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The Philosopher's Stone

Philosophical Discussion Group, Armstrong State University

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THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

ANNOUNCES

THE FIRST HONORS PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM

FOOD FOR THE SOUL SERVED BY AASU STUDENTS

APPETIZERS FOR THE BODY PROVIDED BY OLYMPIA CAFE

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2003

10 – 1 PM

UNIVERSITY HALL 156

The Newsletter of the Philosophical Debate Group

Colloquium Session Schedule On Thursday, April 24, 2003 In UH 156

10:00-10:20 Session 1

"The Paradoxical Philosopher: Plato the Writer, the Rhetorician, the Artist, and the Philosopher" by Megan Schlicht

10:20-10:40 Session 2

"Good Guilt, Bad Guilt: Does Guilt Hinder Development or Lead to Morality?" by Mike Huling who comments on Nietzsche's and Freud's views of guilt.

10:40-11:00 Session 3

"Plato in the 21st Century" by Bretlan Weaver examines Plato's observations regarding the fallibility of the democratic state.

11:00-11:20 Session 4

"Descartes Finds Freedom – But What is It, Exactly?" by Ditrie Sanchez

11:20-11:35 BREAK

11:35-12:00 Session 5

"Renaissance Man" by Lauren Mason is an exploration of Platonic influences within Renaissance literature.

12:00-12:20 Session 6

"The Practice of Dying and Death: Are Plato and Dr. Nordenhaug Trying to Encourage Philosophy Student Suicides?" by Karla Rodriguez explores Socrates' definition of philosophy as "the practice of death and dying."

12:20-12:40 Session 7

"Should Epistemology or Metaphysics be Considered Primary in the Search for Truth?" by Amanda Bartley who focuses on whether one can search for what one does not know.

12:40-1:00 Session 8

"My Soul Responsibility: Self Interest or Am I My Brother's Keeper?" by Gretchen Stewart

Science Emerging From Philosophy & Philosophy Altered by Science

by Becky Penick

For hundreds of years after the fall of the Roman Civilization, the western world saw very little advancement in science. It did, however, see changes in philosophical thought. Much of that change in thought fell along Catholic Church lines, but there were still changes. When Aristotelian logic came into play in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, it began to influence thought gradually away from theology to philosophy and the new sciences. Philosophical thought had an impact on the world by creating the conceptual framework in which science could set out methodically to confirm the correct theories.

By the end of the Middle Ages, science was on its way to becoming an important area of study in its own right. A hundred years after the Renaissance, philosophy was no longer having such a large and unilateral impact on science. The tables had turned. Science was now making an impact on philosophical thought with all its new discoveries, like the discovery of how light passes through a concave lens and is reversed thereby forcing a new understanding of how the human eye works and in turn forcing new philosophical theories of sense perception.

Philosophers were then forced to alter philosophy to fit the new scientific conceptual framework as they tried to understand where the earth fit into the universe, and how Newtonian physics affected our view of our world and the heavens beyond as well as man himself. Science has come a long way since the Middle Ages and over the last six hundred years, its sense of independence from philosophy and its power over philosophy has grown.

If a Tree Falls in the Forest and No One is There to Hear it, Does it Make a Sound?

By Tawnya Gallagher, Michelle Avant & Leslie Metz

Like to know the answer to this age-old conundrum? Try asking the question, if a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to sense it, does it even really fall? Or try asking, if a tree falls in the forest and you are there having sensations of a tree falling, does that mean your mental sensations of the tree necessarily must come from a material tree?

According to Berkeley, our entire reality exists as a pattern of sensations in our minds. If this is indeed the case, one could conclude that our not being in the forest would allow an otherwise falling tree to stand upright. But, herein lies the catch. The forest isn't materially there to begin with—only one's mental sensations of the forest are present.

If one is to persist in the belief that matter is fact, Berkeley argues, one must find supporting evidence for such a notion from either one's senses or reason. Each of these, as revealed in Berkeley's analysis, is inadequate to confirm the physical existence of such a forest, tree, or sound.

Now, prepare for the physical world to dissolve beneath you and assume a new understanding of the world that is not around you—but IN you! One cannot trust matter to be observed by the senses, because they can only provide the mind with nonmaterial sensations and ideas. If you are accustomed to trusting that the idea (of an object) produced by sensations (of that object) represent the actual material object, as John Locke affirmed, then consider that one idea can only be like another idea. In other words, no immaterial idea can ever be like (or represent) anything material. The idea of fifty pounds does not weigh fifty pounds any more than the idea of red is actually red since ideas, being immaterial, are both weightless and colorless.

Attention Art Majors: Does Art have Any Value? Don't ask a Philosophy Major...

By Tawnya Gallagher & Emily Odom

What exactly IS art and how does it contribute to philosophy, if at all? Philosophers have argued about art's significance for centuries, the most influential being Plato. He wasn't a big fan of art. He often appears to have thought that art confuses and distracts people thereby preventing the search for reality. Evidently, having the apparent world we live in now plus a painting of the apparent world we live in now makes things more complicated rather than less.

However, Plato did give credit where it was due. He did say that art was acceptable as long as it came with some "philosophical chatter" and "daring speculation about the nature of things." Basically, art should only be used to benefit people, and if it did not do that, then it should be censored. (Thankfully, Picasso did not believe a word of this...it might have crushed him.)

According to Plato, art can be a dangerous thing. It can confuse and mislead until there is no hope that Ultimate Truth will become clear! So remember art students, you have the power to corrupt and distract minds with that paintbrush or pen you are holding. Use it wisely.

The Honors Philosophy Class of 2003 and The Philosophical Debate Group invite all material and immaterial beings to join us in nourishing the soul with philosophical food for thought on April 24 in UH 156.

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