CORE106 Fall 2015

November 16, 2015

Class Notes

**Watts c. 3-6**

4. The Wisdom of the body.

Defining things with words can only use other words.

“If…God cannot be defined or fixed…we know about God all the time, but when we begin to think about it we don’t.” (55)

When we think about experience we strap it into rigid forms and ideas (55)

How do we divine wisdom from something impossible to define?

Yet consider the wisdom in knowing how to breathe? Can you think of knowledge of God in this way?

* Conscious vs. unconscious learning.

Brain thinking vs. instinctual wisdom: (58)

QUESTION: Is the brain part of the body, and how do we integrate our understanding of both of them.

Human desire tends to be insatiable. (59)

Knowledge of mortality tends to make us cram experience. (60)

Primary consciousness…lives completely in the present. (60)

The brain can make predictions. (60)

“Happiness will consist not of solid and substantial realities but of such abstract and superficial things as promises, hopes, and assurances.” (60)

“Sleep is a waste of time..” (62)

“It is therefore far from correct to say that modern civilization is materialistic if a materialist is a person who loves matter.” (63)

Slavery to clocks…another illustration of how we fight our bodies. (89)

Our ability to forsee has much to do with our fear of death. (66)

We cannot ee that our brain is material and therefore subject to change. (66)

INTERESTING: This book was written in 1951 but his prescience about computers is amazing. (see p. 68).

“Man must eventually become a parasitic appendage to a mass of clockwork.”

The link between war and prisoner’s dilemma…(70). Does he account for social interaction?

“Matter is a spirit named.” (71)

NORMATIVE: “The function of the brain is to serve the present and the real, not to send man chasing wildly after the phantom of the future.” (71)

Thinking should not be like heaving bricks. (72). The Anagram?

**5. On Being Aware: (75)**

**“Light, here, means awareness – to be aware of life, of experience, as it is at this moment, without any judgments or ideas about it.” (75)**

**Consider this with Woolf (incandescence) and Robinson.**

“Because awareness is a view of reality free from ideas and judgments, it is clearly impossible to define and write down *what* it reveals.” (76)

“Since we can’t do this, we can get closer to it by removing things that stand in its light.” **This is, among other things, a claim about science. (76)**

“If I want to be secure, that is, protected from the flux of life, I am wanting to be separate from life.” (77)

“The desire for security and the feeling of insecurity are the same thing.” (78)

“I can only think serious of living up to an idea if I split into two pieces: I am me.” (78)

“You may ask, ‘Which experiences, which sensations and feelings, shall we look at?’” The answer is that you must look at the ones you have *now.*” What about memory? (81)

A memory is a shadow of a real experience. (82)

Key: A memory is static. (82)

Experience: Reading a sentence

Experience: See yourself reading it.

Experience: See the experience of the experience of yourself reading it. (83)

“Never at any time were you able to separate yourself from your present thought or your present experience.” (83)

Your body and brain are not separate from thoughts and feelings. (84)

“The notion of a separate thinking, of an “I” distinct from the experience, comes from memory and from the rapidity with which thought changes.” (85)

“There is not something or someone experiencing experience.” (85)

**Chutzpah: “The madness of the thing is that when such facts are presented we circle, buzz, writhe, and whirl, trying to get the I out of the experience.” (86)**

**To understand this moment, I must not try to be divided from it; I must be aware of it, with my whole being. (87)**

**GREAT QUOTE on p. 87 about music: “…so long as you are thinking, “I am listening to this music,” you are not listening. “So long as you are calling it names and saying, ‘I am happy’, or ‘I am afraid’, you are not being aware of it.” (87)**

**6. The Marvelous Moment. (89)**

**“At this moment, who are you?” If you stop to think, you will describe something in the past.” (89)**

**The effort to separate "I" from the reality of the present creates a state of tension in which pain thrives. (90)**

**Sorrow can only be compared with the memory of joy, which is not even remotely the same thing as joy itself. (91)**

**“There are two ways of understanding an experience: compare it to the memory of other experiences, or be aware of it as it is.” (92)**

**Comparing an unpleasant experience to memory is an attempt to avoid the experience. (93)**

**BEST PRACTICAL AND RESTRAINED PASSAGE: “It is a useful process for knowing when to come out of the rain. But it does not tell you how to live with things from which you cannot get away, which are already part of yourself.” (93)**

**“Fear is trying to separate itself from fear.” (94)**

**NOTE THE RELEVANCE OF WATER in Gilead. (96)**

**You will try to escape if you are not aware of the inseparability of thinker and thought. (97)**

**SPEAKING FROM PRIVILEGE: At other times, it remains, but the absence of any resistance brings about a way of feeling pain so unfamiliar as to be hard to describe.” (98)**

**“You have no choice but to be aware, because you cannot separate yourself from the present and you cannot define it.” (99)**

**What do you do? “Look!” (99)**

**In the widest sense of the word, to name is to interpret experience by the past, to translate it into terms of memory, to bind the unknown into the system of the known.” (100)**

**Half of sanity…”other half of sanity”: 101**