

Can the solipsist be refuted?

I always encounter situations where a person is trying to convince me of his or her idea by totally ignoring my opinion. For example, I may prefer to buy a black car because it is easier to clean when my wife insists on buying a red car she prefers the colour red. And in situations like this I am always curious. Why does no one ever think of the other person's perspective or try to put themselves in the other person's shoes?

But when I find myself in the same situation, I realise I act the same way. Solipsists argue everything that appears to happen to us is not real. Everything just happens in our own private world in our head. When I try to do anything in my daily life, I always stay in my own world. For example, I may believe I am going to work today to meet my friend at the office. But the Solipsist says I actually never go anywhere. It just imagine myself doing this or make it real only in my head. The outside world never exists at all.

I use my background knowledge to make decisions about every issue that comes to me every day. I listen to other people's opinion and receive it. But then, I make my own private judgement about what is right or wrong, or what I will do. For example, I may listen to my wife's opinion that the colour red is better than black. I make a private judgement that my wife's opinion is wrong. I agree with the Solipsist that we already judge what is right. It will always be right for us. For example, if I have my own private reason for why black is better than red, that is enough of a right reason for me.

Sometimes, when I try to plan some project, I realize the project will take almost twelve hours and will take great effort to accomplish. Based on my previous experience, I will try to put this project into my morning schedule because the job is important and will need my highest attention to think clearly and make the right decision. Or, if it is necessary to do the project in the evening, after a lot of hard work, I will take a rest before doing that important job. This is because I know by experience that my brain cannot function at the same quality all the time.

Calculating a group of numbers may take me one minute when my brain is tired instead of only ten seconds it is not. We can be blind to our limitations when the time to make decisions and we are tired. We may think we have the ability to make quick decisions when we do not. Why? Because we decide what is right for us in the moment. I may fully believe at six o'clock in the evening, after a hard day, I still have quality brain power. And what we think is right will always be right for us. But later, maybe another day, we look back and realise the mistake we made. I may even realise I miscalculated the number yesterday. So, in that sense, the Solipsist is right about the idea that 'what I think is right should be right for me'.

When I have an opinion about any issue I consider, of course I should think about it from my own perspective and that opinion may be absolutely the right opinion for me. But how about when I receive another opinion on the same topic from another's perspective? It may be different from mine, which I think is right. For example, suppose I listen to my wife's opinion about how good the colour red is. I receive this opinion into my brain even though it is different from my original opinion. The Solipsist will say whatever happens in the end, my final opinion will be right. That may be true. But that may become right for me after I have already reconsidered her opinion. I may have compared my wife's opinion with my original opinion and then arrived at a

new judgement. I accepted the new idea and now I have formed a new opinion in my private mind. But that new opinion came from outside of myself. It was like a gift from someone else.

I can't give myself a gift, can I? I can't pretend to give myself a gift and make myself happy with that counterfeit gift. I need other people to give me the gift. Only then can be happy with the gift. In real life, I always appreciate when someone gives me a gift. I was very glad when my parents bought me toys when I was young. It stands to reason, then, that my parents really exist. It should not be only imaginary in my own private world.

I cannot only stay in my own private world for whole my life. I need other people to do things for me. If I come home tonight and am surprised by my wife who hands me an anniversary gift, the Solipsist will say 'It's nothing but my internal representative of my wife's character in my mind who gives the gift to me in my own world. My wife is not real; the gift is not real. Everything is just imagined in my brain'. In other words, the Solipsists says 'The outside world does not exist, everything only happens in my brain'. But if I cannot give the gift to myself, then this anniversary gift comes from some other subject who resides outside of my own mind and my own internal world. So, I understand the representative character of my wife in my private world has its source in the external subject who gave me the gift: my wife. In this respect, I think the Solipsist is wrong.