

# Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 110W

Fall 2014

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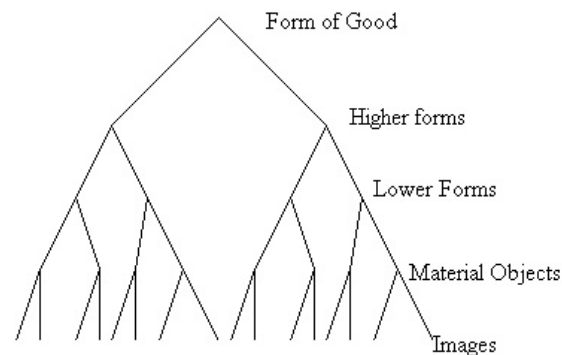
Class #14(/28) - On Reduction (And Reid vs. Locke)

# Business

- Fall Break
  - halfway point
  - catch-up or rest?
- Last week: Isabel on Plato
  - Body theory
  - Soul theory
- Next week:
  - Courtney on Reid's irreducibility theory
  - Miller on Hume
  - Alex on Parfit
- Today:
  - A bit more on the soul theory
  - Jacob on Locke's consciousness (or memory) theory
  - Reid's response to Locke

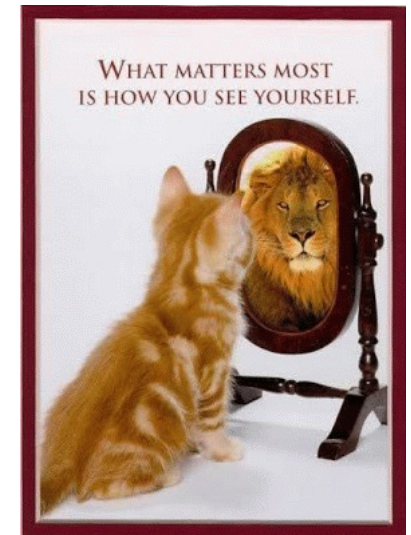
# Plato's Soul Theory of Personal Identity

- The perceivable world is not the real world.
  - ▶ The cave
  - ▶ The forms
- The real world is a world of constancy, not change.
- The soul, which grasps the forms, is the persistent self
- Four Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul
  - ▶ The cyclical argument
  - ▶ The argument from recollection
  - ▶ The argument from affinity
  - ▶ The argument from exclusion/theory of forms, or the final argument



# Plato on Recollection

- Knowledge of the forms must precede any knowledge of particulars.
- When I see a picture of my daughter, I can note similarities and dissimilarities with my idea of her.
- In order to note the similarities and differences, I have to know both my daughter and the picture.
- I also have to know when two things are equal, and unequal.
- Real equality must be absolute identity, which I never experience with my senses.
- Poverty of the stimulus/evidence
- Plato concludes:
  - My knowledge precedes my birth.
  - The soul exists independently of the body.



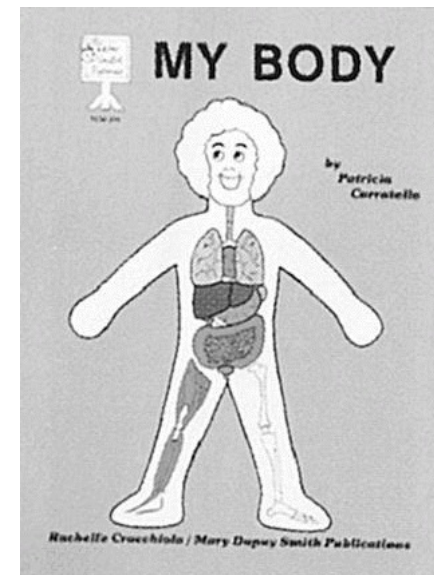
# **Descartes and the Soul Theory**

# Doubt and the Body

- In the Second Meditation, Descartes asserts that he exists as long as he is thinking.
- In sections after the *cogito*, Descartes claims that the only essential property of himself is his mind.
- Like Plato, Descartes gives up the body theory of the self for something close to a soul theory of self.
- Also like Plato, Descartes relies on a poverty-of-the-evidence argument for the transcendence of our knowledge.
  - ▶ The wax
  - ▶ Mathematics: the chiliagon

# Descartes on the Body Theory

- What then did I formerly think I was? A man, of course. But what is a man?...It Occurred to me first that I had a face, hands, arms, and this entire mechanism of bodily members: the very same as are discerned in a corpse, and which I referred to by the name “body.”...As to the body, I was not in any doubt. On the contrary, I was under the impression that I knew its nature distinctly” (Second Meditation).



# Descartes

## Giving Up the Body Theory

- The difference between the body and mind can be traced to doubting.
- We can doubt a lot about our bodies.
  - We mis-perceive them.
  - We could be dreaming.
  - We could be under the false impression that there is a material world.
  - Leibniz's rainbow





# Surety and the Mind

## Descartes Embracing the Soul Theory

- Doubts about the physical world do not extend to the mental world.
- We can not doubt the existence of our thoughts.
- Thus, says Descartes, we can be sure about the existence of our minds without knowing anything securely about our bodies.
- Descartes concludes from this difference that we are essentially only our minds.
- The mind is the soul.

# Descartes Full View

## Not Quite the Soul Theory

- Descartes actually believes that we are an amalgam of our minds and bodies.
- Descartes's view is subtle and liable to be interpreted as a strictly soul theory of identity.
- “It seems that the argument proves too much, and takes us back to the Platonic view (which you reject) that nothing corporeal belongs to our essence, so that man is merely a rational soul and the body merely a vehicle for the soul, a view which gives rise to the definition of man as a soul which makes use of a body” (Arnauld, *Fourth Objections*, AT VII.203).
- Descartes: No it doesn't.

# The Soul Theory of the Self

- The self is the soul.
  - ▶ longer-lasting than the body
  - ▶ pre-existing the body
- Descartes:
  - ▶ The self is the mixture of mind and body.
  - ▶ The soul is the mind, the seat of thought.
- Plato's soul is not exactly (or just) a mind.
  - ▶ Two aspects of platonic souls
    1. *The seat of knowledge*, performing the functions that we attribute to minds.
    2. *Bringer of life*; having a soul distinguishes living things from non-living things.
  - ▶ The three-part division
    1. a rational part
    2. an appetitive part
    3. a spirited part
  - ▶ Compare to Freud's id, ego, and superego

# Jacob on Locke's Consciousness Theory

# Reid on Locke's Theory

# Memory and Consciousness

## A Small Point

- Locke's account of the self relies on continued consciousness.
  - ▶ We know that we are the same person who had a certain earlier experience when we can recall, using memory, that experience.
  - ▶ Memory is essential to connecting our consciousness.
  - ▶ Memory is consciousness of a past experience.
- Reid worries about Locke's blurring the difference between memory and consciousness.
  - ▶ When, therefore, Mr. Locke's notion of personal identity is properly expressed, it is, that personal identity consists in distinct remembrance; for, even in the popular sense, to say that I am conscious of a past action means nothing else than that I distinctly remember that I did it (Reid 347b).

# Gaps in Conscious Experience and Memory

- Every time we sleep, we lose consciousness.
- Some experiences are forgotten.
- Two things can only be identical if they have all the same properties.
- If my self ends with the cessation of conscious experience, when I go to sleep, and then begins again in the morning, it seems as if I should have many different selves.
  - ▶ “While any being continues to exist, it is the same being; but two beings which have a different beginning or a different ending of their existence cannot possibly be the same” (Reid 346a).
- If consciousness and psychological continuity are required for personal identity, then every time we sleep or lose a memory, we lose our identity.
  - ▶ “If the intelligent being may lose the consciousness of the actions done by him, which surely is possible, then he is not the person that did those actions; so that *one intelligent being may be two or twenty different persons*, if he shall so often lose the consciousness of his former actions” (Reid 347a).

# The Old General

- The old general (a) remembers being a middle-aged officer (b).
- The middle-aged officer (b) remembers an experience from his childhood (c), being flogged for robbing an orchard.
- But, the old general (a) does not remember being flogged (c).
- According to the transitive property of identity, the old general is surely the same person as the child.
  - ▶  $a = c$
- According to Locke's theory, it seems, the old general is not the same person as the child.
  - ▶  $a \neq c$
- "The general's consciousness does not reach so far back as his flogging; therefore, according to Mr. Locke's doctrine, he is not the person who was flogged. Therefore the general is, and at the same time is not, the same person with him who was flogged at school" (Reid 347a).



# The Self and Change

- “Our consciousness, our memory, and every operation of the mind, are still flowing like the water of a river, or like time itself” (Reid 348a).
- Since our conscious experiences change constantly, it looks like Locke’s theory entails that we are constantly changing, too.
- But we are looking for a theory which provides some consistency for a self through time.
  - That’s why we rejected the body theory.
- The changing self is naturally puzzling
  - “Is it not strange that the sameness or identity of a person should consist in a thing which is continually changing, and is not any two minutes the same” (348a)?

# Reid on Locke on Evidence

- Reid claims that Locke confuses personal identity with evidence for personal identity.
- My memories of an experience are evidence that I had that experience.
- My consciousness of an experience is evidence that I am having an experience.
- But, my identity is not my memory or my consciousness.
- “It is to attribute to memory or consciousness a strange magical power of producing its object, though that object must have existed before the memory or consciousness which produced it” (Reid, 347b)
- The stolen horse example
  - ▶ Locke is arguing from epistemological premises to metaphysical conclusions.
  - ▶ We discover, says Reid, that we are the same over time by using memory and consciousness.
  - ▶ But we should not confuse the way we learn about something with the thing itself.
  - ▶ We use memory and consciousness to identify our selves, but our selves are not merely continued consciousness or memory.

# Reductive Theories of Personal Identity

1. Body Theory
2. Soul Theory
3. Consciousness Theory

Each of these accounts has some significant flaws.

We'll look at different responses to the flaws next week, in Reid and Kripke.