

UNDERSELF

LESSON 1: PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE SELF

Socrates (469-399 BCE)

- No historical docus if he really existed
- No known writings
- Highly regarded by Plato
- Credited for many contribution in western philosophy
- **gnoti seauton**
 - Greek aphroism
 - know thyself
 - indiv knows themselves then all basic issues and difficulties in life will vanish

Techniques in asking

- Who am I?
- What is the purpose of my life?
- What am I doing here?
- What is justice?

Self-knowledge

- Knowledge of one's understanding of the world and knowing one's capabilities and potentials
- Self is achieved and something to work on

Possession of knowledge is virtue and ignorance is vice

- One must have humility to acknowledge ignorance to gain knowledge

Socrates is a Dualist

- "What is I that when in body, makes it living?"
- Soul
 - Pre-existed the body
 - What makes the body alive
 - The ruler of the body
 - The soul will live through
- Body
 - Human, mortal, unintelligible, dissolute, and inconsistent
- Death is the release of soul from the body

Plato (428-347 BCE)

- Greek
- Student of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle

Plato's Idealism

- Empirical reality
 - Experiential world = unreal

- Only a shadow of ultimate reality
- Ultimate reality
 - Put essence to make them real
 - Real as it is eternal and constitutes abstract universal essences of things
- Objective realities
 - Ideas are objects of intellect by reason alone
 - Exists in their own world
- Soul is eternal – enduring self: even after death, the soul continues to exist

St. Augustine

- Doctor of the Church in 1298

Memory and Expectations

- Time
 - Measured within their memory
 - Property of the mind
 - From human beings
- Past and future
 - Can only exist through memory and expectations

Introspection

- Awareness of one's own mental processes
- Inquiry of the soul them of the mind, consciousness and thought
- Humans: superior
 - Have self-consciousness

Rene Descartes (1596-1650 CE)

- French Philosopher and mathematician
- Dualist

Cogito, Ergo Sum

- I think, therefore I am
- Anything and everything can be doubted
 - Except: if one doubts, that cannot be doubted
- Only humans have Hubris (excessive pride)
 - To think of irrelevant questions on existence and purpose of life
 - * Have the audacity and impertinence to try to figure out the meaning of life and are actually self-aware of their own existence
- "We are a thinking thing"

Self

- "A thinking thing or a substance whose whole essence or nature is merely thinking"

- A feature not of the body but of the mind and thus a mental substance rather than a physical substance

Mind and Body

- Mind-body dichotomy
- Thought (mind) always precedes action (body)
- Humans are self-aware
 - Masters of their own universe

Paul and Patricia Churchland (Canadian-American)

- Paul (Oct 21, 1942) Vancouver, Canada
- Patricia (Jul 16, 1943) Oliver, British Columbia, Canada
- Neurophilosophy
 - Philosophy of the mind and neuroscience

Eliminative Materialism

- Common sense understanding of the mind is deeply wrong

Folk Psychology

- Common sense is **FALSE**

Self

- Nothing but the **BRAIN**
- Patricia Churchland's: "Touching a Nerve: The Self as Brain"
 - To understand the self, one must study the brain, not just the mind

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Mar 14, 1908 – Mar 3, 1961)

- French phenomenological philosopher
- Human experience was his main interest

Body

- Subjective type
 - Lived and experienced
 - Body as-it-is-lived
- Objective type
 - Observed and scientifically investigated

Self as Embodied Subjectivity

- Sees human beings neither as disembodied minds nor as complex machines
 - Existing without body
- Consciousness is formed through physical involvement w the world
- Body is a general medium for having a world and we know it is not through our intellect but through our experiences

Subject (a self) Essentially Requires a Body

- Consciousness must be embodied
 - Both perceiving and engaging
- Mind and body are essentially correlated
- "I am my body"
 - Accepted mental states
 - ☀ Suggested use of mind is inseparable from our bodily, situated, physical nature

LESSON 2: THE SELF FROM THE SOCIOLOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Hello