Janice Thomas
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In this book Thomas aims to clearly set out the philosophy of mind held by the following six figures: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley and Hume. This is a useful project in itself. But she also wants to go beyond just mapping their views and to 'try to discover what each of the six philosophers has to say that is relevant to four topics that have been of strong interest to philosophers of mind in recent years' (1). To this end she investigates the following topics for each philosopher in turn: 1) the ontological status of the mind, 2) the scope and nature of self-knowledge, 3) the nature of consciousness, 4) the problem of mental causation, 5) the intentionality of ideas.

The chapters devoted to the discussion of whether the mind is considered a substance and to what extent self-knowledge is possible rehearse well-traveled ground. Descartes, Leibniz, and Berkeley take the mind to be a substance with some principle of activity. For Spinoza, the mind is not a substance because only God meets the independence criteria for substance-hood. Hume takes both material and immaterial substance to be inconceivable and Locke seems to remain agnostic about the issue. With respect to self-knowledge Thomas says that all six philosophers under consideration think that we can have some level of knowledge of both the nature and the contents of the mind. And they all ascribe to some version of the transparency of the mind, with Leibniz and Spinoza on one end of the spectrum, who state that many of the ideas in our minds are ones that we may never be able to access, and Locke on the other, who asserts that all our ideas are fully transparent to us.

With respect to the question of consciousness, Thomas finds not much of interest in Spinoza, Berkeley and Locke, and more questions than answers are to be found in the relevant chapters on these figures. She finds much more to uncover in Descartes, Leibniz, and Hume. Thomas advances the view that there are indications of several different kinds of consciousness in the works of these three philosophers, not all of which require the presence of a rational mind. In Descartes she identifies five different sorts of consciousness: 'organism', 'introspective', 'perceptual', 'access' and 'phenomenal' (35-41). The latter three are also taken to be evident in Leibniz and Hume. One of Thomas' goals in identifying these different kinds of consciousness, it seems, is to defend the view —contentious especially when it comes to Descartes—that these philosophers allow non-human animals some species of consciousness (35, 122, 255).

But even if we accept that her interpretations are borne out by the texts, it is difficult to see just how coming to appreciate these different forms of consciousness will further illuminate the views of these thinkers. For it seems that to the extent that the early moderns were concerned about 'consciousness' they were interested to pinpoint what exactly about human minds allows for the kind of mental life we have that seems absent in other creatures, despite the ways our minds may be similar. Her second goal in identifying different kinds of consciousness is to illustrate that some of what these thinkers say can be seen as a precursor for contemporary discussions in philosophy of mind like those of David Armstrong, Ned Block and Thomas Nagel. But these connections are only briefly sketched, without sufficient explanation for why considering them goes beyond being interesting from the perspective of the history of ideas (which they certainly are), but are furthermore *philosophically* interesting or useful for a better understanding of either contemporary debate or the early modern positions.

To get a handle on the topic of mental causation in the early modern period we must ask not only how, if a philosopher takes human beings to be composed of two utterly different substances, those substances are supposed to interact, but also how, if a central role is ascribed to God's agency in a philosophical system, we can understand the causal power of human beings at all. We can also question whether mental causation of further mental events is possible, and whether the possession of that kind of causation alone could qualify human beings as having some kind of freedom. These threads are not always clearly distinguished in Thomas' discussion. To take one example, she suggests that for Descartes mind-body interaction is not a 'top rank' philosophical problem because he 'has given it all the answer possible: human minds move their bodies—as God moves matter—by force of will' (47). This presents two problems, the treatment of which would have been interesting and helpful in this discussion. First, if we are to appeal to Descartes' view of human freedom to help explain any other position he holds, an account of what exactly Descartes might mean by human freedom, a hotly debated topic, would be of great benefit. There are contemporary works that present arguments for Descartes' occasionalism, others his concurrentism, and still others his libertarianism. Mention of these strands of argument in the current literature would have helped to provide at least some context here. Second, and more serious, is that even if we can agree on what view of freedom Descartes holds, it is not clear how affirming that humans have a free will in any way offers a metaphysical explanation for mental causation.

More historical context overall would have been useful in the discussions of the post-Cartesian philosophers' views on mental causation. It is surprising that Thomas does not often cast her discussion in terms of reactions against Descartes. Tracking these reactions and explaining how and why they diverge would have provided a deeper understanding of the complexity and evolution of the problem. Explicitly setting these views against the Cartesian picture would have helped to illustrate how philosophers have tried to understand and escape the problem of mental causation, and to set up a useful framework within which to evaluate their successes and failures in that task.

The question of the intentionality of ideas is how it is that ideas come to represent the things that they do. Thomas states that there are two kinds of mental representation—derived and original. An example of the former might be a triangle atop a square representing a hotel on a map—it represents what it does in virtue of a stipulation. Ideas seem to be the kinds of things in the latter group—where, as Thomas says, 'they just do represent the thing they stand for or represent' (10). In other words, their intentionality does not depend on anything else—it is original. Thomas argues that all the philosophers she considers except Hume take ideas to have their intentionality derived from God. In Hume's case it seems that ideas represent impressions based on a combination of resemblance and causal dependency. As Thomas says, 'Hume assumed that mental images just naturally represent why they resemble and that this requires no further explanation' (274). This is in stark contrast to the others, who 'all reach the view that it is God who bestows aboutness or meaning on our mental states' (267). There are some kinds of ideas that have their intentionality directly bestowed by God and implanted into human minds—Descartes' innate ideas, Leibniz's monadic concepts, and Berkeley's divine archetypes. Other ideas receive intentionality from God indirectly—sensory ideas for Descartes and Berkeley, and all ideas on Locke's account. In these cases 'we are endowed with the physiological mechanisms for acquiring—and things are created with the powers to cause in us—just those ideas that are best fitted to represent what we naturally take them to be ideas of' (282). Even some kinds of ideas on Spinoza's view are placed in this category, even though Thomas admits that he says very little on the topic (97-8). The limited textual basis upon which to ground claims about intentionality overall easily makes the chapters devoted to this issue the most controversial of the book.

A more general problem with this work is its structure. It is unclear why Thomas chose to group the philosophers according to the increasingly outmoded rationalist/empiricist distinction. One might expect that the decision to treat them following this classification would result in a running narrative that explains why certain philosophers are typically grouped together and/or why such grouping can limit our understanding of both the philosophers and the period. But Thomas doesn't do this, nor does she otherwise motivate the structure of the book—all the more surprising given that she herself suggests that the division may have limited use (278). Despite this, however, and the worries raised above there are two audiences who could well benefit from reading this text. Students interested in different theories of mind in the early modern period would benefit from Thomas's expositions of the central problems with each thinker's view. Early modern enthusiasts who are interested in investigating connections between their field and the questions that motivate contemporary philosophy of mind, particularly questions that saw extensive treatment in the 1980s, will find solid ground from which to start their research.

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