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The Philosopher's Stone

Philosophical Discussion Group, Armstrong State University

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The Philosopher's Stone

The Newsletter of The Philosophical Debate

Television and Other Tools: What do they Really mean to us?

Some Things to Consider. . .

What is the difference between pleasures of concentration and pleasures of fantasy? Are pleasures derived from intellectual stimulation of higher value than pleasures derived from senses and emotions? What is the imagination? What is the necessity of concentration over pleasures of the senses? Why is one valued more than the other, if at all? How does the television effect our capabilities for using our imagination?

Highlights From The Last Meeting. . .

It seemed to be the consensus of most of the group that television does have some effect on the capabilities of an individual to use their imagination. In many cases it seemed that this effect is adverse. For example, a popular science fiction program might show what the visual effect of going into light speed might be like. If you read of this in a novel, you use your own mind to visualize what such an experience might be like. With the visual effects provided for you, you are not required to do any of the work yourself. When you read something, your imagination fills in the pictures. Is this trade-off of imagination for the ability to process more information more quickly necessarily a negative thing? What do learning and intelligence really mean?

Prior to the print culture, people had a larger cognitive capability. They were able to keep large amounts of information in their memories. The [Iliad](#), for example. When the print culture emerged, we were then able to keep more accurate records, to preserve cultural ideas, to analyze thoughts, and we could develop logical argument forms which were not previously possible. What we traded for these advancements was a portion of memory capability. One of the effects of the print culture was that

more information became available. As it accumulates, we find ways to keep up with it, and hence we emerge into a visual culture where the very medium through which we get information influences the information we receive. What is the loss and the gain of the current transition from a print culture to a visual culture? The gain is the speed with which we can process data, and the amount of data that can be accessed. But what sacrifices are made? For example, it was pointed out at the meeting that most of what is seen on television enters the short-term memory and is forgotten shortly after viewing a given program. What do we learn from the television? It is there to sell itself? If we are learning from the television, we are learning only what it wants us to learn. Can the same argument be given for learning from the printed word? It is necessary to think critically in order to learn, to actively reflect on whatever we are studying? Do we analyze what we see on the television less than we do when we read books? Does the act of reading as a cognitive stimulant work better than the television?

The Computer Model of the Mind. . .

One hundred years ago, we would not have thought to compare the mind to a computer. But as computers were developed, there was an attempt to fashion them after the human mind. As computers became more sophisticated, we began using computer terminology to describe ourselves and the way we think, for example, processing, collecting information and data. We think of our mind as something that receives, collects, and categorizes data. When we "gain information" we think of it as input, and we output a summary. Do we mean the same thing when we talk about our mind as we do when we refer to a computer? What are some other models of the human mind?

Next Meeting

October 16

8:30 pm

The Writing Center

Our Topic: Mapping the Mind

What is your model of the mind, and why? Also, What is [Artificial Intelligence](#)--is it the attempt to create an autonomous cognitive machine, and 'artificial person,' or a computer system capable of learning from mistakes and reacting to unfamiliar situations?

Announcements

*Special thanks to Dr. Marinara for assisting with our fund-raiser!!

*On Saturday, October 26, we will be hosting a Philosopher's costume party. Be creative! Come as your favorite philosopher or representation of your favorite philosophy. For details, contact Dr. Nordenhaug in the English Department.

*For more information about The Philosophical Debate, come by our table on October 10th, during the Armstrong Atlantic State University celebration. And don't forget: the drawing will be on the afternoon of the 10th for the \$100.00 Media Play gift certificate! Stop by for details!!