

Aristotle's theory

Philosophy



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Aristotle against Epiphenomenalism In the modern scientific knowledge, epiphenomenalism is a teaching, considering the mind and consciousness as phenomena, which only accompany physiological processes (Robinson).

Epiphenomenalism suggests that mental processes do not play an active role in a causal link defining various physiological states. The mind-body problem is being examined through the denial of the significance of mental processes in the physiological functioning of the body. Analyzing the philosophy of Aristotle, one can argue that he does not support epiphenomenalism.

Despite the fact that Aristotle believes that the soul exists until there is a body, the philosopher recognizes activity of the mental processes and their involvement in physiological states of a person.

Considering the relationship between body and soul, Aristotle points out an inextricable link between them. “Unlike Plato, he has no objection to so intimate a relation between the mental and the physical” (Caston 331). In fact, he expresses the conviction that their interaction can be regarded as monism. Recognizing the link between body and soul, Aristotle says that the soul is active, not passive. Unlike the supporters of epiphenomenalism, Aristotle argues that the physiological processes can be the result of certain psychological processes. There are two possibilities (Caston 330). Some physiological processes are the result of both physical and psychological conditions, while others can only be the result of certain mental changes.

To sum up, there are no reasons to believe that Aristotle supports the standpoint of epiphenomenalism on the importance of psychological states in human activities. On the contrary, Aristotle emphasizes activity of the mental properties and their impact on various physiological states. Thus, Aristotle understands the unity of body and soul as an opportunity to

influence each other.

Works Cited

Caston, Victor. "Epiphenomenalisms, Ancient and Modern." *The Philosophical Review*, 106. 3 (1997): 309-363. Print.

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