

Najbolji esej iz filozofije ide na IPO

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Najbolji esej iz filozofije na engleskom jeziku, zbog kojega je učenik LUKA MIKEC pozvan na Međunarodnu filozofsku olimpijadu (International Philosophy Olympiad - IPO) možete pročitati na poveznici "Opširnije..."

The limits of my language are the limits of my world. What is the key difference between an (non-human) animal and human being? Discovering the essence of human, the very difference between us & human beings & other mammals was, and in fact still is, one of the most interesting philosophical conundrums. Our intuition suggests that the key difference (and this & which is not necessarily the metaphysical essence of human being (if any such exists) & is the meaning in which I'm using the word "essence") is somewhere around the area of questions of conciseness. And when we think about conciseness, we think of somewhat mysterious entities and objects like: the feeling of "self", thoughts, concepts, words. Now, let's try to skim through these and see how good they are as candidates for "the human essence". The feeling of "self" (which is sometimes referred to as conciseness, or self-conciseness & however I am already using the term "conciseness" for a wider area of problems) is one that's very hard to be described (mathematician Manfred Minski would say it's basically more than 20 simpler sub-questions that we ask when we ask "what is the feeling of self?"). Although it is an interesting problem, it is not really the feeling of self what we think of, when we think of part of conciseness that's specific only for human beings. For example, when we think of our pets, or some mammals like monkeys, or any other being that we are close to - or are known for having some degree of intelligence & we are keen to prescribe them some version of feeling of "self". I'll later try to show that the feeling of self actually does have some interesting connections with "the human essence", however, it alone, as shown, is not a good candidate for that. Then we have the idea of a "thought", as some sort of mental process. We can split this idea on two parts: the first one consists of the idea of "concept" and the idea of "words"; and second part is some underlying biological "machinery" that "makes thought happen". The biological part is probably shared to some point between most of living beings. So, we are left with words and concepts, as something that might be our essence, or in other words, something which is in some important way specific only to us. A "concept" is not necessarily connected to words, a concept can be mental image, feeling, intuition. We all agree that all mammals experience at least some of these phenomena. So I'll make the list of possible candidates even shorter by excluding all concepts except for human-only concepts & which are basically those that we express using words. Thus we are left with what might be a good candidate: a concept expressible through words. At some point in human evolution, human brain evolved to point where it could make pairs of concepts, which are very abstract objects (in fact, except for some very vague descriptions, modern neurobiology and philosophy don't have any concrete answers to the question "what exactly is a concept"), and perhaps even more abstract things & words. Words can be thought of as strings of symbols, that get their meaning when one's brain connects them with one's concept. This process first happened randomly, at some point in history. Nowadays, it happens every day. Babies are born with immensely complex machinery for mapping concepts onto words. However, what really makes our usage of words interesting is the overall "form of the concept-word map", a very general and volatile structure that we call & language. And the language is, in my opinion, the best answer to the problem I started with: what is the essence of human beings. Now let's take a step back and take a look at idea of "my world", as a synonym for "what I can think of, what can my thought be about". Let's take a look at a regular cat. Can a cat think? Certainly! Not, perhaps, with words, but surely a cat can manage concepts to some point. However, we won't say a cat made a theory that has any deeper connection with the nature, world, or itself. In some sense, it's not interesting (in discussion on our, human, essence) enough to think of "cat's world". This might be antropocentric, but we are, after all, discussing human beings. So, if "my world" & complexity is interesting enough only to humans, there must be something about what we think might be human-only (concepts expressible through words together with their connections & or shorter, our language) that makes that complexity interesting. If we look at the language, when language is thought of as a structure that gives meaning to strings of symbols (words), more closely, we notice there is no word we use that's not a part of concept-word pair. It doesn't strictly logically follow, just from that proposition, that all concepts are mapped to some words (it only follows that all words are mapped to some concepts & at least "words with meaning" are mapped to concepts, as logical positivism remarked). If it would follow, we would almost completely deductively (which is something even scientists are rarely able to do) prove that our language & the map, the sum of all connections between concepts and words & limits the area of concepts we possess, and by that, limits what we can think of in any way. I think this can be done in an interesting way, by asking ourselves "how could I think of something complex enough, that I possess concept of, without using words?". And the answer is in the question itself: when we make theories and assumptions about world, we use complex entities. Pure (the ones which are not bind to words) concepts are trivial, and can only provide intuitions, but can not be put in the actual stream of thought (that is, for humans, stream of words). So outside of the language, no thought can be thought of, no world can be speculated. I would like to return to and comment on something I mentioned along the way to that conclusion: that the feeling of "self" might have something to do with our essence (which, in turn, has to do with "our world"). The idea I'll try to present is based on developments in the age of computer science and discrete mathematics. It starts with this: all living things are basically (biologically) the same, the only real difference between living things is in how well did they developed their brain. Now, the "self" can be thought of as a central concept in every brain, which is in some way active, that is: it can affect other concepts and be affected by them. It is a useful brain's "feature" that allows quicker reaction to problems we encounter (it connects otherwise not-so-close

concepts, for example some person might connect the concept of “love” with the concept of “keyboard”.) All beings that possess any concept at all probably have some version of “self”. However, the very fact that pure concepts are (this is where computers come, in terms of algorithmic effectiveness) too simple, the “self” of most of living world is just too vague. For example, mosquito’s concept of “self” is probably not as complex as ours. What makes us special is the fact that words, which are strings of symbols, can be much more easily manipulated in our brains than the concepts they actually represent. They can be used as a sort of a shortcut (instead of moving and sorting concepts, we move and sort simple things - words). In return, since larger amount of information is made “aware”, we are provided with more reality to our self-awareness. If this idea is shown to be true, it would make us, language-users, even more superior in thinking abilities than language-non-users. It would also, by showing that our brain’s implementation of language is even more detailed and even larger portion of concepts are covered by words, give more stability to the proposition that language limits my world. Autor: LUKA MIKEC