

The Problem of Interaction

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Malebranche's Occasionalism

- The Occasionalist's primary focus lies in providing an explanation for causation more generally.
- Malebranche claims that bodies are naturally passive, ruling out transient causation.
- Bodies can only change their states due to reactions to the will of an active substance.
- This substance is God, who intervenes whenever a body is affected.
- This even applies to body-mind events, so parallel mental states are created in relation to physical states due to the will of God.
- Intramental interactions are also caused by God.

Leibniz

- Leibniz holds on to this intra-mental causation by stating that changes in a monad's natural state are immanently caused within that monad.
- His problem lies in why the representations of these states (bodies) are seemingly encapsulated within a system of efficient causal interactions.

Spinoza's Solution to the Problem of Interaction

- Spinoza asserts that the universe is composed of one substance, subsequently solving the problem of interaction between bodies (just another perspective on the mind; the only substance) and minds with his theory of parallelism.

Leibniz's Worlds of Perceiving

- Leibniz rejects this uniformity of substance, as he breaks down the world into realms of perceiving.
- The real world contains monads, the only true substance, but the phenomenological world *represents* this substance through the use bodies to conscious monads.
- This phenomenological world is a fallacy however, as conscious monads can only change their states due to intrasubstantial causation. A conscious monad perceiving another monad receives a false representation of the entirety of the universe that is held in the other monad, because this monad only represents the state it is currently in.

Leibniz's Response to the Problem of Interaction

Leibniz runs into the problem of interaction, because the phenomenological world makes it appear that there are efficient causes due to the perceived existence of bodies (derived from a conscious monad perceiving different monads in different states)

Leibniz rejects that there are transient efficient-causal interactions even though bodies seem to exist and interact within the sphere of these laws.

Leibniz's answer: Pre-Established Harmony

Leibniz says that there is a “pre-established harmony” between all substances that make the appearances of the bodies appear to follow the laws of efficient causation.

Representations of monads and monads themselves “agree in virtue of the harmony pre-established between all substances, since they are all representations of a single universe” (M78, AW 282a)

The appearances of bodies and their interactions seem to be constituted within the realm of efficient causes, in parallel correlation with the perceptions of the conscious monad, or mind.

God and the teleological nature of progression in natural states

- The reason this correlation is parallel between representations of monads and the natural states of monads in actuality is because God has made the universe so that monads seem to effect each other.
- Insisting that God's pre-established harmony only allows immanent causation, Leibniz concludes that there is a teleological nature to the progression of states.
- This undermines free will in a way, as the way a monad will progress in its natural states is already determined, but the monad still is not effected by external laws of efficient causation.

Works Cited

Leibniz, G.W.. "The Principles of Philosophy, or the Monadology." *Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*. 'Ed'. Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009. Print.