



Excerpts from WYK1965 Group Mails, as Fond Memories of James Tong

Reincarnation House of Cards

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On Wed, Oct 9, 2019, 11:34 AM James Tong jtong@polisci.ucla.edu wrote:

We have to ask Stephen, who has been working on his system of re-incarnation. We even worked out a way to recognize each other when we become kois but not pigs. Your conscience would be clear when you sell your farm pigs that look like Stephen. If he does not ID or redecorate himself, he deserves to become bacon.

But if we cannot bring our memory banks to our next life, how do we know it is us? “Us” means we have an ID that is constructed from, preserved in and retrieved by memory.

James,

Glad to read your key point of “short coming (my words)” in my Reincarnation House of Cards. That of an individual’s identity.

“But if cannot bring our memory banks to our next life, how do we know it is us. “us” means we have an ID that is constructed from, preserved in and retrieved by memory.”

This is a challenging question to provide a hypothetical answer. I welcome these challenging questions. They keep me thinking and continue to remember that a house of cards is only as good as its ability to be self consistent when faced with questions and data and evidence.

As a counter example to the assumption that retention of memory (of any incarnation, past and present) is necessary to support the assumption that there is individual identity, I would bring up a person who due to disease or malfunction of the brain, loses all memory of his past in this life. Yet his family and acquaintances are sure that he is the same person and individual.

But you asked a different question. "How do we know it is us?" And not "Does that past or future "being" have the same "ID" or identity as the now Me?"

The observed data by James that James right now does not know whether a past alleged James(minus 1) existed or that a future James(plus 1) will exist in the Koi species only firmly supported James' knowledge now that James doesn't know.

But James rightly can put the burden on me to show that there are some causal effects from one incarnation to one or more future incarnations, otherwise the assumption of identity is meaningless.

And I recently got more interested in the idea that "meaning and purpose" is a fundamental driving force underlying the existence of the universe or universes.

In the last three weeks on a cruise, a Canadian speaker gave a total of ten 45-minutes lecture on Physics. From Einstein to Hawkins, GR to QM to String theory to Theory of Everything, etc.

My personal reflection is that the more one knows, the more one knows that one does not really know. Not counting by facts or theories. But by counting what other questions are we asking which we did not ask before.

Back to identity. If the Universe has an objective recording of all events which occurred in the past and the Universe knows the Identity of beings in multiple incarnations, and the Universe has a valid reason or purpose for such identities to be kept separate and recorded in all their incarnations, and a valid reason for shielding the consciousness of one incarnation from memories of past incarnations, would that not be a meaningful house of cards? Or in fact, a meaningful experiment using one universe?

With modern physics knocking on the door of higher hidden dimensions, we are getting closer to discovering the meaning of the universes.

Example to reflect. If it takes the Large Hadron Collider to smash protons billions of times together to discover one occurrence of the Higgs particle, yet science will conclude that the Higgs particle exists, would it not be possible that the soul exists and that it carries its identity across incarnation?

James, I don't try to persuade you to adopt the same house of cards as mine. I am still challenging my own. But still think we don't know enough to rule it out.



Stephen

Stephen,

As someone who has been in academia all my life, a philosophy major and studied some theology, I have always admired enquiring minds, and you are one of a few in our class, and the best in my book.

In your system, do all beings know their previous existence? Your example of the person who lost all his memory suggests it is possible to hat they do not know. And from animal research, few species are self conscious. Chimps do recognize their own image in the mirror. If you put paint on their right cheek, they will try to wipe it away. But I doubt that kois would raise their hands if their names are called.

But if few beings can make a credible claim they know their previous existence, and among them, can prove to others' satisfaction, how do we know? Do you allow for ignorance about self-previous existence, but other or others know their previous existence, what is the evidence? In your example, the close relatives and care-providers know, because he still has the same bio-metrics. But when you become koi, you would not know, and you don't have the same finger prints and chromosomes, which being would know that you were the one who was the brother of Maria and Teresa, and who called Mabel Ling (my colleague' Joan's sister) two weeks ago?

Does reincarnation take place for all beings all the time or only some of beings some of the time? (all beings have a previous existence?) And what is the existential unit? Buddhists allow for trans-incarnation of animate objects (a mermaid can become a rock — 望夫石, for instance). But for inorganic matter, what is the existential unit — each silicon molecule or the entire boulder, the deck of card or the Jack of diamond? If all beings have a previous existence and subsequent existence, what were their existence before the Big Bang and adter the end of the universe?

I don't take cruises. Junk food (pun intended) makes me put on weight. I get seasick, and I am too dumb to follow lectures on Einstein and Hawkins. This is about the limit of my understanding on reincarnation.

Wink, wink, wink — signal with the left eye in our next life that the red snapper you encounter is me.

James