

Episode Fifty-Eight - The Mind's Direct Receipt of Images

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You see, the Epicureans were “very wrong about their physics and it has since been refuted” – but the underlying idea of “atoms and void” still holds.[1] Similarly, the geocentric model was wrong, but at least it was a step in the right direction: the Earth isn't flat and the stars aren't hanging from a giant dome above it. Science, as you know, is the social process of finding less-wrong answers 😊

With that in mind: As to the underlying idea, I am not aware of any such evidence to the contrary; in my humble opinion, it can be argued that a mind with introspection can hardly exist for long, if at all, without also holding the concept of introspection inside itself. Further, it is very unlikely that a vast number of people are capable of introspection, do have the mental concept of introspection, but chose to never talk about it – it is absurd to assume they collectively conspired against writing it down, and as such it is reasonable to assume they didn't say it, either. If they didn't say it, why else would that have been other than that the concept was absent from their minds, which in turn implies they didn't have that capability to anywhere near the extent that we commonly take for granted today.

What's more, humans can function quite well without introspection, even in today's society. Only once cognition or even learning itself are impaired does the overall functioning see a rapid decline. And what is probably most surprising to many people nowadays, is that reduced introspection has very serious advantages in a harsh environment.[2]

To put it differently: By offering evidence that the sun must be at the centre of the solar system, one cannot refute the underlying idea of the geocentric model: “Planets are balls circling each other.”

[1] To be read benevolently; which is to say: I know even the Bohr model was more refined than that, there's the particle-wave dualism, and all that doesn't even get us started on the quantum physics. None of this genuinely affects the point I'm trying to make, which is to say: At the time, “atoms and void” was less-wrong than anything else, and as such it was the right way forward.

[2] Conjecture on my part: This is why the Stoics tried to emulate some aspects of a non-introspective mind inside of an introspective mind.