

Introduction to Modern Philosophy

Lecture §9

End of RD: Med 6: The Mind/Body Problem

-->D's arg. for the "real distinction" = mind/body dualism = "substance dualism"

--conseq. 1: immortality of soul?

-->conseq. 2: "property dualism" = irreducibility of mental to physical: Body has divisibility, mechanism, determinism, and mind has indivisibility, teleology, freedom

-->Big Problem: mind/body "intimacy" (causality: outside-in/inside-out)

WHY A PROBLEM?: RD's appeal to likeness of causes and effects.

-->D's solution: "contingent interactionism" (3 cheers for the pineal gland!)

--->Gilbert Ryle: the ghost in the machine

--other solutions: materialism (Hobbes); neutral monism (Spinoza); panpsychism (Leibniz)

II. Leibniz's world, Part I

--Sins of the Father: Desc: strong rationalism, but 2 leftover problems (m/b and G); L's answer: h-rationalism!

--2 types of metaphysics: descriptive (Aristotle) and speculative (Plato).

L: relativity, "deep" ecology, psychology of the unconscious

--the rationale behind L's metaphysics

--see handouts #3 & #4

RD has a pos marker (C&D) and a neg marker (indubitability) for certainty.

In Med 5-6 RD is recovering what was doubted in Med 1.

The nature of the ext. world is extension (which is geometricality--capacity to be char'd by geometry).

After proving the existence of the ext. world in early Med 6, RD attempts to address a problem: mind/body problem, broadly. He argues for the real distinction betw the mind and body: by 'real' he means a distinction in being, not merely in words. Mind and body are essentially different, i.e., are different substances. How he argues for it:

1) I C&D intuit the mind to be thinking thing.

proof: intuit is C&D and God isn't a deceiver. QED.

2) I C&D intuit that body is extension.

proof: same as above.

3) If mind and body are distinct essentially, they do not depend on each other for their existence. Hence, mind can exist on it's own (an implication of the cogito, under the EDH).

Has RD shown the immortality of the soul via 1,2,3? No, since he has only shown that the mind exists independently, not that it exists forever. Immortality is possible, but not yet established (BH).

RD wants more than substance dualism. He wants property dualism: you cannot explain the mind by appealing to the properties of the body (and vice versa). Body has divisibility, is mechanistic and is fully determined. Mind is indivisible, teleological (its purposes are its own, not driven by mechanical principles i.e., and are free (undetermined).

JP: this means man is internally free and externally determined.

But there is a huge problem: we are beings which are both minds and bodies. How do we

explain the intimate unity that our mind and body seem to have (if they are so different, how can they be so intimately related)? How can I cause things in the physical world, and how can things in the physical world cause things in the mental world? RD's answer: God made it so (it is a contingent fact establ'd by God). If you look carefully at the physiology of the brain, you will see this is so. He thought there was a part of the brain (the common sense part--otherwise called the Pineal Gland) which produces physical images, and then has physical effects (raises my arm). Outside objects produce activities in the pineal gland, which are converted into mental images.

JP: this is an entirely unsatisfactory answer. But, lucky for him, we don't have a better answer, either. RD thought of this as a kind of interface, a doorway thru which physical becomes mental, and mental becomes physical.

Ryle was correct to note that this was like a fairy story about a ghost which lived, but need not, in a machine. But current psychological theory has the same problem, despite all that.

Other solutions than dualism: materialism (throw out the mind--Hobbes; problem, implausibly reduces mental stuffs), neutral monism (there is a third substance which is in one respect mind, in another body--Spinoza; problem, how to characterize this other substance. God was the third substance in BS. Upset the Jewish elders, since implied pantheism), 'panpsychism' (really, all things are mental [deep down]--Leibiz; problem, implausibly reduces physical stuffs).

Leibniz: attempt to embrace RD's rationalism and claims about God with a different set of solutions to the ensuing problems. L's answer is, basically, hyperrationalism. He is a speculative metaphysician, and one of the most unusual of philosophers. Anticipated relativity theory, deep ecology (in idea that everything which exists is, in essence, alive) and the idea of unconscious cognitive processes (remember that RD thought all cognition was conscious). Read the handout and then the monadology for Thursday.

2-21-02

I Leibniz's world: Basic principles of the Monadology

--Given that God is all-knowing, all-powerful, all-good and supremely rational, what sort of world?

--see handout #3

II. All about monads

--essential features: simple, windowless, unique, extensionless or immaterial, universal perspectival mirrors, perceptual (conscious vs. unconscious="little perceptions"), appetitive and autotelic, universally interconnected and harmonized. analogy: universal info-processing network.

--How the theory explains the physical world: (space, time, matter): "well-founded

phenomena"=substance--supervenience.

B s-supervenes on A iff A is suff. for B, and no B without A

--How L solves the mind/body problem: panpsychism +supervenience+parallelism

--the irreducibility of mind to matter and motion: the mechanical room argument

--"Deep Ecology" (=Great chain of (living) Beings)

5. divine (all-K, all-P, all-g, & supremely Rational)

4. human (appet+percep+nutri+mem+appercep+reflec.)

3. animal (appet+percep+nutri+mem)

2. organic (appet+percep+nutri.)

1. non-organic (appet+perception)

So, L and RD are rat'lists: we have knowledge by reason alone, independent of sensation. This knowledge comprised by necessary truths.

Epistemic Thesis: a priori knowl of nec. truths

Metaphys. Thesis: world is completely intelligible, created by God to be a harmonious and intelligible whole.

GL is an attempt to solve the remaining difficulties for RD: mind/body prob. solution and prob's with idea of God. GL has a speculative vision which offers a hyper-rat'l solution to these holdover prob's from RD's work.

GL thinks world is intelligible at the most general level and at the most particular level.

GL uses a hypothetico-deductive model: you offer a set of explanations, and then see if they work to explain, via deductions, everything needing explanation.

Handout #3:

1) For GL, God is a kind of supreme logician. The world He creates is one that operates like a logical system, with all parts unified under a single, coherent and unified principle set of principles. Only universal, necessary principles can do this job. (This = principle of systematicity)

2&3) A perf. world must have both perfection at the top and at the bottom. So, there must be perfect basic items, perfect simples, which are put together to make the perfect universal whole (the universe/god). Each of these has a nature which makes it what it is (for otherwise, it wouldn't be perfect in itself in any sense).

4) Unless the world is just made up of a bag of simples, there must be composites made out of simples which comprise everything which isn't a simple.

5) To have a perf. rat'l systematic world, there can be no 'explanation gaps'. So, everything is made out of monads (everywhere). Note: for GL, therefore, there is no 'action at a distance'.

Rather, there are intervening entities (composite or basic/simple) which explain what looks like action at a distance.

6) Given #5, everything must have an explanation (a suff. reason).

7) uniqueness of monads (the identity principles).

8) The universe is reflected in every basic entity (monad), but from its own point of view. So, each monad has perceptual relations to all monads.

9&10) Monads are changeable: each has a purpose toward which it tends, and its essence moves it from within (entelechy). Thus, each monad has a 'principle of unrest' in it.

11) Note that the constitution of both the physical and mental worlds is the same: made of monads. Thus, monads have mental attributes--they are mental entities which have perceptual relations to each other.

GL thinks that all change in the world is mental change, but he thinks he can account for all physical change with that explanation of change.

Note also that God, creator of the world, exists outside his creation. God is the supreme monad.

Monads do not affect each other externally (i.e., they have no physical influence on each other). This is related to fact that they have no parts. But he says they have multiple attributes (manifoldness), so what gives? Well, GL simply means they have no physical parts. Notice how this is very like RD's pic of the mind: partless, indivisible, etc. But, monads are not nec'ly rational or conscious.

Note also, God is subject to rules of rationality/logic. God's nature and rationality are coeval. To regard this as a limitation of God's is to misapprehend the stature of reasonableness: what is the contrast? An irrational world? Is that a less limited ultimate reality, or a more limited one? Q: but we decide what is rational. A: No, not for rationalists. Reason informs us what is rational, not vice versa. Q: isn't this arguing in a circle? A: Yes, but it is not a bad circle (Soc = Soc). This is a coherent system.

For GL, all ideas are innate. It has repr's of everything else (from it's pt. of view). But not all monads are conscious. Hence, GL holds that there are unconscious perceptions (unc'ious monads have little perceptions of each other-e.g., bits of chalk have repr's of each other unconsciously, which is to say, each carries information about the other).

The whole system is preprogrammed for all relations among monads, along with the essences of each monad (and its conseq. aims), by God.

JP motivates idea of "little perceptions": feeling of the chair under your butt...you don't always notice this feeling(s), but that does not mean they are not there. Also, sight of a tree includes many little perceptions, of all the components of the whole sight (each leaf, each vein of each leaf [which is visible from our perspective], etc.).

Next time, JL's proof.