

Reading Guide Parts of the Soul I

Readings for 18 January 2011

REQUIRED READINGS

[A] Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-22

[B] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 253d-256e (V*2)

[C] Jonathan St. B. T. Evans, "In two minds: dual-process accounts of reasoning." (2003), pp. 454-459 (V*2)

RECOMMENDED READINGS

(Note that the Hume reading has been downgraded from Required to Recommended.)

[D] David Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature*, Book II, Section iii, pp. 413-418. (V*2)

OPTIONAL READINGS

[E] Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, Chapters 1-3, pp. 3-29 (V*2)

[A] Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-22

Background

Jonathan Haidt (Yale class of 1985) is a social psychologist who teaches at the University of Virginia. You can read about him, and find links to his work, at <http://people.virginia.edu/~jdh6n/>

The Happiness Hypothesis is an accessible and engaging work, written for a popular audience. You should find the chapter easy to full, and should read it in full.

In the course of the chapter, Haidt refers to a number of texts that we will be reading during the semester. (Indeed, the selection from Plato is part of this week's reading.) If you are interested in following up on any of the texts that Haidt refers to, you can find references to them in the notes on pages 247-8.

Terms, Concepts, and Examples

Be sure that you understand and are able to distinguish among the following terms, concepts and examples:

Terms and Concepts: head brain/gut brain; corpus callosum; confabulation; neocortex; controlled/automatic processing

Examples: the elephant and the rider; Gazzaniga split-brain studies; Virginia schoolteacher case; Bargh interruption study; Mischel marshmallow studies; Julie/Mark incest story

Reading Questions

As you read, pay special attention to the following issues and questions:

- (1) What are the four divisions that Haidt identifies?
- (2) Why does he introduce the topics of self-control, mental intrusions and argumentative persuasion? How do these relate to the main claim of the chapter?

[B] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 253d-256e

Background

(You can read basic biographical information about Plato on the reading guide of 13 January 2011.)

The excerpt we are reading is a brief passage from Plato's dialogue *The Phaedrus*, which was composed at roughly the same time as *The Republic*. The dialogue includes a series of discussions about the nature of love and the power of rhetoric.

As you know from reading the Haidt selection, Plato famously held that the soul has three parts: Reason, Spirit and Appetite. At *Republic* 590cd (p. 260 in the Grube/Reeve translation), he offers a vivid image of this: Appetite is represented by a multicolored, multiheaded beast; Spirit by a lion; and Reason by a human being. In *The Phaedrus*, the role of Reason is played by a Charioteer; the role of Spirit by a cooperative and easily-guided horse; and the role of Appetite by a wild horse, difficult to control.

The selection that we are reading provides a vivid – and rather racy – discussion of how the Charioteer comes to control the horses when faced with the sight of a young boy with whom the character is in love.

I'm afraid this is the only R-rated reading we will be doing this semester.

Reading Questions

As you read, pay special attention to the following issues and questions:

- (1) What strategies are available to the Charioteer for controlling the horses? How might these strategies translate into other domains (that is: be employed for tasks besides self-regulation in the face of one's beloved)?

[C] Jonathan St. B. T. Evans, “In two minds: dual-process accounts of reasoning,” pp. 454-459

Background

Jonathan St. B. T. Evans is Professor of Cognitive Psychology at the University of Plymouth (England.) He is known for his work on reasoning and (ir)rationality. You can learn more about him at <http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/dynamic.asp?page=staffdetails&id=jevans>.

This article initially appeared in the journal *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* – “TiCs” to those in the know. If you enjoyed this piece, you may want to make a practice of reading the journal each month. You can view the current Table of Contents at: <http://www.cell.com/trends/cognitive-sciences/> (In order to access the articles listed there, you will need to log on to TiCs through the Yale Library system.)

Passages to focus on/passages to skim

Please try to read the entire text. If there are technical portions that you find difficult, feel free to skim these.

In lecture on Thursday, we will be talking more about dual-processing in the context of the heuristics and biases tradition. (Evans discusses this briefly on page 457.)

Terms, Concepts, and Examples

Be sure that you understand and are able to distinguish among the following terms, concepts and examples:

Terms and Concepts: System I/System II; belief-bias effect; Wason selection task; heuristic

Reading Questions:

As you read through the selection, keep in mind the following question:

- (1) What are the fundamental differences between System I and System II?
- (2) What is some of the evidence that Evans offers in support of the hypothesis that there is “dual-processing” in reasoning? How, in particular, do the following phenomena provide evidence in favor of this hypothesis:
 - the “belief-bias” effect
 - Wason selection task results

RECOMMENDED READINGS

[D] David Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature*, Book II, Section iii, pp. 413-418.

Background

Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) is (along with the philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) and George Berkeley (1685-1753))– one of the three most important figures of British Empiricism, which was an important Early Modern philosophical movement. Empiricism in this context is generally contrasted with Rationalism (a philosophical movement exemplified by philosophers such as René Descartes (1596-1650), Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) and Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716.)) Empiricists and rationalists disagree about whether sensory experience is the ultimate source of all human concepts and knowledge: empiricists (like Hume) hold that it is, whereas rationalists hold that in some instances, reason itself is the ultimate source of information or conceptual structure.

David Hume’s *Treatise on Human Nature* was published in 1739/40, and was written when Hume (who lived from 1711-1776) was only 26 years old. This comprehensive work – in which Hume seeks to provide a full account of human nature – is divided into three large sections or “books.” The first is entitled “Of the Understanding;” the second “Of the Passions” and the third “Of Morals.”

The brief selection that we are reading for today comes from the middle of Book II. In it, Hume discusses the relation between Reason and Passion, and makes his famous two-part argument, articulated at the end of the first paragraph, that “reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will” and that reason “can never oppose passion in the direction of the will.”

For those of you who are familiar with Hume from having read his work in other contexts (Directed Studies, Philosophy 126, etc.), this reading should provide a nice supplement to the other texts we are reading this week. For those of you who have not read Hume before, the text may be a bit challenging. (For this reason, the reading is merely recommended.)

OPTIONAL READINGS

[E] Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, Chapters 1-3, pp. 3-29

Background

Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century. Though a number of his major ideas have fallen into disrepute, and nearly all of the details of his views have been challenged, his influence on subsequent thought – in both academic and literary domains, as well as in the context of mainstream culture – has been extraordinary.

In this dense but rewarding selection (which has been translated from the German), Freud introduces his famous distinction among the Id, the Ego and the Superego.

The text is complicated and the terminology can be difficult. For this reason, the reading is merely optional.

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