Are Words in Your Brain?

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Is there a YOU in there that is making your body happen?

I have in front of me the *L.A. Times* from January 24, 2000. It's a front-page article entitled "A Scalpel, a Life, and a Language." It's actually a rather phenomenal story about a man who had a brain tumor and they were attempting to remove the brain tumor without damaging his language capability.

They used the surgery for an opportunity to help map the brain out a little bit more because he was conscious during the procedure. The brain doesn't have any pain cells, you can't feel anything.

They mapped the brain by asking him questions, touching probes to his brain and checking his inability to recognize certain pictures. Then when they removed the probe, he could name the picture immediately. He actually recognized the picture but he couldn't think of the word of it. This allowed them to learn some things about how the brain interacts with the mind to produce language.

What's remarkable about this is that they got it wrong, frankly. It's a remarkable article. They conclude that the words are in the brain.

The article starts like this: "In every human thought and reflection, there is a word." By the way, that's controversial. If that's true, you can't think unless you have language. But the problem is, of course, how do you learn language without thinking about it before hand? It seems to me you've got to be able to think before you can learn something because learning is a process of thinking. And then you might learn words that help you to think in a more precise or specific way. But it doesn't strike me that you've got to have words in order to think because you would never be able to get started in the learning language process if that were the case.

In any event the article says, "In every human thought and reflection, there is a word. For Paul Sailor, the essence of all his words is concealed in the cells along the pastel furrow of brain tissue behind his ear just to the left of the surgeon's probe."

Just think about that statement for a moment. Do you think words are concealed in the tissue of your brain? Now if they were, then you should be able to cut around and find that noun or adjective, if the physical thing is stuck in your brain somewhere.

What this article does is highlight the tendency of taking all mental activities and trying to reduce them to physical things. In the field of neurophysiology the idea that one is a substantial soul that works with his body to produce language is archaic, is a folklore, a fairy tale. What we know now is that there is no soul, so they say. *Time Magazine* declared in a 1995 article that there is no soul. We don't know what consciousness is, but one thing we know is, it ain't a soul. There's no YOU in there that is making your body happen. The lights are on but nobody is home.

The reason they say (and this is almost an exact quote, I'm not making this up) scientists have been looking for the soul for 100 years and haven't been able to find it . The second reason: There is no space in the brain for it to fit. You think about that.

Do you think that if a soul really existed it would need any space to fit? The soul is not physical, so it needs no physical space. And if it did exist, you would not be able to find it with a physical

instrument that is meant to measure only physical things. Of course, scientists can't find it. It isn't the kind of thing you can find with the scientific methodology. Why? Because scientific methodology was meant to measure physical things, not non-physical things like souls.

Of course, this isn't an argument for the soul. But it just goes to show that you can't disqualify the existence of the soul simply because science can't find it.

It's like going into a house and looking around for an invisible man. You come out and say, "You said there was an invisible man in your house. I went in there and looked all over, and I didn't see him anywhere. I looked under the bed, in the closet, in the attic in the basement. I looked everywhere and I didn't see him." Well, that is ridiculous because you don't find invisible men by looking for them in that way. They are invisible.

That's why it is misdirected to simply dismiss the existence of the soul because one can't find it with their physical instruments. Here is an article that assumes the soul doesn't exist, and that things like sentences and words and language are actually physical things that are in the brain somewhere. That's why they can say in the article, "For the first time neurobiology is revealing exactly where nouns, verbs, sentences, and the concepts they articulate are rooted in the brain." One has to just think about it for a few seconds to know there ain't no nouns in your brain.

By the way, there ain't no nouns on this piece of paper I am reading from. There's just ink shaped in a certain way. And the way the ink is shaped indicates that this ink shape on this page is referring to a noun that itself is not physical.

You know how I know nouns aren't physical? Because the noun "table" can be in a whole bunch of places at the same time. Physical things can't be that. You can have "table" in all kinds of different conversations, I could read it, I could speak it, I could put it on a CD disc. All these tokens, all these representative things, things that stand for nouns, can be everywhere. The nouns can attach themselves to these symbols very easily because they can be everywhere. Physical things can't be in more than one place at one time, therefore the nouns aren't physical. And you aren't going to find nouns by looking at the chemical content of this paper and this ink. Language is not physical and it ain't located in your brain.

There may be certain parts of your brain that are used by your soul in a cooperative unified relationship to produce language such that if some part of the physical stuff is gone awry, then you are not able to partner in the same way and make language or recognize language. There is certainly an interdependency between the soul and body. No doubt about that at all.

That's all this shows. This experiment demonstrates correlation. It doesn't demonstrate identity. It doesn't prove that the nouns, parts of speech, thoughts, and sentences are identical with stuff in your brain. They aren't the same thing.