

Brett Sanders
Professor Helman
Cultures and Traditions
Notes for 1/26

The discussion began with Meng stating that on page 80b, it states that a theory can not be justified by the appeal of authority. Dan then stated that a theory should be justified by fact, but pseudoscience does not justify a theory by fact, but by authority. John then stated that an authority, such as a specific scientist, could have a special machine that no one else can test and therefore no one could falsify it. Dan then said that if no one could reproduce the test, then an authority could not be refuted.

The discussion shifted at this point to page 81. Kevin stated that the passage that said “knowledge is impossible,” he thought it interesting that aliens would have the same information that we do, but they would not have the same names of our scientists linked to those certain breakthroughs. Dan then asked would names and theories be better than just theories by themselves. Kevin then said that people should be credited for their breakthroughs in science, such as the Nobel Prize. Bryan then stated that some scientists were told that they were wrong when they started out, and therefore it is important to learn the processes. Neizer agreed with Bryan saying that different areas of studies can not be left separate, and that the processes are important.

The discussion then turned to page 82 as Elliott stated that scientists have come so far that Darwin himself would have to really study up just in order to prove his theory in a modern theory test. Kevin then stated that Ben-Ari states extremes, a very personal stance on the pseudo-sciences, and Darwin would do well under the modern tests.

Adam then moves the discussion to page 86b and astrology’s worth. He said that it is stupid to think they have any importance and that Ben-Ari takes a very strong point of view on the subject. Adam also stated that he spends so much time talking about pseudo-sciences that he gives them more credit. John asked why Ari dedicates so much time for something that he thinks is ludicrous. Dan then says that a person can spend time on pseudo-sciences. He then asked, if astrology contained formulas, would it be more scientific. Adam stated that it would seem to be more of a theory based on something if it could be proven mathematically. Kevin then asked the question why are humans only affected? Wouldn’t everything be affected if it’s a science? That is pretty hard to prove with math. Adam then stated that pseudo-sciences lack an all-encompassing mechanism. Bryan then brought up the point that the light we see now of stars really happened long ago.

Kenny then shifts the discussion to page 89b and states that life is better when you have a belief in a pseudo-science and that people feel more comfort and relief. Dan then stated that this weakens Ari’s argument in general because he gives them some sort of worth. Kevin then brings up the point of the Individual v. Population. He said that they do give relief but a person can not test for it. He then made a statement about subliminal tapes giving relief to people, so they could be worthwhile, but they can not be tested. Elliot stated that he sees pseudo-sciences as a form of entertainment; that entertainment is like magic—not real but cool. Bryan stated that pseudo-sciences are more like a hobby. Adam stated that Ari should have just come out and directly stated this in his book.

Kevin argued that he could not have done that because that would give even more credit to pseudo-sciences. Adam then makes the point that scientists who came from other fields of science to make a discovery is good because he was an outside guy. John then asked are these guys just intelligent, great men that could have done anything or are they simply just great at their field of science. Dan then stated that Newton spent every waking moment in a lab. He said that he was smart but he also experimented a lot. Darwin also spent a lot of time at what he was doing.

At this point, the discussion left Just a Theory and moved onto the binder. Nate was interested on the page H-3d and the statement of creating a phantom. Nate found it interesting that the first goal is to set an impossible goal. Nate said what is the point? He said that knowing a person will never reach a goal, what is the point in starting out? Kevin then stated that some of the points were absolutely ridiculous using propaganda techniques. Adam then stated that the steps just kept milking money out of people. Dan then brought the discussion back to the subliminal tapes in order to overcome a trauma, and that just because science has not proved it to be true, who says it can't be true? Nate stated that psychologically, something might be possible subconsciously and that a person could feel like they are improving and then it might just actually be accomplished. Professor Helman then asked, would it be a good goal to bowl 300 every time? Dan stated that it is actually obtainable and that it is the goal that every person sets every time they bowl. Bryan then stated that every person has a goal of perfection instinctively. Adam then stated that if something seems obtainable and some propaganda comes around, a person would be intrigued and maybe try it. Neizer then stated that Jim Jones got a lot of people to commit suicide because he was the "salvation" that the people were looking for. The discussion then ends here at roughly 9:50.