

How do you know that the author of these words has a mind?

We are able to know the author has mind on a number of different accounts. Let us now explore each so that we may sharpen our thinking in light of the question itself.

To begin, we are not long in waiting before we soon observe that we are somewhat robbed of sensory experience. As informed by Pathways (n.d.) that our beliefs are born under the banner of ‘best explanation’ (p.2), as provided for by our sensory experiences, we are ourselves soon informed in the absence of traditional sensory experiences. For example, since this question is not presented to us by a person who must be so as the person walks like one, and talks like one, and therefore, must be one, and is instead presented as a written sentence alone. However, whereas our external sense experience is restricted to sight, our internal sensory experience is very much liberated to explore mind in its own domain for the best possible explanation will be by its nature, similar to what is being explained.

Because we are “considering beliefs that figure positively in the explanation of our experience” (Pathways, n.d., p.3), our figurative considerations are positively certain that there must be mind as we ourselves have mind. How can we be absolutely certain? This is problematic due to due diligence as philosophers seeking truth via that tool we know as skepticism. Let us consider the following set of ones and zeros:

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01001000 01101111 01110111 00100000 01100100 01101111 00100000 01111001
01101111 01110101 00100000 01101011 01101110 01101111 01110111 00100000
01110100 01101000 01100001 01110100 00100000 01110100 01101000 01100101
00100000 01100001 01110101 01110100 01101000 01101111 01110010 00100000
01101111 01100110 00100000 01110100 01101000 01100101 01110011 01100101
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00100000 01110111 01101111 01110010 01100100 01110011 00100000 01101000  
01100001 01110011 00100000 01100001 00100000 01101101 01101001 01101110  
01100100

These numbers when translated asks the question, “How do you know the author of these words has mind?” In binary form, this is essentially not only how the question really appears, as we can see, but its informational content has been conveyed or transferred from one mind as you yourself as the reader not seem to acknowledge by virtue of understanding what you are now reading . Thus, the question it seems is a set of quantitative number values that are arranged in such a way as to convey qualitative value as semantics when decoded. Semantics being defined by Merriam Webster (2014) as word meaning and phrases in particular contexts tells us that there is something more to what the headlines, or our sensory experience, is telling us.

Still the relative skeptics, we must ask ourselves whether a computer possessing artificial intelligence asked the question in the form of digital media. The medium in which the question being presented being electronic seems to suggest that the author might be artificially intelligent. Because the general public’s awareness of artificially intelligent machines is commonly recognized and expressed by such groups as Wikipedia (2014) as software or machines capable of exhibiting intelligence, we would probably be aware of such intelligence if, in fact, it were believed to exist by humanity’s best and brightest minds in the field of computer science. The fact is however, that since artificial intelligence is not publically known to exist, we can objectively rule out with near absolute certitude, but not absolutely, that the question was not presented by artificial intelligence.

If the question was not presented by artificially intelligent being, then can we be certain that mind was indeed its author? Part of the lingering problem being that even if we assume a

human being typed into a word processor the question, we are still left grappling with the concept of mind. As relative sceptics, we are able to resist what Pathways (n.d.) refers to as “destructive arguments” (p. 3) by maintaining skeptical relativism.

At this point we should recall our earlier mention of semantics while calling to our attention the ageless mind-body problem because contextual meaning as expressed in the sensible word symbols themselves appear to be something symbolically more meaningful than a collection of numerical values. The resident value existent in the problematic mind-body dichotomy is discoverable in philosophy of mind, which according to the Encyclopedia Britannica (2014) is found wanting to reflect on the nature of mental phenomena. The key here being in reference to ‘mental’.

There is a difference between the terms, “mind” and “mental”. Where the former reflects something greater than our biology, the latter is firmly rooted in the biological. For example, where does our mentality enter the mindal domain? Where is the beginning of thought processes? These questions seem to lead us down a path to quantum psychology.

Because there is semantic meaning not only between the words, but in the words themselves, we must acknowledge that we are seeking something meaningful. We are not examining a material organ, (i.e., our brain), looking for thought matter in chemical form, but are instead engaged in an examination that is thoughtful. The thoughtfulness of the question asks us to thoughtfully ponder something that is thinking for since life begets life, thoughts, it seems, must beget thoughts for something may only come from something sharing some form of similarity. For example, underbrush is born below the canopy of other shrubbery; planets are born from planetary systems; and a question from something which questions.

These thought invoking questions then must come from something thinking as a provoker of thoughts as it must think about the thoughts that are invoked. It is something of an intelligent circular corkscrew if you will that requires us to exercise thought in effort to eventually drink in and partake of its wisdom. One of the assumptions the mind in question seems to be making is whether we can know anything at all for absolute sceptics must ultimately be skeptical of one's own skepticism. Stemming from the Latin, *ipse se nihil scire id unum sciat* or "I know that I know nothing", we are rooted in not being able to be absolutely sure that the question originated from mind, for all we know, it could have spontaneously sprung out of nowhere according to principles of logic and reason not yet discovered.

Something else that is being pointed out, which is noteworthy, is the reference to the author, presumably, him or herself. Since we tend to think of author as being synonymous with agency, we immediately draw a parallel between author and mind for we also think of agency synonymously with mind. The reason being that most people like to think of themselves as being more than a purely biological organism, and instead, being in possession mind as further evidenced by one's belief in being additionally in possession of soul and so on and so forth. Thus, when we think of the term 'author', we soon discover ourselves heading down a lengthy train of thought; which again seems to be self-evident in ourselves as well in that of the question itself as well.

Again it seems we might consider semantics for the words themselves in relation to one another convey meaning. The nature of the words are in English. Since the English is the language of business, we might think that the business of the question pertains to its own self-evidencing nature; which is academically qualified by having paid to receive the question, in question, and possibly even lead ourselves to earning credentialed qualifications as well. If the

language of the question were in Spanish, we might believe the nature of semantics were of love. If the language of the question were in German, we might find ourselves believing the only natural semantic recourse may be scientific. Although well abstracted in the depths of psychology, there is a definitely philosophical bent that cannot be ignored.

### **Final Thoughts**

Finally, we arrive at a mind markedly questioned. It seems that we might know that the author of the question *has* mind because we simply choose to believe that is so. Since we can be relatively certain that Dr. Klempler is a real person who really is the director of the ISFP while assuming with a relative degree of certainty that he or one of his colleagues actually wrote the question, in question, we can rest with a relative measure of certitude and confidence that our certitude is in actuality, true. If we posit that human beings have mind, and Dr. Klempler is a human being, then we may logically conclude that Dr. Klempler has mind. Although it is possible that an algorithm formulated the question, it is unlikely given the reason governing the circumstances in which the question as presented. In the end, is it not simply practical to believe that Dr. Klempler, or one of his colleagues, authored the question? It seems so.

## References

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