

MEDITATIONS ON FIRST PHILOSOPHY

In which are demonstrated the existence of God and the distinction between the human and the body

Descartes, René

-René talks about how your knowledge built on top of false or incorrect knowledge can be falsified and/or collapse

“...I should hold back my assent from opinions which are not completely certain and indubitable just as carefully as I do from those which are patently false.”

-He explains that knowledge given to you may not always be true, as well as the things and facts you already know

-knowledge built on top of falsehoods is liken to an unstable foundation of a building

By the second meditation Descartes finds a truth about himself that he is a thinking/rational animal

“Cogito ergo sum”

Third meditation-

A general rule Descartes lay down is that anything that he perceives clearly and distinctly is true

The ideas of these things he perceives clearly, that these ideas occur outside of his thoughts

Descartes then states that the powerful being who created him can deceive him but cannot tell him he doesn't exist

Invites the idea of a God

→ If you can't eliminate the possibility of the situation then you can't know for certain

→ We can't be sure of things that are perceived through the senses

LECTURE

09/20/16

I. THE EVIL DEMON

II. THE COGITO

III. CLEAR AND DISTINCT PERCEPTION

IV. GOD THE GUARANTOR

The Normal World

→ Facts about the world that we discover and know. These are ascertained through the senses

→ Beliefs are then formulated and we get knowledge of the world

The Demon World

→ the malicious demon that plants thoughts and beliefs in our mind

How do you know which world you are in?

Why? How do we know if we are wrong?

Objections: → *That's really impossible!*

→ *Who cares?*

Explanation: include all are you evidence

“ To know something, your evidence has to eliminate the alternatives”

Your evidence doesn't eliminate that you're dreaming or deceived by a demon
∴ You can know you're not dreaming etc. → so you shouldn't believe you're not dreaming

Real World Hypothesis vs Demon hypotheses
(this is the hand) (impression of the hand)
→ Choose the most simple explanation

→ Find one thing that he is certain of, and use it for evidence of differentiating what is the real world vs. Demon world

THE COGITO

SEPT 22 2016

“I undoubtedly exist [...] I am, I exist” →

I think therefore I am = “Cogito ergo sum”

THE FIRST ITEM OF KNOWLEDGE: I EXIST

<p><i>Argument structure</i> (P) I think <u>(P1) If I think, I exist</u> (C) I exist</p>	<p>Either → I'm right in <u>thinking</u> I exist or I'm wrong in <u>thinking</u> I exist If I'm right, then I exist <u>If I'm wrong, then I exist</u> ∴ I exist</p>
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Why does Descartes allow himself to be so certain that he exists when he doesn't allow himself to be certain that 2+3=5 ?

THIRD MEDITATION

<p><i>(P1) I am certain that I am a thinking thing.</i> <i>(P2) I could only be certain I exist if I clearly and distinctly perceive it to be so</i> <i>(C) Clear and distinct perception provides certainty</i></p>
<p>(P) If clear and distinct thinking sometimes leads to falsehood, you can't be certain that what you clearly and distinctly perceive is true _____. (C) Clear and distinct perception never goes wrong</p>
<p>(P) The only way clear and distinct perception can provide certainty is if it never goes wrong (P) For clear and distinct deception to never go wrong, there would be a very powerful, non-deceiving (so good) being _____. (C) God exists</p>

I. THE MIND
II. THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM
III. DESCARTES' ARGUMENT

What is the nature of the mind?

Unconscious / subconscious / sensations through perception / imagination / mentality

I. THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM: *What is the relationship between the mind and the body?*

- *Is the mind the ultimately just physical?*
- *Are they separate?*

DUALISM vs. PHYSICALISM

Both views that there is a connection between the physical state and the mental state

<p>Dualism: <i>the mind is something over and above the physical</i> <i>DESCARTES, BRIE GERDLER</i> <u>Physical states can cause mental states</u>; the disagreement is about whether mental states just are physical states Disagree the nature of mental states not what these states are about Neural structure #3562 → (cause) feeling happy</p>	<p>Physicalism: <i>the mind is nothing over and above the physical</i> <i>JJC SMART, PRINCESS ELIZABETH OF BOHEMIA (subjection to dualism)</i> Disagree the nature of mental states not what these states are about Neural structure #3562 = feeling happy (it is itself/one thing)</p>
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<p>CONSCIOUS MENTAL STATES: are the things that happen in your mind that you are aware of, that you automatically know that is happening. Sensations that you are aware of.</p>	
<p>→Intentional / Propositional attitudes: inherently about something/ targeted at things (objects) (beliefs) →You believe that something is true [believe that (x)] →Desires about something [desire for (x)] →Hopes →Intentions</p>	<p>→ Sensory / Phenomenon : doesn't have to be about something →Pains →Sensations →Feelings →Emotions</p>

Ethereal vs. Corporeal

Elisabeth to Descartes

→ opposed the Theory of Dualism

Asks Descartes “*how the soul of a human being (it being only a thinking substance) can determine the bodily spirits, in order to bring about voluntary actions.*” (Elisabeth 62)

→ determination of movement = the impulsion of the thing moved

→ “Physical contact is required for the first two conditions, extension for the third” (Elisabeth 62)

ARGUMENT: Touching things is not necessary to cause physical change

→ Brick needs to be touched to act contrary to force of gravity

→ Gravity is a physical force (Electromagnetic Field)

→ No Physical state is not a mental state

→ Physical Force still being exerted upon brick → the brick has no mental properties

October, 6th 2016

I. CONCEIVABILITY ARGUMENT

II. OCCAM'S RAZOR

III. SMART'S RESPONSE TO DESCARTES

- Elisabeth focus' on the conclusion of Descartes theory of Dualism
- Believes that Dualism is false = physicalist

Smart → opposes with a general style of argument → *Conceivability Argument*

Descartes starts a premise with what he imagines/conceives

I. CONCEIVABILITY ARGUMENT

(P) *I can conceive of feeling pain even if nothing physical exists*

1. (C) *It's possible to feel pain without anything physical*

2. (C) *It's possible for there to be physical duplicates of me w/o mental states*

1. (C) *Pain is not anything physical*

2. (C) *Pain is not any physical state*

→(p 14 of text) J.J. Smarts (Physicalism) doesn't think that what you can imagine isn't possible in the real world.

- You cannot draw a conclusion from what you conceive / imagine
- Opposes this argument itself: *sensations are just brain processes; the same way that a certain thing is just named differently*

Principle of Occam's Razor *medieval philosopher William Ockham

→ If two theories both account for all the evidence, you should believe the simpler theory

→ Simplicity

- 1) The least amount of objects in the theory would be the most simple
- 2) Fewer fundamental kinds of objects
- 3) Fewer fundamental kinds of law

Eg. Pain = a set of neural processes that occur when pain is inflicted

Eg. Lightning is electrical discharge

Occam's Razor

(P) Of physicalism and dualism we should accept the simpler theory- the one with fewer fundamental kinds of objects and fewer kind of laws

→ Physicalism posits only one kind of thing and only one kind of law whereas dualism* had two of each

∴ We should accept Physicalism*

Objections of his own view → of dualism

1) We can imagine/know that we're feeling pain without imagining/knowing that we're in brain state #362

∴ the feeling of pain is not brain state #362

→ *you cannot form conclusions from what you imagine/know of this world*

INVALID ARGUMENTS, ALTHOUGH PREMISES ARE TRUE CONCLUSION CANNOT BE DRAWN FROM WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW/IMAGINE/CONCEIVE

J.J.C. Smart

Rene Descartes

I know this is water
I don't know it's H2O

∴ Even if it's not H2O, it's still water
∴ water is not H2O

I know I exist
I don't know anything physical exists

∴ Even if nothing physical exist, I exist
∴ I am not a physical thing

Knowledge is obtained through the scientific method, not by sitting at home and trying to make sense of it through other meanings

READ GERDLER'S DEFENCE OF DUALISM WHICH AVOIDS THIS PROBLEM OF WHAT YOU KNOW

OCTOBER 11, 2016

I. CONCEIVABILITY AND POSSIBILITY
II. DISEMBODIMENT ARGUMENT
III. WATER VS. PAIN

Descartes: I can't just be a physical thing because I can conceive of existing even if nothing physical does
Smart: But I can conceive of water existing without H₂O yet water=H₂O

Brie Gertler

Physicalism: pain = C-fiber stimulation → It's logically impossible for a thing to be in pain without C-fibres

Correlation b/w Pain and C-fiber stimulation (one causes the other)

"It shows only that one of these factors *is not*, in fact, present in the absence of the other. But it does not show that one of these factors *could not possibly* be present in the absence of the other." -Brie Gertler

DISEMBODIMENT ARGUMENT*:

Conceivability test: If I can conceive of a situation, it's logically possible

I can conceive of having this very pain even while disembodied while using sufficiently comprehensive concepts

∴ It's logically possible to have this very pain while disembodied

If it's logically possible to have X without Y, then $X \neq Y$

∴ This very pain \neq C-Fiber Stimulation

→ if there is one mental state that is the cause of a physical state, then dualism is true

Is our concept of pain sufficiently comprehensive?

	WATER	PAIN
Surface features	Colorless, odorless, fills lakes and rivers, tasteless, liquid	The hurting sensation
Hidden Essence	H2O	C-Fiber stimulation

That water is possible without being H2O because the surface features is possible without it the Hidden Essence. Our concept of water is what gives rise to the characteristics of water. Therefore it is logically possible to have the surface features of water but it isn't H2O.

Our concept of pain is what we think essential of having pain, which is the hurting sensation (the surface feature). What's essential to pain, is the hurting sensation.

October 13, 2016

- I. Free will and Moral Responsibility
- II. 3 Views on Free will
- III. An Initial Problem for free will
- IV. Strawson's Problem for free will

I. FREE WILL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

I. **Free will** is the capacity that allows us to be morally responsible for our actions

- E.g. To lift your arm, how to live,

Doing something Good/Bad. You deserve Praise/Blame.

Reward vs. Punishment

- 1) *What is free will?*
- 2) *Do we/can we have it?*

A person is capable to do something good or wrong, which enables us to choose whether we praise/blame/reward and punish them for that action.

II. THE 4 VIEWS

<p>1) Determinism is the view that every event is caused to happen in such a way that, given the total state of the universe at any time, plus the laws of nature, what happens next is inevitable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That anything you do is predetermined by the laws of nature - There's only one path, all actions are accounted for in determinism - Given your cause/environment/genetics/experience is inevitable for you to have these desires of action 	<p>2) Libertarianism is the view that everyone has free will because determinism is false (determinism being incompatible with free will).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The world cannot be determined - You are morally responsible <p>LAUREN EKSTROM</p>	<p>3) Compatibilism is the view that we can have free will even if determinism is true, because free will is a matter of doing what you want to do, not because of external coercion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eg. if you do take you the money, and determinism is true, you are still freely doing so. - Doing what you want to do not because of external coercion - You are morally responsible for the decision you made <p>SUSAN STEBBING</p>	<p>4) Pessimist is someone who denies the existence of free will</p> <p>Galen Strawson: free will is not compatible with determinism</p> <p>*But they deny that indeterminism can help</p> <p>Not free agents. Not morally responsible for the actions we make</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - random/luck - Not morally responsible <p>STRAWSON</p> <p>Determinism is either true or false</p>
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- I. An Initial Problem for free will continued
- II. Strawson’s problem for Free Will
- III. Stebbing’s Compatibilism
- IV. “Responsibility to” vs “Responsibility for”

TIMELINE OF LESLIE

↓ Greed

(Has to be morally responsible)

Betrays a co-worker

Shoots a cashier

If determinism is true, her characteristics showed that it was inevitable for the decisions she has made

Personality Characteristics: Lack of respect for life → she was responsible for having these characteristics

Desire for money → caused to have these features that led to the decision ↑

Dislike of Moral rules → caused Leslie to steal money out of the till

The effects of your decisions will create an inevitable outcome

You are morally responsible for some action only if you’re responsible for what made you do it.

STRAWSON’S PROBLEM FOR FREE WILL

IF determinism is true, you are not morally responsible for any actions and so have no free will

IF determinism is false that just means some events happen randomly, and you’re not morally responsible for those either

You’re not morally responsible for any action, and so have no free will

Strawson: Neither case are you morally responsible for your actions

What could decisions involve that make them neither determined nor random?

Stebbing: Randomness makes things worse

Agrees with this premise: *IF determinism is false that just means some events happen randomly, and you’re not morally responsible for those either*

FREE WILL ↔ MORALLY RESPONSIBLE (Bi-conditional)

↓

Blameworthy or Praiseworthy

Infinite Regress → common problem on questions of morality

- *Causa Sui*: the ability to cause one self *you can't prove causa sui
- The Divine being stopped the infinite regress

OCTOBER 20 2016

- I. **STEBBING'S COMPATIBILISM**
- II. **"RESPONSIBILITY FOR" VS "RESPONSIBILITY TO"**

STEBBING'S COMPATIBILISM

IF DETERMINISM IS TRUE

We are tempted to believe Strawson's first premise of her argument is true

Your character made you act → you are morally responsible

Eg. My desires made me shoot the cashier
→ I made the shooting happen.

You freely do **A** just in case you do **A** because you want to; because if you hadn't wanted to, you wouldn't have

You can't help having the desires you have
Given the desires you have, you can't help the actions you do.

∴ You can't help the actions you do

INCOMPATIBILIST

You're morally responsible for doing something only if you could have done otherwise

COMPATIBILIST

You're morally responsible for doing something only if you could have done otherwise, had you wanted to.

→ You can act freely even if your action is absolutely determined, as long as you're doing what you want.

II. "RESPONSIBILITY FOR" vs "RESPONSIBILITY TO"

THE THEORY OF FREE WILL

Being responsible for an action _____ the actions that reflect on you (what Stebbing says we should be concerned about)

Being responsible to a person or group (it is just for the person or group to punish you)