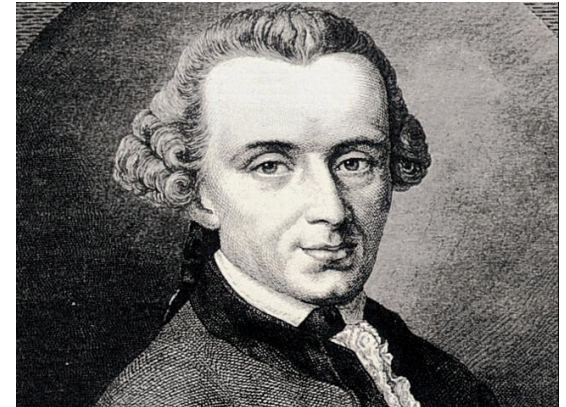


Philosophy 203
History of Modern Western Philosophy

Russell Marcus
Hamilton College
Spring 2016



Class #25
From Hume to Kant



Business

- Handouts
 - ▶ New Schedule
 - ▶ End of Unit 4 Writing Assignment
 - Due next Thursday, unless you're writing the longer paper
 - In which case, that's due next Thursday
- RAT5 on Tuesday
 - ▶ Read the *Critique* slowly, carefully.
 - ▶ Kant's jargon takes some getting used to.
- I hope to have the “short” list for the final by early next week.

Topics in Hume

- ✓ 1. Causation and Induction
 - ☞ 2. Free Will and Compatibilism
 - 3. The Bundle Theory of the Self
- Then, from Hume to Kant

Leibniz and Hume and Freedom

- Leibniz gives us a kind of compatibilism.
 - God already knows what we will freely choose.
 - Our choices are still choices, since they proceed from our natures.
- Hume's view improves on Leibniz's in part by thinking more carefully about the nature of freedom.
 - An action which does not derive from our will would be random, arbitrary.
 - Cartesian liberty makes actions inexplicable.
 - Freedom, in the sense we care about most, is opposed to external constraint.
 - An act is free if it is done in accordance with our will, even if both the act and the will are also determined.



Team Activity

Humean Compatibilism

- “For what is meant by liberty when applied to voluntary actions? We cannot surely mean that actions have so little connection with motives, inclinations, and circumstances that one does not follow with a certain degree of uniformity from the other and that one affords no inference by which we can conclude the existence of the other. For these are plain and acknowledged matters of fact....
- “The actions themselves may be blamable; they may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion. But the person is not answerable for them and, as they proceeded from nothing in him that is durable and constant and leave nothing of that nature behind them, it is impossible he can, upon their account, become the object of punishment or vengeance. According to the principle, therefore, which denies necessity, and consequently causes, a man is as pure and untainted after having committed the most horrid crime as at the first moment of his birth, nor is his character any way concerned in his actions, since they are not derived from it, and the wickedness of the one can never be used as a proof of the depravity of the other...
- “By liberty, then, we can only mean *a power of acting or not acting according to the determinations of the will*—that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may. Now this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to everyone who is not a prisoner and in chains... (Hume, *Enquiry*, §VIII.2, AW 571–72).
- Which of the following is the best interpretation of Hume’s view about freedom?
 - ▶ A. We have libertarian freedom, but that’s not the important kind of freedom.
 - ▶ B. We lack libertarian freedom, which we want, so we have to settle for a lesser sort of freedom.
 - ▶ C. The libertarian fails to describe the kind of freedom we care about, which concerns not being forced to do what we don’t want to do.
 - ▶ D. We have libertarian freedom, and it is consistent with determinism.
 - ▶ E. All notions of freedom are incoherent.

Moral Responsibility in a Deterministic World

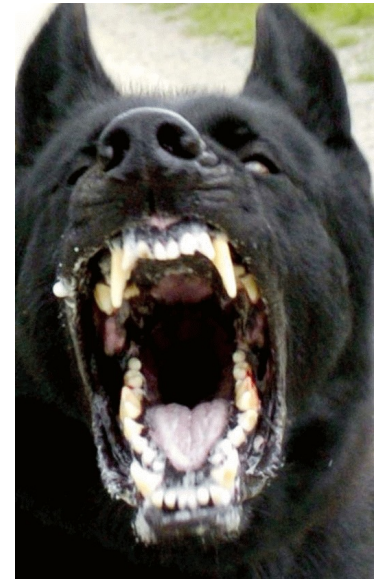
- If I do something only because I could not have done otherwise, I do not do it freely.
 - ▶ I do not return to the ground when I jump in the air of my free will.
 - ▶ If I pay my taxes because I am afraid of being fined or imprisoned, or if I refrain from cheating only out of fear of punishment, or if I am forced by threat to do any action I do not wish to perform, I do not act freely.
- If I want to pay taxes, since I approve of their uses in building and maintaining roads, schools and armed forces; or if I refrain from cheating because I believe it to be wrong, then I am acting in accordance with my will, freely.
- Consequently, we can hold people morally responsible for those acts they perform freely, in Hume's sense, and not for those they perform under constraint.

The Compatibilist Wins!

- By focusing on a sense of 'freedom' that is not opposed to determinism, Hume makes free will compatible with determinism.
- He also makes both the acceptance of both free will and determinism compatible with ascriptions of moral responsibility.
- He allows us an account of moral responsibility which aligns with our belief that we are responsible only for that which we choose.
- Hume's definition is consistent with the doctrine that ought implies can, that our moral responsibilities do not exceed our powers.
- Everyone should be happy.

Not So Fast!

- The reflective determinist may remain unsatisfied.
- Are we free to choose what we choose?
 - ▶ Are our thoughts themselves merely the products of physical processes?
- We excuse children from legal responsibility, because we think that they are not free to choose otherwise, even when they are not constrained by an external force.
- Mental disorders
- fMRI and mindreading
 - ▶ Can we maintain, as the compatibilist does, that we are free, if a computer can predict our behavior?
- We distinguish between cases in which our will is constrained and cases in which it is not.
 - ▶ The absence of free will implied by the predictability of our actions seems to excuse.
 - ▶ That is the essence of incompatibilism.



The
incompatibilist

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Locke and Reid on the Self

- Locke gives us lots of reasons to reject reductive, substantial theories of the self.
 - Soul theories
 - Body theories
- Instead, he provides a conceptual account: the self as consciousness and connectedness in memory.
- Prof. Copenhaver argues that Locke's view of memory is broader than ours.
- Still, Reid argues that Locke is confused between evidence for the self and the self itself.
- He provides an irreducibility theory:
 - The self is an irreducible monad.
- Giving up!
- Berkeley and Hume explore another option.

Berkeley and Hume

- Berkeley worried that we have no idea of self.
 - ▶ “There can be no idea formed of a soul or spirit; for all ideas whatever, being passive and inert... they cannot represent unto us, by way of image or likeness, that which acts...The words *will, soul, spirit* do not stand for different ideas or, in truth, for any idea at all, but for something which is very different from ideas, and which, being an agent, cannot be like or represented by any idea whatsoever - though it must be admitted at the same time that we have some notion of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind, such as willing, loving, hating, inasmuch as we know or understand the meaning of those words” (Berkeley, *Principles* §27, AW 452b).
 - ▶ Berkeley abandons his policy of never admitting an object that was not first in the senses to posit a self as what unifies our experiences.
- Hume, like Reid, worries that the common notion of self outruns our memories.
 - ▶ “Memory does not so much *produce* as *discover* personal identity by showing us the relation of cause and effect among our different perceptions. It will be incumbent on those who affirm that memory produces entirely our personal identity to give a reason why we can thus extend our identity beyond our memory” (*Treatise* I.4.6, AW 530b).
 - ▶ Hume welcomes a skeptical approach.

Team Activity

Hume's No-Self View

- “If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same through the whole course of our lives, since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other and never all exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions or from any other that the idea of self is derived, and, consequently, there is no such idea... When I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception” (*Treatise* I.4.6, AW 526a).
- Which of the following interpretations, of this passage and others, best captures Hume's view about the self?
 - ▶ A. We have no idea of the self, but we can infer the existence of a self as the thing which has experiences.
 - ▶ B. Since my experiences are constantly changing, my self is changing over time, too.
 - ▶ C. There is no such thing as the self, despite our commonsense beliefs.
 - ▶ D. There is a self, but we must take its existence as a matter of faith.
 - ▶ E. Since I can observe my perceptions, what I call myself is just a series of perceptions.

A Functional View

- Hume's claim that there is no self relies on his premise that a self should be precisely identical over time.
 - ▶ Too strong?
 - ▶ As we age and acquire more experiences, we have different properties.
 - ▶ Certain experiences are cathartic, change us.
 - ▶ Metaphoric?
- A biological theory of the self can accommodate these changes without giving up on an enduring self by relying on the functional organization of the body as a criterion for identity over time.
- The self as a collection of loosely-related individual instances of bodies, each just a moment of time wide
 - ▶ Related biological entities
- Hume's account of our ordinary conception of self is similar to this functional view.

Loose Connections of Experiences

- Though we never perceive a self, we do have experiences.
- Whatever we call ourselves must be related to our series of experiences.
- Our experiences are joined by a variety of psychological connections among our ideas.
 - resemblance, contiguity, cause and effect
- These psychological connections govern all of our thoughts.
- They do not connect our ideas in some underlying substance.
- They conjoin our experiences over time.
- Memory too demonstrates mere conjunctions.

The Diverse Self

- Instead of being a paradigm of unity, Hume thus argues that the self is an exemplar of diversity.
- Just as Berkeley argues that the apple is merely a bundle of independent sense experiences, its taste independent from its roundness and its crunch, we are just a collection of various, separate experiences.
- As far as we know, even the world itself is just a loose collection of events unconnected by causal laws.
- Everything is particular and all the particulars are independent.
 - ▶ “Every distinct perception which enters into the composition of the mind is a distinct existence and is different and distinguishable and separable from every other perception, either contemporary or successive” (AW 529b).
- The self is dissolved.
 - ▶ “When we attribute identity, in an improper sense, to variable or interrupted objects, our mistake is not confined to the expression, but is commonly attended with a fiction, either of something invariable and uninterrupted, or of something mysterious and inexplicable, or at least with a propensity to such fictions. What will suffice to prove this hypothesis to the satisfaction of every fair enquirer, is to show from daily experience and observation, that the objects, which are variable or interrupted, and yet are supposed to continue the same, are such only as consist of a succession of parts, connected together by resemblance, contiguity, or causation...” (AW 527b).

The No-Self Theory and the Bundle Theory

Two ways to view Hume's theory of the self

- It is a no-self theory because he denies any experience of a self.
 - There is no I, beyond the experiences.
 - Against the Cartesian claim that the cogito yields the existence of a thinker.
 - We are just thought.
 - Buddhist view
- We can call it the bundle theory of self for his claim about our loose connections.
 - A bit misleading: it might be interpreted as claiming that there is an enduring self which unites the bundle.
- We have a practical interest in maintaining a notion of the self over time.
- But the claim that there is a self underlying the experiences, some haecceity, is, strictly speaking, false.
 - Or anyway we can have no knowledge of any self.

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Two Pairs of Humes

- Skeptical and Naturalist
 - ▶ The skeptical Hume argues that we have no knowledge of the future or unobserved.
 - ▶ The naturalist Hume presumes our beliefs in universal scientific laws, and explains them in terms of our natural psychological capacities.
 - ▶ These two Humes are compatible.
- Radical and Moderate
 - ▶ The Radical Hume
 - Berkeley is right about abstract ideas.
 - We have no knowledge of the laws of nature, the causal structure of the world.
 - We have no reason to believe in a self.
 - The future is completely determined; we are not free.
 - ▶ The Moderate Hume
 - 'Causation' is a mental phenomenon, arising from habit.
 - Mathematical theorems are secure relations of ideas.
 - We believe that nature is uniform.
 - We are free, in the only sense that is important.
 - ▶ Are these two compatible?

Toward the Kantian Revolution

- Despite attempts to tone down Hume's skepticism (with practical and naturalist interpretations), Hume's conclusions are baldly skeptical.
- Both Berkeley and Hume may be read, in retrospect, as *reductio* arguments on the representational theory of ideas.
 - Berkeley shows that this theory, coupled with our sensory apparatus, gives us no reason to believe in a material world.
 - Hume, shows that the combination gives us no reason to believe that we have knowledge of the laws of nature.
- Something has gone seriously wrong.
- Kant attempts a Copernican revolution in philosophy.
 - The empiricists followed a weak psychology into a dead end of skepticism.
 - Kant starts with our knowledge, a denial of skepticism, and works backwards to our psychological capacities.
- Transcendental arguments
 - We know we have knowledge of causes, the self, and mathematics.
 - Our bare experiences are insufficient to support this knowledge.
 - So, there must be psychological capacities which support our knowledge.