

Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 110W
Fall 2014
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Class #20 - Intro to Behaviorism
Skinner, from *Science and Human Behavior*
Hempel, "The Logical Analysis of Psychology"
Locke, "On the Inverted Spectrum"

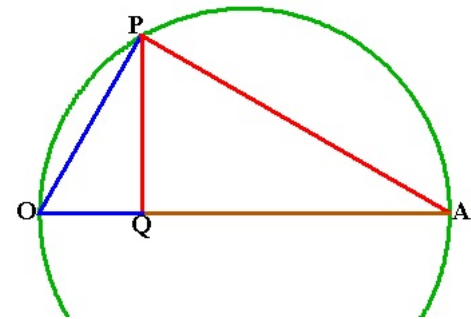
But First....

...a dualism summary

Descartes's Main Argument for Dualism

- MB1. I have a clear and distinct understanding of my mind as being independent of my body.
- MB2. I have a clear and distinct understanding of my body as being independent of my mind.
- MB3. Whatever I can clearly and distinctly conceive of as separate, can be separated by God, and so are really distinct.
- MBC. So, my mind is distinct from my body

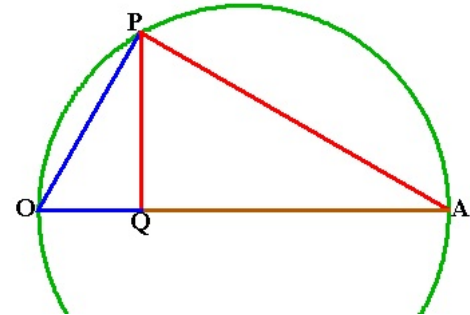
Arnauld's Triangle



Suppose someone knows for certain that the angle in a semi-circle is a right angle, and hence that the triangle formed by this angle and the diameter of the circle is right-angled. In spite of this, he may doubt, or not yet have grasped for certain, that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the squares on the other two sides. Indeed he may even deny this if he is misled by some fallacy. But now, if he uses the same argument as that proposed by our illustrious author, he may appear to have confirmation of his false belief, as follows: "I clearly and distinctly perceive," he may say, "that the triangle is right-angled. But I doubt that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the squares on the other two sides. Therefore it does not belong to the essence of the triangle that the square on its hypotenuse is equal to the squares on the other sides."

Even if I deny that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the square on the other two sides, I still remain sure that the triangle is right-angled, and my mind retains the clear and distinct knowledge that one of its angles is a right angle. I clearly and distinctly understand that this triangle is right-angled, without understanding that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the squares on the other sides.

How Arnauld's Triangle is a Counter-Argument



- We can be certain that the triangle is right-angled.
- The certainty of our knowledge of our right triangle persists, even if we doubt, or fail to recognize, that the sum of the squares of the legs is equal to the square of the hypotenuse.
- Thus, if Descartes's reasoning about the mind and body is sound, it follows that the Pythagorean theorem must not be essential to the triangle.
- But, we can prove that the Pythagorean theorem holds necessarily of the triangle.
- Descartes's reasoning must thus be unsound.

In the Spirit of Arnauld's Objection

- AO

AO1. I have a clear and distinct understanding of Clark Kent, as someone who can not fly.

AO2. I have a clear and distinct understanding of Superman, as someone who can fly.

AO3. Whatever I can clearly and distinctly conceive of as separate, can be separated by God, and so are really distinct.

AOC. So, Clark Kent is not Superman.

- The conclusion of SC is clearly false.

- But, the form of SC is the same as the form of MB.



A Cartesian Reply to Arnauld

- Descartes should respond by finding a difference between the two arguments such that AO is unsound while MB remains sound.
- He could insist that we do not have a clear and distinct understanding of Clark Kent.
 - Our knowledge of him is inadequate.
- Denigrating our knowledge of Clark Kent solves the problem with the Superman argument.
- But, that solution might rebound on the first premise of Descartes's original argument.
- We have to wonder whether our knowledge of the body is also inadequate.
- Perhaps, if our knowledge of the mind were adequate, then we would understand that the mind is the body, and not distinct from it.

The Problem of Interaction

- The main problem with the Cartesian theory of mind
- Our bodies affect our minds; our minds affect our bodies.
- Why does the mind get drunk when the body does the drinking?
- If they are independent substances, it is hard to see how they could do so.
- Ryle: “theoretical shuttlecocks” transfer information from one domain to the other.
 - ▶ The ghost in the machine
- Monism is motivated mainly by the problem of interaction.

Psychology, Philosophy, and Introspection

- Cartesian dualism and the view of consciousness as definitive of the mental dominated philosophical thought about the mind through the nineteenth century.
 - ▶ Not a lot of plausible alternatives
 - ▶ Theological support
- Through Kant, many philosophers agreed with in many ways with Descartes:
 - ▶ the ability to reason distinguishes humans from other animals
 - ▶ minds are different in kind from bodies
 - ▶ our understanding of ourselves must be rooted in our conscious experience
- Psychology declared its independence from philosophy in the late nineteenth century.
- The methods of the early psychologists relied almost exclusively on introspection.
- Freud, Adler, Jung, and William James all agree with the Cartesian view.
 - ▶ We have privileged access to our mental states.
 - ▶ We can know about our own minds best by reflection.
 - ▶ The only way to know about the minds of others is by their reports of their own mental states.

The End of Cartesian Dualism

- The increasing importance of unconscious mental states to psychological explanation eroded the Cartesian notion that the essence of mental states is their consciousness.
 - ▶ “The evidence adduced recently by Freud seems to show that there exist channels tributary to this stream, which run hidden from their owner. People are actuated by impulses the existence of which they vigorously disavow; some of their thoughts differ from the thoughts which they acknowledge; and some of the actions which they think they will to perform they do not really will. They are thoroughly gulled by some of their own hypocrisies and they successfully ignore facts about their mental lives which on the official theory ought to be patent to them. Holders of the official theory tend, however, to maintain that anyhow in normal circumstances a person must be directly and authentically seized of the present state and workings of his own mind” (Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, p 14).
- Darwin’s work showed that humans were contiguous with other animals.
 - ▶ no different in kind
 - ▶ more advanced faculties
 - ▶ Our ability to reason can be explained according to evolutionary principles.

Introspection and Science

- More threatening to introspective psychology and its Cartesian roots is that there is no way to test or verify what some one says about their own mental states.
- Memories may be largely reconstructed.
- Our reports of our own conscious thoughts are highly influenced by suggestion and context.
- Proper scientific treatment of mental states requires greater objectivity than the Cartesian view seems to allow.
- Scientists demand observational access to data and replicability of phenomena.

Behaviorism: The First Physicalist Theory of Mind

- A variety of sources
 - ▶ logical empiricists
 - ▶ psychological behaviorists
 - ▶ linguistic philosophers
- The logical empiricists (e.g. Hempel) and the psychological behaviorists (e.g. Skinner) were united in their desire to dispense with metaphysical speculation in favor of concrete, observable scientific evidence.
- The linguistic philosophers (e.g. Ryle and Wittgenstein) agreed with the logical empiricists and the psychological behaviorists that appeals to obscure internal processes were dispensable, and that we should explain behavior in terms of what is observable.

Three Problems with Dualism

A Summary

1. The problem of mind/body interaction
2. The usefulness of positing unconscious mental states
3. The lack of third-person observational access