

Hobbes' Materialism

Material and Senses

- To solve the problem of interaction between the mind and body Hobbes concludes that all that exists is the material.
- “The cause of sense is the external body or object which presses the organ proper to each sense either immediately, as in taste or touch or mediately, as in seeing, hearing, and smelling”(116a).
- Neither in us that are pressed are they anything else but diverse motions (for motions produce nothing but motion)”(116a)

Failure of the Material Mind

- Given that all that exists is physical objects how does Hobbes explain the the various functions of our mind that do not seem to be mechanical
- Not until a machine can write a sonnet or compose a concerto because of thoughts and emotions felt ... could we agree that machine equals brain ... No mechanism could feel ... pleasure at its successes, grief when its valves fuse, be warmed by flattery, be made miserable by its mistakes, be charmed by sex, be angry or depressed when it cannot get what it wants. - Prof. Geoffrey Jefferson, *Lister Oration, 1949*

The Power of Memory Explained in Momentum

- “IMAGINATION is nothing more than decaying sense”(117a)
- Absurd as an idea of the modern era
- Compared with long-term potentiation by which the repeated activation of synapse increases pre- and postsynaptic mechanisms to increase synaptic strength. (National Institute of Medical research, London)

Cognition as Unguided or Consequence Imaginations

- “*Unguided or with out design, and inconsistent, in which there is no passionate thought to govern and direct those that follow to itself*”(119b)
- “*Regulated by some desire and design. For the impression made by such things as we desire or fear is strong and permanent... from desire arises the thought of some means we have seen produce the like of that which we aim at*”(120a)

Regulated Imagination

- We seek the causes and effects of imagined things:
- “When of an effect is imagined, we seek the causes of means that produce it...The other is when, imagining anything whatsoever, we seek all the possible effects that can be produced by it – that is to say we imagine what we can do with it when we have it”(120a)

Hobbes' Objection to the Idea of God in Descartes Meditations

- “The whole of this inquiry collapses if there is no idea of god”
- “When we say anything is infinite, we signify only that we are not able to conceive the ends bound as things named...and therefore the name God is used, not to make us conceive of him (for he is incomprehensible and his greatness and powers are inconceivable to), but that we may honor him”(121b)
- “We have no idea or corresponding image to the sacred name of god”
- “You write ‘I did not extract [the idea of God] from the senses...the whole inquiry collapses if there is no idea of god. It has not been proved that there is any such idea and does not seem that there is one”

Speech

- “The General use of Speech is to transfer our mental thoughts to verbal”(122a)
- Uses of Speech:
 - To registers the cause and effect of all things
 - To show others Knowledge
 - To make known our wills and purposes
 - For amusement

Abuses of Speech

- Errors of Speech caused by abuse of Language:
 - “Regist[rations] for their concepts which they have not yet conceived”
 - Use of metaphor
 - “When by words they declare to be their will which is not”
 - “When they use them to grieve one and other”(122b)

Use and Meaning of Philosophy

- “By PHILOSOPHY is understood *the knowledge acquired by reasoning from the manner of the generation of anything to be the properties, or from the properties to some possible way of generation of the same, to the end to be able to produce, as far as matter and human force permit such effects as human life requires*”(132a)

Reason or Deduction

- “When a man *reasons*, he does nothing else but conceive a sum total form addition of parcels, or conceive a remainder from *subtraction* of one sum form another, which (if it is done by words) is conceiving of the consequences of the names of all the parts to the name of the whole, or from the names of the whole and one part to the name of the other”(125b)

Induction

- When the like consequences have been observed before; and the more often they have been observed, the less uncertain is the sign. And therefore he who has the most experience in any kind of business has the most signs by which to guess the future”(121a)

Truth and Speech

- “Then the affirmation of consequence is true; other wise false. For true and false are attributes of speech not things”(123b)
- To Hobbes Speech is conveyance of information and reason. If our speech is wrong then our reasoning is wrong. Materialism does not solve the resemblance hypothesis, so false speech is a mistaken conception or representation