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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

Why do people prefer their comfortable prisons to the unknown?

Some things to consider. . .

When considering the [mind](#), one of the questions raised is whether or not the mind is completely biological. Is the mind different from the brain? Another idea is that the mind is something that learns from our environment; it is a reaction to the world around it. Are these two ideas compatible? What is consciousness? Are the consciousness and the mind the same? What is a mind? If all of our knowledge is already inherent in us and our task is to bring it out, how can the mind react to something that is not in its "programming?" Do we even have minds? Does life have a purpose? If you are willing to admit the existence of a God then you are given a purpose. Can a materialist have a universal purpose in mind? Why do we feel the need to find a universal purpose?

The Comfortable Prison

The prison is our own minds; the comfort is in our ideas which serve as assurance against the unknown. The unknown creates the worst fear in us; we dislike confronting new ideas and new situations. In the Bible, the Jews wanted to go back to Egypt after Moses led them out to "freedom" because they knew what to expect in Egypt; they wanted to return to slavery and suffering to avoid the unknown. Also, [Darwin](#) waited many years before he published on the evolution of the species because he not only feared the reaction of the public but also because he feared his own idea. Max Planck also had a similar experience; he posited the theory of quanta which went against classical physics, in which he believed, and he spent much of his life trying to prove himself wrong. Why are new ideas so frightening to us? If we believed one thing all of our lives, we would be stagnant; is it not the incorporation of

new ideas into our understanding that allows us to grow?

Highlights From The Last Meeting. . .

The brain is 64 billion interconnected synapses; is the mind just energy created by these synapses which can be altered so that we can learn? We made the distinction that the brain is matter and the mind is not matter. Which raises the question of how they meet: how does the material communicate with the immaterial? (A note of irony: according to science, the brain doesn't "exist;" scientists say that they cannot prove that matter exists only that we perceive it. Since science cannot prove the existence of matter, nor the existence of God, does this make matter and God the same conceptual thing?) Since the mind is not material, there is no empirical evidence that a mind exists. Some people believe that the mind is energy patterns created by the brain. But how do these energy patterns create thought? What is thought?

Can the concepts of beauty, love, or anxiety of the unknown be reduced to electrical impulses in the brain? These concepts do not necessarily reflect matter or can not be attributed to objective empirical evidence. If these concepts are not matter or empirically accessible, then what are they? If thought is more than just synapses and energy, and if this something else causes our ability to think of things as beautiful or to conceive of other such concepts . . . are we slowly losing that ability? Does the evidence in the evolution of culture indicate that we are really becoming more like a machine, able only to process data and conceive of thoughts through synapses and the energy that they create?

Next Meeting:

November 6

8:30 pm

Gamble Hall, Room 106

our topic will be: Law and Justice--Does the one equal the other?

Announcements

Special thanks to Al Harris, Annette Logue, Dion Couch, Media Play, Dr. Baker, and--as always--Dr. Nordquist.

*Congratulations to **Carmen Tucker**--the winner of the \$100.00 Media Play gift certificate!!

**ThePhilosophical Debate invites you to a Halloween Party*

Saturday, October 26th, at 7:00pm.

Come as your favorite philosopher or as a creative representation of a philosopher or concept in Philosophy

The party will be covered-dish.

For more information or to let us know what you would like to bring, please contact Dr. Cooksey or Dr. Nordenhaug in the English Department.