

Knowledge and Reality, Lecture 18

Brian Weatherson

11/2/22

Reminder

- Election day is 6 days away.

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- You can vote at UMMA, just outside this building

A Grand Theory of Perception

Differences Between the Stages

Experiences

Four Steps

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3. Experiences → beliefs
4. Beliefs → actions

World to Inputs

We mostly think this is a matter for the scientists to discover.

- But note that there are two kinds of philosopher who disagree.

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- And if not, the external world can't cause sensory irritations.
- But we're by and large setting them aside.
- For this part of the course, assume there is an external world, and it is much like science says it is.

World to Input

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- They think that the world is in some sense fundamentally mental.
- Perhaps the entire world is a construction out of (perhaps merely possible) sense-experiences.
- Again, set that view to one side, though until recently it was *very* popular in Western philosophy.

Inputs to Experiences

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Inputs to Experiences

We don't see firing rates in the optic nerve, or hear vibrations in the inner ear.

- It's only when these things are converted into experiences that we have perceptions.
- There are a few reasons to think that we are sensitive to things that we don't consciously experience - e.g., blindsight, or very fast reactions.
- But we'll mostly pay attention to things where there is a

Inputs to Experiences

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- These are all meant to be the same kind of thing.
- As we get further into the book, we'll fuss more about some details here.

Experiences to Beliefs

We don't believe everything we see.

- Sometimes we ignore it. Actually most of the time I guess that's true; I have almost no beliefs about the periphery of my vision most of the time.

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- Sometimes we ignore it. Actually most of the time I guess that's true; I have almost no beliefs about the periphery of my vision most of the time.
- Sometimes we overrule it, when we think something must be illusory.
- But we're interested in perception because so often we do take things to be as they appear.

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And sometimes belief leads to action.

- Not always in the way that would be optimal
- Sometimes there is a deer in the headlights effect
- Sometimes someone is committed to an action and does it even when they know by perception it would be wrong/pointless.
- But often enough.

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A simple view:

- No role for philosophy at steps 1 and 2; they are just scientific question.

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A simple view:

- No role for philosophy at steps 1 and 2; they are just scientific question.
- Epistemology has a lot to say about step 3, about how beliefs are formed.
- And practical philosophy (ethics, philosophy of action) has a lot to say about step 4.

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Siegel's view:

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Siegel's view:

- Somewhat sympathetic to the simple view about step 1, though we'll come back to it.
- But thinks that the theory of rationality should cover all of steps 2 to 4.

A Grand Theory of Perception

Differences Between the Stages

Experiences

Three Questions

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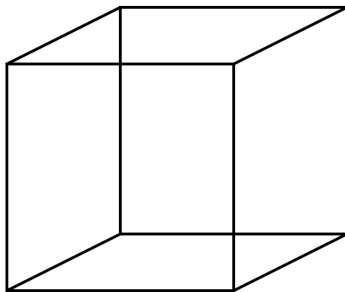
- Which of the four stages is under voluntary control (or anything like it)?
- Which of the four stages reflects skill on the part of the perceiver?
- Which of the four involves (or should involve) other beliefs?

Voluntary Control

- Stage 1 seems to. You can turn your head, close your eyes, shift your attention, or zone out.

Voluntary Control

- Stage 1 seems to. You can turn your head, close your eyes, shift your attention, or zone out.
- Stage 2 is a little harder to see intuitively, though maybe focus can do it.



The necker cube 'illusion

Voluntary

A Grand Theory of Perception

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Step 2 - Irritations → Experiences