

Lesson Plan

NEUROHEADWAY

Neuroscience Into Education

Plato, *The Phaedo*

- "It may be said, indeed, that without bones and muscles and the other parts of the body I cannot execute my purposes. But to say that I do as I do because of them, and that this is the way in which the mind acts, and not from the choice of the best, is a very careless and idle mode of speaking. I wonder that they cannot distinguish the cause from the condition, which the many, feeling about in the dark, are always mistaking and misnaming."

Beakley & Ludlow eds. *The Philosophy of Mind: Classical Problems/Contemporary Issues*

1. The causal role of consciousness

- Conscious experience has been the target of multidisciplinary research
 - *consciousness studies, science of consciousness*
- However: it is difficult to understand what (if any) causal role consciousness (C) plays (*qua* C)
 - this calls into question the existence of C as an autonomous category
 - Kim: an existence without causal powers is an existence not worth having
- Philosophers of mind: the principle of the causal closure of the physical domain (CCPD) makes it impossible for a non-physical C to influence the course of physical events.
 - this problem is easily solved if we can show that C is physical
 - but that is exactly the HARD problem!

Neo-scholastic metaphysics...?

- However: philosophy of mind (and the “physicalism” associated with it) often has a very weak connection to our best theories of physics (Ladyman & Ross 2007).
 - arm-chair, neo-scholastic metaphysics
 - or at best “A-level chemistry”

The need for a scientific metaphysics

- To properly tackle the problem of consciousness and its causal efficacy we need a truly scientific metaphysics
 - a general framework that is implied by our best theories in physics (quantum theory and relativity) and the special sciences