

Philosophy Notes Week 1

Philosophy Notes #1: Descartes

Types of Philosophy

- Metaphysics: what exists and what's the nature? What things truly are?
- Ethics: Study of morality (concept of good or bad) (concepts of right or wrong)
- Epistemology: investigates the nature of knowledge and belief
- Aesthetics: investigates the nature of beauty and art.
- Philosophy of Mind: Investigate the nature of the mind and its relationship to the body

Philosopher Types

- Utilitarianism: principle of utility, an action is right, if it results in the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people.

Trolley Problem

- A trolley is out of control and is headed towards 5 people who are unaware of its presence. A diverting track leads to 1 person who is also unaware of the trolley. You are the only one aware of this. Next to you is a switch that can divert the tracks' direction. If you don't flip the switch, the trolley kills 5 people, but if you do flip the switch the trolley will kill one person.
- Utilitarianism would say to flip the switch
- A trolley is out of control and is headed towards 5 people who are unaware of its presence. You are witnessing this from a bridge above the tracks. Next to you is a very large man, and he has the ability to stop the train. If you choose to do nothing 5 people die, if you choose to push the man off the bridge he dies and the 5 people live.
- Thompson states that proximity is a factor of morality but ultimately distance is not a factor of moral differences.

Descartes

- Looking for a piece of knowledge that cannot be doubted
- How did I learn to come about this piece of knowledge?
- Where does your knowledge come from?
- Ex: Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, Politicians, Illusionist
- I Exist
- I Think
- I Think, Therefore I am