

History of Modern Philosophy: Epistemology

A Recapitulation

Main Themes

(i) Methodology: Rationalism

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- (i) Methodology: Rationalism
- (ii) What are Ideas? What problems do different theories of Ideas pose for the Theory of Knowledge?

Methodology: Rationalism

Descartes' Foundationalism



- ▶ From (Aristotelian) Empiricist to Rationalist Foundations

Methodology: Rationalism

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- ▶ Metaphysical Underpinnings of Cognition (God/Mind/World)

Methodology: Rationalism

Descartes' Foundationalism



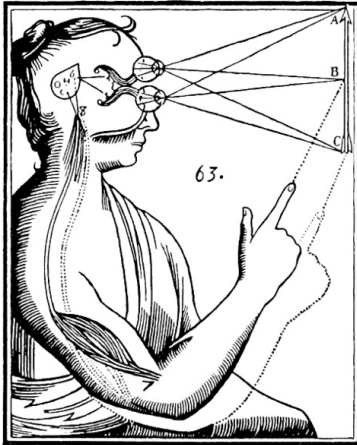
- ▶ From (Aristotelian) Empiricist to Rationalist Foundations
- ▶ Metaphysical Underpinnings of Cognition (God/Mind/World)
- ▶ Cognitive Attunement

The Cartesian Circle

Kinds of Certainty

- (i) Psychological Certainty
- (ii) Normative Certainty
- (iii) *Scientia*

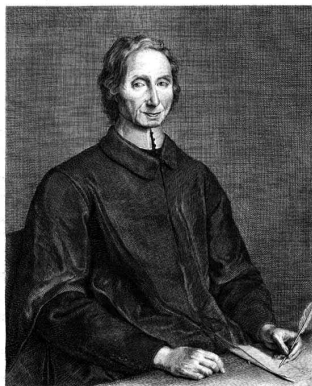
Key Question



- ▶ Does Epistemology necessarily require aid from Metaphysics?

Causal and Epistemic Intelligibility

Malebranche



NICOLAS MALEBRANCHE
*Prêtre de l'Oratoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences decédé le 12. Octobre 1715. âgé de 77 ans.
Simple, sage, doux, sérieux, sans vanité.
Dans le sein de Dieu s'inspire
Il cherche la Vérité.
Et loin de se croire lui-même
Qu'il se fût jamais ou son orgueil
Pour apprendre sans doute comment Dieu veut qu'en l'âme
Il n'ait rien qu'en Dieu ne connaît rien qu'en lui.*

- ▶ Without **Causal Intelligibility** the Cartesian philosophy is still vulnerable from Pyrrhonian scepticism
- ▶ The theory of the **Vision in God**. Malebranche's Rationalist Epistemic **Foundation**
- ▶ The Objections of **Antoine Arnauld**

Causal and Epistemic Intelligibility



Spinoza

- ▶ God/World/Mind: A Naturalist Rationalism?
- ▶ Mind-Body Parallelism.
- ▶ The Principle of Sufficient Reason

Causal and Epistemic Intelligibility

Leibniz

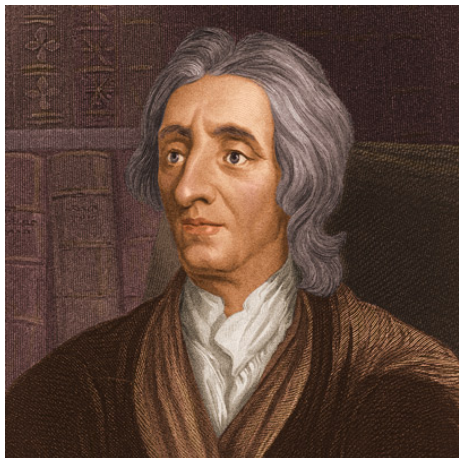


Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716)

- ▶ Two Great Principles:
The PSR and the PNC
- ▶ Is Leibniz able to derive his whole metaphysical system from these two great principles?
- ▶ (A)lways in every true affirmative proposition... the **concept** of the **predicate** is in a sense included in that of the **subject**. (G II 56)

The Impossibility of *Scientia*

Locke



- ▶ Wisdom comes from understanding our cognitive limitations
- ▶ Real and Nominal Essences.
- ▶ 'Our ignorance is infinitely wider than our knowledge (IV.ii.22), because (1) we lack ideas; and, (2) we cannot discover the true connections between our ideas'

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5. What lessons, if any, could contemporary epistemologists learn from the rationalists?

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- (iii) Ideas as dispositions (Descartes/Leibniz)

Innate Ideas



Descartes

- ▶ The **dissimilarity** problem and the pursuit of truth
- ▶ Ideas - **Adventitious**, **Invented**, and **Innate**
- ▶ Clarity and Distinctness

Innate Ideas



Spinoza

- ▶ Innate Ideas ✗
- ▶ Common Notions ✓
- ▶ Representation

Innate Ideas



Malebranche

- ▶ Innate Ideas ✗
- ▶ Ideas in God ✓

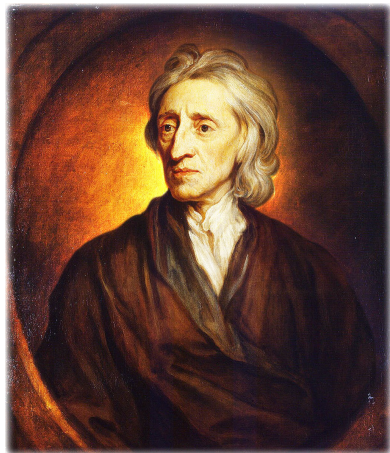
Innate Ideas



Leibniz

- ▶ Innate Ideas ✓
- ▶ Monads - Mirrors of the Universe/God

Innate Ideas



Locke

- ▶ Innate Ideas ✗
- ▶ The Power of Abstraction ✓
- ▶ Demonstrative Knowledge of God and Morality

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5. Does Locke provide convincing reasons to reject the theory of innate ideas?
6. Does Leibniz provide a convincing defence of the theory of innate ideas?