

Homework 7: Rationalism

Rationalism regards **reason** as the chief source and test of our knowledge or what is true. Our perspective is altered by our feelings and our senses so we must use **reason** instead.

Truth is not sensory but **intellectual**.

Rationalism is **a priori** this means we gain our knowledge without experience and instead use reason. An alternative to **a priori** is **a posteriori** which is when knowledge is gained from experience or observation .

There are three ways we can gain knowledge:

1. **Deduction**—applying principles to draw conclusions
2. **Innate ideas**—ideas you are born with
3. **Reason**—use logic to draw conclusion

SPINOZA

Is an example of a Rationalist. **Spinoza** was from Amsterdam and was born in 1632. He was born Jewish but was very critical of Jewish ideas about God. He died in 1677.

Spinoza was accused of being an atheist (Not believing in God) but in fact he just rejected the Jewish ideas of God. He was excommunicated for his beliefs. This means he was forced out of the Jewish faith.

Tasks

1. What do Rationalists use as their source of knowledge? (1)
2. What two things are our perspective altered by? (2)
3. What does a priori mean? (1)
4. What is the opposite of a priori? (1)
5. Why is it this the opposite of a priori? (1)
6. What are the three ways we can gain knowledge? (1)
7. Give an example of when you would use each type of method (from Q6) (3)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

Marks out of 10

Homework 8: Spinoza

"But having failed to make him mend his wicked ways, and, on the contrary, daily receiving more and more serious information about the abominable heresies which he practiced and taught and about his monstrous deeds, and having for this numerous trustworthy witnesses who have deposed and born witness to this effect in the presence of the said Espinoza, they became convinced of the truth of this matter; and after all of this has been investigated in the presence of the honorable hakhamim, they have decided, with their consent, that the said Espinoza should be excommunicated and expelled from the people of Israel..."

from the Ark in the synagogue of Talmud Torah, the united congregation of the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam

Heresey **means:** belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious doctrine

Excommunication: It is the total exclusion of a person from the Jewish community.

Spinoza was from Amsterdam and was born in 1632. He was born Jewish but was very critical of Jewish ideas about God. He died in 1677.

Spinoza was accused of being an **atheist** (Not believing in God) but in fact he just rejected the Jewish ideas of God. He was excommunicated for his beliefs.

Spinoza believed that God wasn't outside of nature , he didn't punish people, there was no after life, he didn't hear or respond to prayers, humans' were not God's special creatures, the holy books were written by men and God was not a craftsman.

Instead in believed in **Pantheism** , this is when God and nature are the same thing.

- Where was Spinoza from? (1)
- Which religion was Spinoza born into? (1)
- What does excommunication mean? (1)
- What does Herese
- What does Herese
- What does atheism mean? (1)
- Why did the Jewish authorities excommunicate Spinoza? List 4 things they disagreed on (4)
- What does Pantheism mean? (1)

Marks out
of 10

Homework 9:

Spinoza was moving away from superstition to reason. He wrote his ideas in a book called The Ethics in 1677.

He was a defender of belief in God, but believed in a very different God to that described in Judaism. He believed in an impersonal God, who was the same as nature, the universe, reason, truth, existence, and is sometimes described as the “world soul.” He describes God as “Everything that is and can be.”

“Whatever is, is in God and nothing can exist or be conceived without God”

Spinoza undermined the idea of prayer. He believed the task humans should do is to understand the world and how the world works and accept it. They shouldn't be trying to ask a God to change things.

He was greatly influenced the Stoics of Greek and Roman. They believed the role of humans was to understand the ways of the world and accept it.

Tasks:

1. What was Spinoza's book called? (1)
2. In what year was this book written? (1)
2. Was Spinoza an atheist? (1)
3. How does Spinoza describe God? (1)
4. What other words are used to describe by Spinoza? (add 3 words please)
5. Why does Spinoza not accept prayer? (2)
6. What was the Stoic's view of the world? (1)

1
2
3
4
5
6

Marks out of 10

Homework 10:

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was born in Germany.

He began a life of professional service to nobleman, primarily the dukes of Hanover.

His professional duties included being an official historian and legal advisor. He was required to travel widely, meeting many of the foremost intellectuals in Europe—of particularly importance were the astronomer, mathematician, and physicist Huygens, and the philosopher *SPINOZA*.

Leibniz “Why is there something rather than nothing?”

Leibniz answer is :God

⇒ *Everything that exists has an explanation for its existence*

⇒ *If the universe has an explanation the explanation is God*

⇒ *The universe exists*

⇒ *The explanation of the universe is God.*

Criticisms:

1. Bertrand Russell– why can’t the universe just exist, why does it require an explanation?
2. If everything requires a cause why doesn't God require a cause?

Leibniz explains that God isn't like everything else, he is necessary. All other things are contingent, they rely on other things for their existence.

Tasks:

Name two people who influenced Leibniz (2)

Was Leibniz an atheist? (1)

Explain your answer to number two. (1)

What does Leibniz believe everything that exists require?? (1)

What does Leibniz believe is the explanation for the universe? (1)

Name two criticisms of this argument (2)

How does Leibniz argue against these criticisms? (1)

What does he mean by Contingent? (1)

Marks out of 10

Homework 11 :

Empiricism Advantages

An empiricist would say that the laws of electrical conductivity are dependent on human observation. It's because we've seen electricity going through a piece of metal and not wood thousands of times that we consolidated the fact that metal is a conductor and wood is not. Our senses don't lie -- under normal circumstances -- and experience can show whether a phenomenon repeats itself and therefore it abides by certain laws or it happened randomly. Scientists for example use experiments to test through observation whether an assumption is true or not.

Empiricism Disadvantages

Perception is not universal: What a person perceives as true can be false for another person. For example, a book can be red for one man, but for a color-blind person it may be green. Does this mean that because one or many color-blinds perceive the book as such it is indeed green? Furthermore, perception is also affected by external factors: the same experiment under different conditions (temperature for example) can give different results, unbeknownst to the careless researcher.

Păţîōňă!í' n ÷ d'vănţăğě'

Rationalists believe that there is a reason each object or phenomenon exists. An object comes back to the ground when thrown upwards not because a million people have observed so but because there is a reason for it to happen: the law of gravity. In addition, metal is a conductor because it facilitates movable electric charges, unlike wood. Rationalism tries to find the already existing general principles (man didn't create them) behind each phenomenon, which are independent of each individual's perception of knowledge. The result is undisputed theories explaining the laws of the world surrounding us.

Păţîōňă!í' n ÷ Ćí' äd'vănţăğě'

Rationalism suggests that people are born with innate ideas, truths in a particular subject area (such as math concepts) that are part of our rational nature and we only have to bring them to the surface. However, as philosopher John Locke suggests, there are "idiots" who are not aware of -- and cannot understand -- simple notions, contradicting the universality of innate ideas. Furthermore, laws or logic describing the world are not infallible, as they may be based on human misconceptions, otherwise scientists would not conduct experiments and just rely on logical arguments

TASK

Choose either to be a Rationalist or an Empiricist and justify why your view is the correct one. You must have 5 points in your answer, -you will get one mark for the point and a second for explaining it fully. This will give you a total of 10 marks. You need to identify your 5 points, so either use 5 different colours to show each point, or underline in 5 different colour or if you have no colour then use different shaped lines to show each point. Use the advantages and disadvantages above to help you.

Marks out
of 10

Homework 11

Homework 12 - Recap of the Cosmological Argument

First Cause (COSMOLOGICAL) argument -This argument says that there is a perfect and well- ordered **universe** rather than nothingness because God brought the cosmos into existence. **St Thomas Aquinas** said that things could not cause themselves to come into **existence** so something has to cause them. The universe exists and therefore must have been caused by something outside the **universe**. There had to be something **eternal** (without beginning or end) that was not caused by anything. The eternal first **cause** was God. Aquinas argued that this first cause of the universe was God. If God had not caused the universe to begin then there would be no universe and therefore we would not exist.

Arguments for First Cause-Some **theists** (Christian's) argue that the measurement of time is evidence that the universe had a beginning. This beginning was caused by God. If we apply this theory to the **Big Bang**, could argue that God is the First Cause, the cause of the Big Bang and the universe could have evolved from this. They would argue that as scientists do not know what caused the Big Bang, then why could it not be God? The Big Bang describes how God caused the Universe. Islam accepts that scientific findings support Allah's existence and the creation of the Universe. Many Christians believe that the **Cosmological argument** is supported by the creation story found in Genesis 1:1-3. It says that before the Universe was created only God existed and at the command of God the process of creation began.

Arguments against First Cause- Just because events/things have causes doesn't mean that the **universe** itself has a cause. It is possible that the universe does not have a beginning, it is infinite. (Steady State Theory – universe is eternal it has always existed. **Atheists** and **agnostics** would challenge the argument saying it contradicts itself. It still does not answer 'who or what caused God'? If God is eternal than why can the universe not be eternal? Big –Bang Theory – Atheists could use this to argue that the universe resulted from a random spontaneous event, not an action by God. The religious accounts of creation are simply **myths**.

Big Bang– Scientific theory that argues that the world and universe resulted when a singularity exploded. From this explosion all the matter that makes up to **universe** came into being. Tiny ripples of radiation detected by scientists have been used as evidence to back up this theory. It is suggested that at one point all the matter in the universe was at a single point, there was an explosion and matter is now moving away from this point. This says that the world is not made in the same way as the seven day account in Genesis in the Bible. Big-Bang Theory is a challenge to First Cause argument only if it is thought to be a spontaneous random event without reason or cause

Task 1:

1. How does Aquinas describe the universe ? (1)
2. Why does Aquinas argue that the universe must have been created by God? 3 points please
3. Why do many Christians support this idea? (1)
4. How do many Christians support this idea and the idea of the Big Bang? (3– explain your answer fully)
5. Give two arguments against Aquinas (2)

Marks out of 10

Homework 13

- 1. What is a rationalist?**
- 2. What does a rationalist use to help make their decisions?**
- 3. Give an advantage of rationalism**
- 4. Give an advantage of empiricism**
- 5. Give a disadvantage of rationalism**
- 6. Give a disadvantage of empiricism**
- 7. Why was Spinoza excommunicated?**
- 8. Why did Leibniz call God necessary?**
- 9. Why did Bertrand Russell disagree with Leibniz?**
- 10. Why did Leibniz call humans contingent ?**

Answers: