AGENDA

1. Review of Personal Identity
2. The “Stuff” of Reality
3. Materialistic/Physicalism
4. Immaterial/Idealism
PERSONAL IDENTITY

• Our main question from last week:
  • What makes me me over time?

• Answers:
  • Body Theory
  • Memory Theory
  • Psychological Continuity Theory
  • Ego Theory
  • Bundle/Illusion Theory
  • Soul Theory
HOMEWORK

In class we’ve discussed how the problem of personal identity over time may be solved through the different theories of PI. Reflect on the case of Tookie Williams.

1) Explain how (1) body and (2) memory theories can be used to argue that 1979 Tookie Williams is numerically identical to the person that was executed in 2005. Then describe why there are issue with each theory that can be used to argue that he is not.

2) Do the same with the (3) psychological continuity theory. Based on his analogy of giving a disproportionate amount of money to different relatives, what would Parfit say about the Tookie Williams case?

3) Keeping all of the above in mind, was 2005 Tookie Williams deserving of being executed for the behavior of 1979 Tookie Williams? Make an argument that does not contradict your answers above.
Parfit

If you think about it, psychological continuity is a matter of degree.

Inheritance:
Am I justified in giving more money to closer relatives, and less to more distance relatives?

“a relative is a relative” = trivial truth

Personal Identity:
Can’t I also say I am closer in identity to me yesterday, than to me 20 years ago?

“numerical identity” = trivial truth
It’s like the young Tookie is a distant relative of the old one. So, deserves different treatment?
Our main question from last week:
  What makes me me over time?

Responses
1. Body Theory
2. Memory Theory
3. Psychological Continuity Theory
4. Ego Theory
   - We have a personal (“I”), first person perspective
5. Bundle/Illusion Theory
   - No evidence for ego theory, or PI
6. Soul Theory
   - Ego theory feels right because it is. Looks like an illusion because we have the wrong assumption about reality.
   - No proof of it because it is immaterial!
“WHAT” ARE YOU THEN?

When you think about this questions, who/what is doing the thinking?

- Is a piece of meat (brain) doing the thinking?
- Or are you using your brain to do the thinking? (like using a tool)

The later is more intuitive and is what Descartes thought when he said “I think, therefore I am.”

But then, where and what is this “you” that is using a brain to think?
INTUITIONS ABOUT THE SELF

• There’s a sense that there is a me beyond my brain.

• Then the universe is comprised of material substance and mental substance (immaterial substance).
• Is this true?
INTUITIONS ABOUT THE UNIVERSE

Investigating the nature of reality

• Is the universe comprised of only of one type of “stuff”? 
  • Monism.

• Is the universe comprised of only two types of “stuff” (material
  and immaterial for example)? 
  • Dualism

• Is the universe comprised of more than two types of “stuff”? 
  • Pluralism

• If the universe is comprised of more than one type of “stuff” can
  all other types be explained or reduced to interactions of one of
  them: 
  • Reductionism.
THE IONIAN NATURALISTS (PRE-SOCRATIC)

- Philosophers in region of Ionia
- Desired a “naturalistic” description of reality.
- Beyond myth.
THALES OF MILETUS
(624-545 B.C.E)

- Sought a single substance underlying all things.
- Used reason and evidence to come to conclusion ("naturalistic").
- What's his conclusion?
THALES OF MILETUS
(624-545 B.C.E)

The source of everything is water
ANAXIMENES OF MILETUS  
(DIED 500 B.C.E)

When you look at water, it changes.

Here’s what I see:

1. Condensation, pure air becomes denser:

   (air - fire - wind - cloud - water - earth - stone;)

2. Matter becomes lighter during rarefaction:

   (stone - earth - water - cloud - wind - fire – air)
ANAXIMENES OF MILETUS
(DIED 500 B.C.E)

Believed the first, universal, underlying element is air “pneuma”.

Two Basics “Motions” – Condensation & Rarefaction
HERACLITUS: ‘You cannot step twice into the same river’
On the process of eternal flux (panta rei):

• "This world, the world of all things, neither any god nor man made, but it always was, it is, and it will be an everlasting fire, measures kindling and measures going out."
Empedocles
(5th c. B.C.E)

One of the first Pluralists. Later followed by Aristotle

• Reality comprised of 4 elements: earth, air, fire, water
• Two “motions”:
  • Love, which unites different things
  • Strife, which breaks things up into basic elements.
THE ATOMISTS

Leucippus of Miletus (5th c. B.C.E)
Democritus of Abdera (460-370 B.C.E)

Leucippus: the original “atomists”
- the universe consists of empty space and simple entities that combine to form objects.

Democritus:
- atoms must be so small that they are invisible to the naked eye
SO WHAT’S REAL?

• So far only material substance. Why?

• Is that all there is?
  Plato: No! There is a reality beyond my senses.

• What is this “reality” to which Plato alludes?
IMMATERIALISM

Plato: Forms are the “real” thing

How do you know these are all books?
They all share “bookness”.

There must exist the absolute, immaterial, ideal (form) of the perfect book, and all other “things.”
IMMATERIALISM

History:

Plato + Christianity or Life After Death
= Greater Popularity of Immaterial World View
IMMATERIALISM & WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

• With the classical philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, as well as with the rise of Christianity, the idea of a soul became dominant in the West.

• The concept of personal immortality gave Western philosophy a distinctly non-material bias.
Scientific Revolution

• In the 17\textsuperscript{th} Century, a growing interest in science once again turned minds back to materialism.

• With the discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo and Newton, people began to believe the world could be quantified and scientists claimed materialism was all that mattered.

• Why?
MATERIALIST

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)
English Philosopher

- All we can truly know about the world is the measurable aspects
- All measurable matter is all there is in the universe and only matter is real
- All mental states are the same as brain states.
THE FORMS OF MATERIALISM

Today, materialism takes many forms with four characteristics:

1) Seeks answers through objective methodology
2) Deterministic—every event has a cause
3) Denies any supernatural belief
4) Reductionistic— the whole can be explained only in terms of the parts or units
OBJECTIONS TO MATERIALISM

• Berkeley's Idealism

• Consciousness
  • Awareness rather than non-awareness
  • "Subjective" experience rather than nothing

• The Knowledge Problem
  • Mary
  • Qualia
  • Bat Argument
  • The problem of subjective experience.

• What is matter?
  • Non-material
George Berkeley (1685-1753)
Irish Bishop, Philosopher

Idealism
What’s he talking about?
BERKELEY’S IDEALISM

- What is this?
- What is a “chair”?
- According to Berkeley it is a certain collection of sensations that we label “chair”.

**Image:** A red chair.
BERKELEY’S IDEALISM

Argument:

1. Physical objects (apples, tables, chairs) are sensible things.
2. Sensible things are a collection of sensible properties.
3. Sensible properties are ideas.

Conclusion:
Since, physical objects are sensible ideas, the only thing that exists must be ideas.
BERKELEY’S IDEALISM

Argument:

1. All **degrees** of heat are equally real.
2. Intense heat is only in the mind

Conclusion:
All degrees of heat exist only in the mind

Works for all sensations: taste, sound, color
THE ROAD TO IDEALISM

• To be is to be perceived.

• Idealism is thesis that all our experiences are experiences of mental representations.

• There is no world of material, physical objects as we ordinarily think of them ‘out there’ in the world and which cause our beliefs, perceptions, feels and so on.

• Material objects are to be understood as families of experiences.

• There exist no objects independent of the mind…

• …except God (according to Berkeley)
If knowledge is grounded in sense experience (empiricism), then we have no perceptual experience which grounds the claim that there exist mind-independent objects.

Why?

Objections to Idealism?
OBJECTIONS TO MATERIALISM/PHYSICALISM

• Berkeley's Idealism

• Consciousness
  • Awareness rather than non-awareness
  • “Subjective” experience rather than nothing

• The Problem of Knowledge

• What is matter?
  • Non-material
EASY AND HARD PROBLEMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Distinction proposed by David Chalmers

The easy problems:

• finding the neural correlate of consciousness

• explaining the ability to apply information to thinking and behavior

• explaining the ability to focus attention, recall items from memory, integrate perceptions, etc.

The hard problem:

Why does consciousness feel the way it does? Why does it feel like anything?