

Unit 02 L12 Philosophy Approach Consciousness

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- Common problems of mind that are addressed by philosophers are:
 - The Mind-Body Problem
 - The Knowledge Acquisition Problem
 - Consciousness
- Definition?
 - Conscious as opposed to being asleep or in a coma (unconscious).
 - Consciousness as one's own individual private mental life (opposite subconscious).
 - Being conscious of various aspects of one's existence, actions and environment as awareness influences behavior.
- Consciousness and Awareness
 - Consciousness **IS NOT** Awareness
 - Consciousness: Able to foresee and apply intelligence
 - Awareness: Knowledgeable about surrounding
 - Awareness is considered as a prerequisite for consciousness. One is difficult to define without the other.
 - You are in a region where a sudden outbreak of Plague occurs. You are aware of the disease and its possible outcomes.
 - Are you conscious as well? How would it impact you?
- Qualia(感质)
 - Consciousness is also defined as the subjective quality of experience. What it is like for you to see, feel, think - Qualia(感质).
 - How is it like to be a bat?
 - Mary the colorblind neuroscientist who is well versed about object knowledge of color but has never experienced it herself.
 - Take away: Knowledge cannot generate the subjective experience.
- Consciousness - Emergent Property of Brain
 - Philosophers have tried to understand and explore mind in various ways.
 - Reductionist way is to try to define the whole as a sum of the components.
 - Not always applicable and doesn't take into account the interaction of the components.
 - John Searle (1992) defines consciousness as an **emergent property** of the brain. Based on the concept of emergence, mind can be considered as an emergent property of the brain.
 - The interaction of parts gives rise to new property as H₂O is liquid and transparent unlike H and O.
- Consciousness - Centralized or Distributed?
 - The Cartesian Theatre - Dennett's (1991) explains about the classical (centralized) view
 - Consciousness is generated at a single center point of the brain

where all information funnels in like a person sitting at a theatre watching a projection on the screen.

- But all information about an event is not received at the same time.
- And proposed an alternative view, multiple drafts model of consciousness.
- The Multiple Draft Model of Consciousness
 - Dennett (1991) argues that we are simultaneously processing information in multiple streams.
 - Consciousness, therefore, doesn't happen at any single place in the brain -> distributed.
- Searle's Chinese Room Argument
 - Argues about if AI can generate consciousness.
 - Being able to answer questions doesn't imply that the person in the room understands the meanings.
 - A 'thought' experiment of John Searle (1980).
 - One of the best known and widely credited counters to **claims of AI** that computers do or at least can (someday might) think.
 - Syntax cannot replace semantics as needed for cognition.
 - Gave rise to two different perspectives of AI
 - **Strong AI:** Machines can have minds and can think like human given the right programs.
 - **Weak AI:** Machines can **simulate** human thought process –show 'as if' they can think but cannot really think. However, simulation is useful for the study of mind.