

## **Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind and Cognition**

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**Dualism-1**

Today, we are going to discuss the problem of dualism in philosophy of mind. The problem of dualism is a Meta physical problem and as you know that Meta physics is one of the key areas of philosophy. Meta physical problems are the problems which **which** discusses the notion of essence, the underlying essence of the reality.

That is, what is the underlying principle **of** which constitutes the reality as I have discussed earlier about it. So, along with Meta physics, there are other areas of a philosophy such as **a** epistemology, logic, **ethics**, esthetics, extra. Now, these are called the branches of philosophy and Meta physics seems to us that one of the central areas of philosophy.

So, Meta physical problems are the problems, which constitute essentially the core of philosophy. Now, what is a Meta physical problem about the concept of dualism? In the case of dualism, we consider that, there are two fundamental principles, which explains the nature of reality and Decart, who is initiating this debate in modern philosophy. He says that, mind and body are considered as two independent substances in Decart philosophy, mind is a substance and the body is also another substance.

So, for **a** mind is concerned it does not need the existence of the body and so for **a body is concerned**, the existence of body is concerned, it does not require the existence of mind. In this case, Decart is raising a philosophical problem and for which he has been criticized that, if there are two independent substances then the interaction between the two is impossible.

Now, the question arises, are they categorically independent of each other and what is that defines the notion of substance, etcetera, etcetera. Now, let us talk about Decarts

substance dualism. And according to Decart substance is something which is simple, which is clear and distinct.

In other words, substance must have a clear, distinct existence. Now, the clarity, simplicity, distinctness are the three fundamental characteristics of substance according to Decart. Now, how do we talk about substance? According to Decart, we need to define substance, something which is unchangeable, something which is simple and clearly available to us, that is the concept of substance.

Then, Decart meta physics of mind must go back to Decart epistemological enquiry. Now, why Decart is interested to talk about substance, that which is clear and distinct, his interest, his main concern is an epistemological concern, because for Decart knowledge must be simple, distinct, clear and certain.

Certainty is something very significant for Decart. Now, if mind exists, if mind is a substance, then it must be certain. By certain he means that it is indubitable, it cannot be doubted, we cannot doubt the existence of mind and it is this concept of certainty that Decart was looking for. Now, what kind of method Decart holds to talk about the nature of substance, now what kind of epistemological method Decart is holding?

Now, epistemology is one of the branches of philosophy, as I mentioned earlier that Meta physics is one of the branch of philosophy, epistemology is another branch of philosophy. Now, when we talk about substance dualism, which is Meta physical in nature, we need to talk about the epistemological method or Decart epistemological concern, which you know as a larger influence on developing this theory called substance dualism.

Now, Decart epistemology as I mentioned earlier is discussed in meditation on first philosophy. Now, here, Decart is trying to prove that, if something exists then it must have certainty as one of the essential characteristic of knowledge.

Now, the question is does the external world exist? Do I exist? Is there something called real about mean and the external world? Now, these questions are the main question for Decart. Decart questioned the reality of or existence, not only the existence of the external world, but also the existence of mean as a being in the world.

Now, this concept of being, being exist is a Meta physical question. As you know Aristotle discusses this concept of being. Now, for aristotle being refers to the meta physical or the ontological existence of the reality. Now, when Decart is raising the concept of being, whether the world exists or the mind exists, he certainly concerned with Aristotlian notion of being.

What is this essence of this beam? And how do we know about its existence? How do we rather confirm its existence with proper justification that this is something real and therefore, this is an epistemological concern of Decart. And for Decart epistemology and meta physics in fact, are related when we talk about his philosophy of mind.

Decart while talking about the nature of mind, while talking about the concept of certainty of the mind gives us two hypothesis and this hypothesis are the dream hypothesis and the derman hypothesis. Now, the dream hypothesis talks about that what am I dreaming about my existence that I am here talking to you is just a mere dream experience of mind.

As you know, when we dream during our sleep, we do not really make any distinction between dream and the real life, dream experiences and real experiences are all found same, during the same. So, Decart dream hypothesis tells us is it the case that we are all dreaming, because dream experiences are as could as our real life experiences.

Now, Decart says I am not aware of things, which are there during the sleep, because during sleep I do as I am doing different, performing different actions right now. So, there is no distinction between dream experiences, dream activities and the real life activities for Decart.

On the other hand, when he talks about the deman hypothesis he says that is there a Deman who is receiving me all the time, who is creating this illusion that there is nothing called a real knowledge. Know Decart skepticism is certainly ever important thesis for all of us. Skepticism talks about doubt, skepticism holds this method of doubt as one of the important means of achieving knowledge, one of the important means of realizing what is truth, but Decart is not very strong skeptic, because there are skeptics who advocates that knowledge is impossible, meaning there by we cannot be certain about any knowledge.

Now, this kind of skepticism was prevalent during Decart time, but Decart was not a skeptic in the strong sense of the torn skepticism, Decart skepticism is called methodological skepticism. Decart is skeptic, because he wants to adapt this method of doubt as one of the methods which would have the potential to take us to certainty.

So, realizing the potentiality of skepticism Decart probably is bringing methodological skepticism into the discourse of mind to prove that there are substances and the substances are real. So, methodological skepticism rules out that these experiences are not illusory. Now, how does Decart do that? As we all know there are many sources of knowledge so, for example, sense experiential knowledge, I perceive that there are fifty chairs in this room, I sense that there are fifty students sitting in the class and listening to my lectures, know these are all about the sense experiences.

So, I have sense experiences, sense experiential knowledge. Now, similar way my sense experiences are not certain all the time, I cannot be certain about my sense experiential knowledge, rather we cannot be certain about the sense experiential knowledge. The kind of certainty, which Decart was looking for is something very significant, he was talking about pure certainty put in quite notion of purity, is something very specific to the resnalist.

Now, all resnalist thinkers believe that if something is true and genuinely true, then it must be grounded on reason, sense experience is not the only source of knowledge, it could be faulty, it could be dubitable, it could be doubted. Now, how does then one overcome this that sense experiential knowledge are indubitable knowledge and what are the cases were sense experiences go wrong.

Say for example, when I am experiencing marines it gives me the impression that there is water in front of me, if I am working on the desert and the shining lights, sun rays creates this impression that there is water in front of me. Now, this impression is a kind of an illusion, this is an illusory experience, so all sense experiences are not there for correct.

So, what is correct or what is a kind of a genuine sense experiences is something to be discussed, something to be thought about. There is a possibility that I am living in the hallucination all the time, if there is one possibility of living in the state of hallucination there is also a possibility that I am all the time hallucinating about things.

In hallucination, we can imagine about the existence of something which is there, but in a reality that may not be there. In hallucination, I find that there is a ghost sitting before me and talking to me, there is a semilian which is sitting before me and dancing. So, those kind of hallucinations are hallucinated experiences are quite possible.

But, is it the case that we are all the time hallucinating. Decart is really throwing a great puzzle to all of us, we need to think about that how the certainty can be achieved, how we can thought about the certainty and knowledge claims. Decart also believed that my intuitive knowledge, the knowledge which depends on a mental ability can also be wrong. Say for example, when we talks about calculations, along mathematical calculation, if I am given this series to calculate then sometimes we go wrong, we cannot be a really certain about it that we have did all correct.

So, are mental ability can also be proved faulty and therefore, dubitable. Now, Decart say is testimony is also dubitable, test their testimonial knowledge which are also dubitable in the sense that I do not know when I am born, I am told rather that you are born on this date, this and this month, this and this year. I am sure all of you might of experience this that your parents might have told you yes; this is when you are born.

Say, 14<sup>th</sup> august 1972 you are born at the time now. I have not experienced, it is certainly a case where I have to rely on others, particularly might be yes to believe that it is true. And most of the time we took advise from the (( )) some of them are correct, some of them are incorrect, meaning there by some of them are right, some of them we find are wrong.

Now, therefore, Decart says testimonial knowledge are dubitable, they do not give us certainty. Now, doubting all this Decart prepares a kind of a method and it is this methodological survey which tells us what is the certain knowledge. Now, as I mentioned that rationalist epistemology believes that reason is the foundation of knowledge and all knowledge, particularly the highest and pure knowledge must be grounded on reason.

The resnalist epistemology also believes that there are certain innate ideas which are not derived from experiences, but they are real. For example, the idea of god is one of the innate ideas and we do not derive it from our experience, rather we intuitively gain this knowledge, we intuitively know that there is god. So, rationalist epistemology when talks

about certainty, it emphasizes that reason can provide abdicative ground to justify what is true knowledge, what is certain knowledge.

Now, this idea of certainty and truth is something important when we talk about Decart methodological skepticism. Now, as we find Decart keeps on doubting all varieties of knowledge, so, therefore, we can say Decart is preparing a set, a set which includes all doubts and that can be called a universal doubt.

This set includes all varieties of doubt, all varieties of knowledge claims which are dubitable, hence it is called a universal doubt. When we doubt things, we are unclear about the certainty of knowledge and pointing out again and again that certainty is something which Decart emphasized in his discourse, but there must be certainty, Decart overcomes skepticism, giving priority to certainty give priority to truth.

So, epistemological priority is something very significant to Decart, where Decarte differs from others skeptics. For others skeptics as I mention that knowledge is impossible, meaning there by everything is dubitable, skeptics do not have this idea that whether there can be a knowledge at all

So, Decart is not that kind of skeptics, rather Decart gives privacy to the epistemology, epistemologically is what I am calling the knowledge which is certain and indubitable knowledge. So, how does Decart **you know** provide ground to this epistemological issues?

Now, let us see what are the important questions Decart is encountering when he talks about the certainty? Now, there are three important questions which Decart finds very significant, they are who is the author of my thoughts, is there a god who puts thoughts into me and am I so bound by my body to sense that I cannot exist without them. What is my existence, what is my being, is something significant.

Because, what constitutes my existence and how do I know that there is god is just an innate idea, is it there before my birth? Before having any experience? No, Decart is not simply jumping into conclusions. Hence, the first question is very important, how do I have these thoughts? Who is the author of these thoughts, is god the author of my thoughts or I am the author of my thoughts.

Now, how do I say I am the author of my thoughts? I am slowly responsible for my thinking; Decart method of doubt is relevant here. Now, let us discuss what is next to the method of doubt keeping these three questions in mind. Now, Decart says when I am doubting, **can I doubt this doubt** can I doubt my doubting itself?

What kind of activities doubt is? What kind of activity it is? When I say that I am doubting that what I see before me is illusory, it is an hallucination which is not really correct, now how do I say that? Now, there are two kinds of activities, one let us say physical activities, activities which are performed by such an physical organism say for example, you all know plants, they grow bear fruits, flowers, etcetera, etcetera.

They all grow old, they all grow tall and finally, there is a decay. When we talk about the biology of life, the biology of the organic beings, we certainly see there is a process involved in it and this is the process which I am talking about is an activity, is a kind of a natural activity.

And all natural activities follow (( )) process, because nature has a whole follows this principle called the uniformity principle, it is due to all objects that there is a growth and there is a decay **at** between these two points. There are certain natural processes and these processes **are** can be called the physical activities of a biological being or a physical being.

Now, there are another kind of activities, which is Decart is concerned with and that activity is called a mental activity, thinking is a mental activity, dreaming is mental activity, doubting is mental, activity experiencing is mental activity, but this activities and the division of this activities is it simple that there are physical activities, there are mental activities.

No, Decart, how does Decart conclude that there are activities? Decart concludes it when we ask this questions. Can I doubt this fact that I am doubting and how do I doubt, do I doubt because I am a physical being or do I doubt that I am a mental bein? Might be is something to do with my existence of a mind? So, there is a mind, now how does Decart prove that there is mind? After having this whole know set up doubt in his hand how does Decart prove that there is mind. Now, doubting is a mental activity and it is different from the physical activities, like say walking, talking, dancing and digestion.

Now, digestion is certainly a natural process, walking could also be considered as one of the natural processes, blood circulation, palpitations, extra, etcetera are natural processes. Now, whether I know them happening or not it goes on inside my body, so in that sense there are purely some activities which are considered as physical activities and there are certain activities which are considered as mental activities.

So, doubting is a mental activity and walking is not purely a mental activity, walking is a physical activity. Now, Descartes is saying that it is physical because from this I cannot infer that I am doubting, ok. Now, if that is so then Descartes says I cannot doubt my doubt, because it presupposes another doubt, which is part of this universal set called doubt, the universal doubt.

Now, when he says this, he says that I am doubting, cannot be derived from my walking, I walk, therefore I doubt that seems very ridiculous. Now, what is that Descartes **you know** inferring? Descartes says when I doubt, I think that I doubt, I am aware of this that I am doubting, now this awareness is something very significant for Descartes, it is this awareness which Descartes says as mental ability that confirms this that I am doubting. So, now, this famous dictum of Descartes **(( ))** says I doubt, therefore I think, therefore I am.

So, from doubting Descartes goes to thinking, because thinking is a mental activity. I am aware of this fact that I am doubting it is with this Descartes, says that I think is something very significant. When I say I am dreaming, I can also have this proposition that I think and dreaming, I think that I am imagining. So, I think is a logical presupposition on which all my mental activities are grounded now. So, this meta physical grounding for Descartes provides the certainty and it cannot be derived from physical activities, say for example, I am walking when he is replying to **(( ))**, one of the contemporaries of Descartes.

He says that from my walking, thinking does not follow, because I can walk and think about something else, when I walk, I came to my office, I was all the time thinking about how I give this lecture to all of you. So, walking and thinking about my lectures are two different activities and they can go simultaneously, there is no logical connection between them.

But of course, when I walk, I decide to walk, I am aware if somebody says, are you aware of the fact that you are walking, probably it takes me some time to think about it that yes I am aware of I am walking, but logically speaking that when I walk, I can think



of something else, at the same time, I can also consciously look at my steps on which I **you know** rest my body.

There are two activities precisely when Decart talks about, physical activities and the mental activities. So, I think is something indubitable and that cannot be doubted at all and that is the essential feature of my own being. Now, the question arises what is the essential feature of my body, if doubting, thinking, imagining understanding are all logically different from the bodily activities; **at** they do not essentially constitute my physical existence, then what is that constitute the physical existence of my body? What is the essential feature of my body thinking is **not of course...** and then Decart says that it is extension.

Extension is the essence of the body, my body has a shape, it has a weight, it has so many other features and all these features are essentially based on these characteristics called extension. So, extension is something essentially there when we talk about the existence of the body. So, existence of the body and the existence of mind are two independent existences, they are independent because they are not having same essential features, the essential feature of the body is extensional and the essential feature of the mind which is a thinking substance is thought. So, thought and extensions are essentially two different features.

Now, it is thinking, which causes actions, all actions are not caused by thoughts as I mentioned earlier, that all actions are not essentially physical or essentially mental, mean there by thinking does not cause all the actions.

Nutrition's self-movement like blood circulations, digestions, the growth of the body, they are different, but when it comes to the mental actions, when I decide that I need to give this lecture to all of you, now this decision brings me here, this decision is causing certain physical actions, I am talking to you is a physical action and it is a voluntary action.

So, voluntary actions are intentional and voluntary actions are conscious actions, I am aware of this fact that I am talking to you, I am aware of this fact that I am engaging all of you to listen my lectures.

So, this kind of activities flow from my consciousness, my thinking that we are **you know** mental being and we can perform certain action which are voluntary. So, Decart was certainly interested to know that how we can certain about our actions, how we can confirm that yes, what I am doing is not wrong, what we are doing cannot be dubitable, which is because it based on this proposition that I think.

So, thinking is **is** essentially a kind of axiom for Decart from which we can derive all kinds of knowledge claims and it is thinking which provides a kind of **a** objectivity to or knowledge claims and Decart was certain about it. So, this certainty, objectivity Decart was trying to achieve, it was through his method of methodological skepticism. And Decart says I am aware of this fact that I am thinking and this knowledge is very personal to all of us that I am thinking. So, what I am precisely is a thinking thing according to Decart quote and quote.

What I am is a thinking thing and all that who thinks exist and that confirms my existence. My existence as a physical being depends on my existence that I am thinking. So, I am or I exists is derived from this proposition that I think, so both are logically related.

If I sees to think, then for Decart I do not exist anymore, so the suggestion of thinking would tell me that I am not a physical being anymore. And I am an embodied being when I am thinking and performing voluntary actions. Now, this embodiment is a peculiar kind of embodiment for Decart. Decart says that which thinks is the soul and it exists the center of the penal gland in the brain and that controls all my voluntary actions, that controls my voluntary action in the sense that I not only sense things, but also reacts according to this impressions. Decart, let us talk about the soul which is there at the center of the penal gland and that controls my physical activities, now that is something significant.

You know how Decart locates the soul as the source of my thinking, which is independent of my bodily movements, but the source of causing voluntary actions, soul has the power to control my bodily movements. And this idea of soul been at the center can cause many philosophical debates, we will come back to this debates, but what is important for us that to know how Decart arrived at this certainty, following this method of doubt.

So, methodological skepticism, which was an epistemological enterprise for Decart, proved that there are meta physical realities, there are two substances mind is one substance and body is another substance.

Mind and body are two independent substances, because mental activities are not controlled by physical activities. Whether when we talk about interaction in the next class, I will come back to this debate that how does mind interact with the body, how does these two substances interact, can there be interaction possible.

If we assume that there are two independent substances and they are categorically different, but it was certainly very interesting that Decart is poaching a great problem to all of us to think that mind is logically independent of the body. The existence of mind is something unique and it is located at the center of the brain and that is the source of all my voluntary actions and that can confirm all kind of certainty and I would have clear and distinct ideas about its existence.

The existence does not depend on my (O) experiences, this existence whether is something very unique, it is the ability of my mind that confirms, that sense the presence of this fact that I am thinking, that is something very unique. And I think we should come back to this debate, how the modern philosophers like Dennett and Sur are approaching to this idea of the centrality of the self or the I or I as a thinking being exists will come back; thank you very much.