

# Hum009 Notes - Truth and Reality

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# Chapter 1

## Hum009

### 1.1 Oct. 2 - What will we be learning in class?

Philosophers tend to be interested in roughly five sorts of issues:

- What is the nature of world?
- What is the nature of the divine?
- What is human nature?
- How do these things interact and how do they overlap?
- What implications do these give on how to live life and the definitions of right/wrong?

We will not be touching on the last of these five.

We will study how we know something is real and how minds and modies interact. We can also decide whether God exists and what we can know. We will look into free will. There is no consensus on this subject.

We will be interested in our reasons for belief and the assumptions we make in believing things.

### 1.2 Oct. 4 - Berlin, Pryor

Discussion:

- What puts a question in Berlin's "intermediate basket"?
  - A question that is neither observable or calculable (the other two baskets).
  - Intermediate questions have no pointers towards their answer.
  - There must be no means to answer the question (no rigorous calculable framework).
  - "Unintelligible questions" are according to Berlin anything with no set framework.
  - Maybe there are multiple classes of unintelligible, such as "what is color seven?" which gives incorrect pointer, and absence of pointers, which is philosophy.
  - This basket of questions is a set of unevolved disciplines.
  - Philosophy is humans trying to figure out a place in the world, an emotional response (Pg. 10).
- If philosophy is a disappearing field, why does Berlin believe that philosophy is endless?
  - Berlin says that newer disciplines still spawn philosophical questions, keeping philosophy alive.

- How does Berlin handle the opinion that philosophy is irrelevant to our lives?
  - Berlin shows that philosophy manifests itself in many fields.
  - Berlin categorizes philosophy as all logically consistent unintelligible questions.
  - Philosophy is relevant for philosophical reasons: rational order and just appreciation of things, according to Berlin.
  - Philosophy is meant to lend understanding and rules.
- Berlin's model is that everybody philosophizes and is capable of doing so, even if not on a professional scale.

Note: As an amateur philosopher, if one finds in established texts trivial mistakes, the mistake is one's own! Reread, meditate, and figure out why you're wrong.

Prior's piece is probably interesting for the following things:

- Use arguments, not assertions.
- Outlines will be required for the first paper (1 page for a 5 page paper).
- Find important arguments and then connect dots: is probably best way to outline.
- Write as if the writer is lazy, stupid, and mean.

### 1.3 October 9 - Descartes P.1

My Notes (oops, wrong section):

- Reason is what makes us strong, and what distinguishes people is not an ability to reason but the ability to reason along correct paths.
- Descartes believes that his search for truth is noblest of all "vain and useless" professions.
- Mathematics is a language of rigor but an undervalued subject in all but mechanical arts.
- All other sciences have unstable foundations, which Descartes presumes can be overthrown. Notice the careful rhetoric about religion.
- Descartes then decides that he will travel the world and find his own knowledge/truth.
- Practical judgement & theoretical, because practical impacts the lives of the thinkers.
- "Thus the greatest profit I derived from this was that, on seeing many things that, although they seem to us very extravagant and ridiculous, do not cease to be commonly accepted and approved among other great peoples, I learned not to believe anything too firmly of which I had been persuaded only by example and custom; and thus I little by little freed myself from many errors that can darken our natural light and render us less able to listen to reason." - Does this mean that he grew to distrust people's words? Is he accepting hypocrisy? I'm not quite sure what the general meaning is?

Questions:

- What is Descartes's greatest goal through this reading? - To introduce doubt and skepticism? To believe things only through good reason!
- Is Descartes's view of knowledge as a sort of math correct, with axioms? Maybe the house metaphor, the foundational mindset, is incorrect; think webs rather than foundations.

- How can we establish a new set of beliefs? Descartes says that you don't have to have a belief disproven before razing it, you can just start over immediately!
- Descartes argues that anything with even remote amounts of doubt is to be disregarded as "truth".
- He first overthrows premise that senses are universally trustworthy then overthrows any trust in the senses.
- Can you know you're not dreaming? Descartes argues not, but is that true? Figure it out!
- Must one not be dreaming to know something about reality? Could you discover things even while dreaming?
- The dream argument seems to depend on that anything inconsistent can debunk an initial belief. Is that true though? Must everything be run through?
- Note that there is a weird argument shift from "can't tell whether dreaming while dreaming" to "can't tell whether dreaming while awake". For example, blind people can't tell whether lights are on or off, but sighted people definitely can...
- Painter analogy establishes that there must be certain truths.
- God argument says that God has control over truths, and were there the worst case scenario that God were constantly deceiving, then he knows nothing. Also, since we do make mistakes, God cannot have made us in a way that is perfect and thus we cannot rule out the worst case scenario. But then, is the "evil genius" considered part of the God argument or is it a fresh argument?
- Were God to have made us perfectly, we're still being deceived. If we come about in any less perfect process, we're even more screwed, and we can still conclude only general features.
- Always keep in mind that the goal is absolute certainty, not things that are applicable in the real world.

## 1.4 October 11 - Descartes P.2

Questions:

- The Archimedes reference shows that Descartes wants to rebuild knowledge from a fulcrum.
- "Cogito Ergo Sum" - I think therefore I am: broken down -
  - I think
  - Whatever thinks exists - Thoughts exist → Thoughts are properties → Properties exist in things → Thoughts exist in things (call it "I")
  - I exist
- Cogito can also be called "non-inferential knowledge", something immediately seen and not thought over (for example, during role call, anything somebody does proves that he/he is here, so non-inferential b/c no dependence). In other words, thinking and existence are permanently tied together.
- Note that the clothing and wax argument show that we only sense what the mind interpolates, not the things we get from senses.
- Maybe "thinking" only needs an actor because of grammatical reasons! Language necessitates an actor for verbs. The counterargument is then that "thought" is a property of things, so call what "thought" is a property of I.

## 1.5 October 16 - Descartes Meditation Six

Meditations 2(closing) and a bit of Meditation 3:

- Note that all of Descartes criterion for "What am I?" includes imagining and sensing, which aren't so much reliant on external stimuli, in the same list as the reactive senses. This is justified as being a list of things for which one must be conscious.
- It is easy to restrain claims to "it seems to me" rather than a universal claim, which makes the Meditation Two seem much more plausible. Descartes tries to merge self-knowledge (restricted) and external knowledge (universally shared).
- Every thought and sensory input once fed into Cogito then yields the conclusion that "I exist and I am a thinking thing", so this must be certainty.
- Truth Rule: Trust those things you clearly and distinctly perceive.
  - I only know this because I clearly and distinctly perceive it.
  - If my clear and distinct perceptions were ever wrong, I could no longer be sure of my existence.

Meditation Six at last!

- Schematize the paragraph that starts with "First, I know that all the things that I..." (premises and conclusions)

## 1.6 October 18 - Kripke FML

Notes:

- *a priori*  $\neq$  necessary
- necessary can be evaluated without discussing sufficiency.
- Rigid designators are such that in every world the same thing is designated, while strong designators designate necessarily existent objects.
- Proper names are rigid, but not strongly rigid because the person might not exist.
- Examining "S is 1m long at  $t_0$ " shows that there is no conflict because we define 1m. However, it is not a necessary truth because S isn't always 1m long. This arises because 1m is rigid while length of S is not.
- But then should 1m be a rigid designation, the statement then becomes contingent on a lot of things, even as it is *a priori*.
- Using a sentence like "Aristotle is the greatest Plato pupil" could be bad as definition, b/c it is nonrigid (could have other pupil). On the other hand, we can use the sentence to fix the referent to always mean Aristotle, where Aristotle refers to the man rather than the pupil.
- Note that the evilness in names like Hitler are nonrigid because in other worlds he would have different properties! And not be Hitler.
- Defining meterstick = contingent on what the meterstick was like! But also, we define a length but not necessarily that the meterstick is always 1m, so the meterstick is nonrigid reference.
- There are contingently true identities!

- Mill says all singular/general = connotative, proper = non-connotative. Kripke disagrees, saying that general nouns aren't connotative because they still describe something proper rather than an amalgam of properties; if something not H<sub>2</sub>O is discovered to be water-like, is it water? no. Ergo, water is a general yet proper noun.
- Note that defining light as "stream of photons" is fixing a reference, because in some alternative world should sound be the means of vision then their "light" would be different from ours but still cause the same sensations.
- There are also a posteriori truths, which are truths that must have been regardless of outcome; such as mathematics, though things like the elemental nature of Au can be disputed.
- Any necessary a priori or a posteriori truth could not have turned out otherwise, though a posteriori truths aren't unique going back through time; maybe other situations could have produced the same judgement.
- Note that it is important in asserting equality/inequality to note whether a non-rigid designator is contingent but fixed by reference to a rigid designator, which could lead to a confusion on the rigid designator.
- Descartes's separation of mind/body holds true because both mind and body are rigid designators.
- It is clear that the heat example is a posteriori contingent, because other beings could have arrived at a different truth from epistemologically identical conditions.
- The pain analogy is different because there is no intermediate step of sensing the heat, ergo no a posteriori contingency is to be found. This is identified because we label heat based on something we feel, so it is in a sense a reference to how we feel rather than a completely rigid designator.

## 1.7 October 23 - More Kripke

- Before Kripke, a priori = necessary, a posteriori = contingent. Kripke argues that a posteriori/priori is the means of knowing knowledge while necessary/contingent is the character of the knowledge.
- An example of a necessary, a posteriori truth would be math proofs, but Kripke suggests other examples. Others include water = H<sub>2</sub>O, light, etc., truths that must have been even before discovery.
- Kripke will argue the difference between seeming to conceive something and really conceiving it (not in the scientific case), EXCEPT when discussing mental/physical phenomena.
- Kripke is careful to differentiate between metaphysical (the way the world is) and epistemological (how you know things) claims.
- Define possibility of  $P$  to be if and only if not necessarily not  $P$ . Define conceivability of  $P$  to be if and only if you can't know independent of experience that it is untrue, or if and only if it is not a priori that not  $P$ .
- Famous example: one knows that bachelors are not married independent of experience. One knows this without going through any experiences, so it must be a priori.
- The connection between conceivability and possibility is: if I can conceive  $P$ , then  $P$  is knowable a priori. If  $P$  is a priori, it cannot have a logical contradiction and thus necessarily is not a contradiction, which makes  $P$  possible.
- Frege (philosopher) argues that labels are what we make of them. He then asks how to affirm "Hesperous is Phosphorous" (morning star is evening star, Venus is Venus). If we believe that the words mean what they reference, then Venus is Venus.

- Frege then points out that we had to go out to discover that these terms correspond to Venus, and thus it must have been *a posteriori* knowledge. So Frege argues that this truth must have been contingent. So then obviously the statement isn't a synonyms argument or an argument about the nature of the words, otherwise it should be known *a priori*.
- Frege concludes that the meaning of a term isn't necessarily what it denotes, that reference  $\neq$  meaning. The sense of the term is the meaning, and only upon discovering the senses of both Hesperous and Phosphorous can we determine that they sense the same object.
- Ex. If we need Chris, the guy in our class, we need a sense of which Chris we're talking about, essential/unique properties of this Chris.
- Kripke argues that all identities are necessary and cannot be contingent.
  1.  $X = Z$ .
  2. Leibniz's law states that for two things to be identical they must share all properties.
  3. X is necessarily X.
  4. X is necessarily Z.
- Kripke thus argues that they are necessarily identical in all possible worlds regardless of our state of knowledge.
- Kripke then asks that, given the statement "Gideon is the instructor of Hum009", how do we refer to Gideon in worlds where he does not teach Hum009? One can:
  - Reject alternative realities (claim that it is an essential property), which then means that all properties become essential, OR
  - Argue that alternative worlds don't reflect the "same" Gideon.
- However, it is clear that when we regret or when we look ahead, we stay the same person, so counterfactual claims are possible. This then concludes that some things have nonessential properties that we use to "sense" things, which means that the sense is not the properties, but the reference! QED

## 1.8 October 25 - Even more Kripke

- There has got to be something beyond the reference of a word when analyzing it, and we call that the sense, the unique properties of the world that we use to identify the term.
- Nixon's example: even if Nixon weren't president, he would still be Nixon. Therefore, the reference/sense of the word isn't enough.
- Cannot generate worlds that claim "Nixon is not Nixon", but can change almost all other modifiers.
- Names or "natural kinds" are rigid designators by Kripke, at least for now.
- Note that rigid/nonrigid designators have no difference in the actual world.
- We must ask ourselves "How does counterfactual discourse develop?"
  - To fix rules for designators, they must be universal and always apply.
  - Is there a way for us to find descriptions that help us define rigidly objects?
  - Descriptions are meant to fix references, a sort of stipulation. For example, let some rigid designator pick out in all worlds what it picks out in this world. This will then be the reference of the rigid designator in all possible worlds.



- Consider though, the rigid designator “heat”. How did people talk about heat before we knew it was the motion of molecules? It was referred to as the sensation of warmth. However, note this is a nonrigid designator. It is not a definition because the sensation is not an essential property of heat.
- We then return to the question of contingent, a priori truths. The above designation of heat is probably a priori, but it cannot be necessary due to the nonrigidity of one of the designators. It must therefore be a priori contingent!
- Remember that Hesperous is Phosphorous must have been discovered, but is necessary because both designators are rigid! So it then becomes clear that a priori/necessary and a posteriori/contingent are no longer always hand in hand.
- The strategies available to sort through good/bad claims cannot be used to sort through physical/mental connections; the appearance of contingency actually implies contingency here. Because pain doesn’t have to imply c-fiber stimulation in all worlds, it must be that mind/body are distinct.

## 1.9 October 30 - Galileo/Locke

Read a bit of Meditation Six in addition to Barkeley reading, and be ready to schematize paragraph 4 in the Barkeley.

- Galileo classifies properties into non-existent perceived and existent inherent properties.
- tooo lazy to take notes....
- Locke separates qualities into primary and secondary qualities. Our ideas of primary qualities resemble the primary qualities themselves (size), while our ideas of secondary qualities do not resemble the secondary qualities (ticklishness).
- Locke specifics resemblance to differentiate primary vs. secondary, which is what does a lot of heavy lifting for him.
- Locke also says that qualities have “powers” to generate ideas, but what power is possessed when there is nothing in which to generate ideas? Would then these properties really exist? Or does Galileo hold weight in calling these properties facetious?

## 1.10 November 6 - Berkeley

- Two significant points: there exists an inner world of ideas of certain truths and an external world that we only can claim directly to perceive rather than to know; we then have to reason through our ideas based on something external to justify something outside of the world.
- There is a distnction: Locke explained objects as not having the qualities the way we think they have them (having qualities they don’t have), but Berkeley claims that these qualities cannot exist (having qualities they cannot have).
- Berkeley says there are three ways to acquire knowledge: actual sense experience, introspection, imagination. (Note that Descartes considers innate truths such as math to be a fourth category of knowledge)
- A single object/name refers to a whole collection of ideas, including internal responses such as the second way to acquire knowledge above.
- Ideas must be perceived to exist. We know that there are at least two things that must exist - thinking things and ideas. We know that thinking things exist outside of our three categories of ideas.

- Berkeley's ideas are along the lines of the appearance-reality distinction we've been studying so far.
- Paragraph 3 starts the Ordinary Usage Argument. The immediate objects of perception cannot exist unperceived is not the exact point Berkeley is making, but more so that the qualities we use to characterize objects cannot exist unperceived. This contradicts Locke and is a much more powerful, much more interesting point. *Essi is percipi*.
- Berkeley then concludes that objects cannot exist absolutely outside of perception, because everything known about objects is perception thereof, so matter is unintelligible.
- No sensible object can exist to be unperceived, says Paragraph Four:
  1. Sensible things are perceived by sense.
  2. All we perceive by sense are our own ideas/sensations.
  3. Thus, sensible things are just our ideas/sensations
  4. Ideas or sensations cannot exist unperceived by some understanding.
  5. Sensible things can't exist unperceived by some understanding
- Philosophical argument is paragraph 4!

## 1.11 November 13 - Berkeley/Malcolm

- Just remember that Berkeley is trying to prove that all science is knowing God's ideas rather than to disprove the existence of anything in particular. He only wishes to reframe "matter" as God's ideas.
- The Master Argument: Ballys Berkely claims that the mere possibility of conceiving an object/idea to exist outside of a mind. In other words, one can conceive the possibility of a sensible object existing unperceived if and only if *esse is percipi* is false.
- One can conceive the possibility of a sensible object existing unperceived if and only if one can conceive a sensible object existing unperceived.
- Berkeley then claims that one cannot conceive a sensible object existing unperceived. Thus, one cannot conceive the possibility of a sensible object existing unperceived. This proves that *esse is percipi* is true.

Malcolm

- Mill's argument is one by analogy, that when I exhibit behavior *X* I am enjoying mental state *Y*, and thus when I observe behavior *X* in others they must be in the same mental state *Y*.
- Malcolm argues that since there exist no criterion for mental states, saying the "same" mental state actually has zero meaning. Were there a criterion, Mill must cite evidence that fulfill the criterion.

## 1.12 November 20 - Descartes Meditations 3,5

Note that the God arguments in Aquinas are called cosmological arguments, which are basically First Cause arguments.

Paley is called the teleological argument, or proof by design. Watchmaker's analogy, means that appearance of complexity must imply actual design, because chance has too low of probability. Note that highly improbable does not imply logically impossible. Coordination is key to implying design, because things like rocks have no coordination between parts. However, if we examine life, we see that there is a coordination in self-preservation, which is why this does still imply design.

Descartes:

- Remember that ideas come from sensation, imagination, and innate ideas (pre-loaded bloatware). We then ask which of these categories can support something external to us?
- Descartes searches for an idea that has a cause aside from himself. What ideas concern are what differentiates ideas, while all ideas are equal in that they are modes of thinking.
- Descartes then differentiates between formal and objective reality. Descartes argues that ideas about God must have more objective reality than finite substances and “modes and accidents.”
- Objective reality is defined as the fact that the objects ideas are about exist. In other words, the idea of the object of a thought exists if it has objective reality.
- The heirarchy exists because a mode/accident must have a finite substance as a base (i.e. a coat, a finite substance, is necessary to claim that a coat is red, a mode/accident). Because God can be thought of independently of the rest, God must be at the top of the heirarchy.
- Every objective reality then needs to be based in a formal reality tbat is at the same level of the heirarchy. For example, I exist, and since I am a finite substance, I can cause anything finite or modes/accident. But I cannot cause God. Thus, since only God can cause God, God must exist.
- If one argues that one doesn’t have an idea of God, then it is like saying “I have no concept of infinity in mathematics” which is a deficiency of the thinker not the thought of; the idea of God exists in Descartes’ mind, which is sufficient.