

Philosophy of mind Descartes intro to personal identity

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Philosophy of Mind/Descartes/Intro to Personal Identity

Introduction to Personal Identity In his quest to describe the human mind and body relationship as well as how mental and physical things interact, Descartes Offers philosophical arguments to prove that God exists and that human soul and mind are distinct. Descartes argues that the soul survives after the body dies, and God reveals himself in the soul unlike knowledge about the world which has to be sought. Personal identity begins from the knowledge that one must be something and cannot doubt the existence of his body. The ability of one to explain what they are is the basis of personal identity.

Person (the mind) thinks, are not affected by what body feels (senses) and are prone to error. Actions are as a result of mental decisions that act as trigger; however, actions can either be determined by a pre-existing condition (determinism) or intentionally decided by the mind (libertarianism).

Combination of determinism and libertarianism result into compatibilism.

According to Baron D'Holbach, human beings (identity) are machines (determined) in a mechanistic universe. Determinism takes the center stage in this argument. Baron D'Holbach argues that if mechanistic laws run the universe then the soul does not have any activity in what the body does and does not exist. His Argument for the existence of the soul is that if people were just organized cells, one (personal identity) would not persist as the same person across his ever changing material bodies. D'Holbach claims that there is no such thing as will because it (the will) is just a choice of an alternative that favours one. Alternatives are preexisting and therefore

people do not have free will.

Person A existing at a time $t(2)$, is the same as person (B) existing at an earlier time $t(1)$, if and only if A remembers or 'cant remember' at time $t(2)$ actions or experiences of B occurring at $t(1)$ (John Locke). Arguing for the premise of sameness of consciousness, brings this out. A person (conscious) can be and at the same time not be the same person at two times given the ability to remember events.

Works Cited

Berofsky, Bernard. Free Will and Determinism. New York: Harper & Row, 1966. Print.

Morick, Harold. Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind: Readings from Descartes to Strawson. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1970. Print.