both of these modes of consciousness will become problematic unto themselves with desires that do not end and may only move forward by the dialectic of consciousness and its realization.

OUR NEXT PDG MEETING

April 12 (Weds) @ 4:30pm in Gamble 106
Pizza and sodas provided by

The Self-Consciously Struggling Spirit
Of Philosophy
In
The Philosophical Discussion Group