

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE 2

19/02/2025

Wednesday

- What we know
- The (physical) processes of knowledge
- Philosophical studies on knowledge

20/02/2025

Thursday

Very brief introduction to the origins of epistemology.

Influence of science in philosophy and epistemology, today's philosopher is very much convinced that it would be a better idea to study perception itself.

“The ‘in’ and ‘out’ in the epistemic journey of human.”

AI and out storage of information/knowledge.

-Black-boxing

Perception and Plato

26/02/2025

Wednesday

J. LOCKE – For detailed understanding: <https://iep.utm.edu/locke-ep>

Background: Descartes declaring that universe is a machine mind/soul is not a part of it.

Descartes: The mind knows best its contents

Rationalism

vs

Empiricism

(Reason as source)

(Relying on data through senses)

Mind can be modelled

Not too interesting

An epistemological issue:

-How is our mind at birth?

An ontological question:

-What are the qualities/properties of objects?

Aristotle's substances -ousia- in regards to Descartes (*Cartesian dualism*).

Different nomological natures.

27/02/2025

Thursday

J. LOCKE

*Ontological question: What do we mean by "qualities/properties of objects"?

-Gold is a shiny thing

-Gold has atomic number of 79

*Sources of knowledge: (1) Sensation, (2) Reflection (*Thinking, Doubting, Believing, Perceiving, Reasoning, Willing*)

→ (all ideas can be traced back to these two)

Ideas are immediate objects of perception or thought or understanding

*And the power to produce an idea in the mind is called a **QUALITY**.

(A snowball has the power to produce in us the ideas of cold, white, round...)

*Primary qualities are inseparable from objects

(Mass, extension, figure)

*Secondary qualities are not in objects but they are powers to produce sensations in us by their primary qualities

*Powers in objects cause changes by means of the primary qualities of another object.

-Primary qualities resemble aspects of objects

-Secondary qualities do not.

****Do senses give accurate info about the world, or is it our mental creation only?***

Locke: There are several considerations:

(1) Our organs cannot produce “vision in the dark”. We cannot smell roses in a desert.

(2) I cannot affect my perception when I look at the sun.

In those cases “imagination” and “perception” differs.

(3) I can remember pain without the physical discomfort (*both mental*)

(4) If you doubt it, if you think that it is a creation of your mind, put your hand into fire.

05/03/2025

Wednesday

G. BERKELEY

Ontological: materialism-idealism

Epistemological: empiricism-rationalism

Like his predecessors: Epistemology begins with the mental content.

Objects of knowledge:

-Ideas imprinted on sense

-Those perceived by attending to the operations of mind

-Those formed by memory/imagination

-In addition to ideas, there must be “spirit”, ideas cannot exist alone

*Discussion on mind, spirit, and soul.

-Existence of “unthinking [unthought/unperceived] things”?

-Contradiction about material substance

-Conceiving objects is distinct from perception?

-But isn't it true that our ideas resemble (external) objects?

-Locke's primary qualities

-”Change the sense organs, and...”

Discussion on sensible objects, can one perceive an unperceived tree? -Esse est percipi

06/03/2025

Thursday

BERKELEY

*Ontology: minds(spirits) and ideas

*Esse est percipi

*"exist": defined through possibility of perception.

*There is a contradiction about asserting the existence of matter independent of perception.

*Try to separate the being of a sensible object from its being perceived

*Why not say that our ideas resemble objects which are material?

*Q: If there were "material objects" could we know them (as they are)?

*Locke's primary qualities?

*Change your sense organs, you will get a different extension

*Ex: The same object feeling cold and warm to different hands if you immerse them in different containers. Why not the same with extension?

Berkeley: my argument primarily shows something about knowledge.

Knowing matter, how? → reason

→ senses

-Ex: in dreams we have the vision without (material) object

- "But it can exist probably". Then we admit we may never know them. So god creating stuff without purpose.

- I alone cannot create what I see at will.

- There is a rerum natura

STACE's Phenomenalism

In modern philosophical use, the term *phenomena* means things as they are experienced through the senses and processed by the mind as distinct from things in and of themselves.

- A problem about inferring existence of hypothetical entities like e^- through causal connection to visible world.

- That causation cannot be established.

I

Ex: the Sun is heating up objects

(A)

→ a piece of wax melts

(B)

II

Subatomic event 1 occurs

→ subatomic event 2 occurs

which causes (A)

which (causes B)

>The external observer looks at the situation and determines that A is the cause of B, which isn't the case as different subatomic events causes A and B respectively which do not correlate, however observer comes into the conclusion of A causing B because it seems as so. Observer can only rely on data which is presented in the world of sense-perception, yet the causes aren't in the said world.

-Causation is observed at a phenomenal level

-We have no evidence for *I* above

-"Subatomic talk" is useful for theorizing only. Similarly with "force" we don't need to postulate "existence"

-Hence, the only cause of sensations are other sensations.

-Only sensations and minds exist. We don't need to admit existence of underlying level.

12/03/2025

Wednesday

WHITELEY (CONTEMPORARY PHENOMENALISM)

Representationalism (Lockian) – Phenomenalism (Berkeley-kind)

-Sense-Data: Sensory units of immediate awareness
(cognitively simple items)

-This terminology may allow us to talk about objects without “physicality”

-Phenomenalism: All statements about material objects can be completely analysed into statements about sense-data (reduction)

Advantages: Removing doubts!

Disadvantages: (1) We draw a distinction between appearance and reality
(2) Sense-data are transient; materials objects are stable

J.S. Mill:

-Sense-data can be actual and possible

-Matter can be understood as the permanent possibility of sensation

(3) Material objects are causally active.

What about sense-data?

Case: Hume’s analysis of causation: -invariable sequence

-regular repetition

-So causation is a relation among sense-data

A case: “S is bored now, but she is not showing any signs of it.”

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Thursday

B. RUSSEL (Representationalism)

-objectivist → max (All is non-subjective)

→ min (Something is objective)

-subjectivist → max (All is subjective)

→ min (Something is not objective)

**Locke and Kant denied MAX*

-Russell: World → physiology → mental content

-Because of this our perceptions are similar (While there are subjective differences)

-A “percept” is an immediately given, and the most reliable part of knowledge.

It is subjective (non-shareable). It provides a basis or foundation.

So we can construct the “world”, using inferences:

Ex: the distant objects are not actually small (thus, we correct our perception)

-**physical** (publicly available) vs **perceptual** space

-What we see is not there “as it appears”

-Our perceptions need not reflect reality (like a mirror)

-When we examine human brain (where our mental content is occurring / we are examining something physical)

-That must be happening in physical space; and the perceptual space is created.

Representationalism: We perceive/experience our representations.

We mentally represent objects out there

Phenomenalism: We perceive/experience our representations.

But no inference from them to objects out there

Direct realism: We perceive objects.

We have visual experience of objects.

We do not see our experiences.

19/03/2025

Wednesday

INTENTIONALITY OF PERCEPTION

*Human cognition is a dynamic one, comprising representational and non-representational aspects.

(NETWORK) ↔ (BACKGROUND)

interaction

*Experience in general and perceptual experience are different performances. Experience does not only success: perception does.

*”But in a hallucination too we see objects.”

*Intentionality as a quality of perception.

*Directedness of the mind, the quality of aboutness.

*Ex: -a sentence is about a situation

-a cat isn't

*Intentionality \sim = intention

*Perception is always of objects (hence, "success")

*Tradition: object perceived

Contemporary: perception of states-of-affairs

S is P

*Visual experience(*perception*) has conditions of satisfaction

So it is similar to beliefs (turning into knowledge)

*This is how we explain intentionality in perception

20/03/2025

Thursday

J. SEARLE be careful about the difference between intentionality and intensionality

*The intentional content provides the conditions of satisfaction for perception.

*Intentionality is a concept of philosophy of mind.

*Searle's view is further supplemented by Intensionality (a concept of philosophy of language)

*extension of a term: what satisfies it in the world

intension of a term: the sense/meaning of the term

*co-extensionality: -different term, but common extension

-can be exchanged in propositions without changing truth-value Ex: morning star,

Venus

Searle: Perception occurs in intensional context, not extensional

Ex: -in a town [bank manager] is also [tallest guy in town]

-suppose John is observing the B.M. John doesn't know the above "identity"

EXTENSIONAL: [John sees B.M.], hence, [John sees the tallest guy]

INTENSIONAL: John sees that [the B.M. is standing in front of a building]

→ ? *John sees that [the tallest guy is standing in front of a building]*

Searle says no.

*The asymmetry shows that we perceive aspects of things (not objects simpliciter)

*The aspect we experience in a given case has to do with the states-of-affairs we face.

-Further sophistications

1- When perception happens, it is causally self-referential → *the cause is really what you find in the intentional content*

Ex: John looking at garden. Thinks he sees a white sheep at the far corner

Actually he is looking at a white rock. But, there is a white sheep behind the rock he is seeing.

→ John perceives that [there is a white sheep at the corner of the garden]

intentional content, TRUE

2- Perception and belief have a $M \rightarrow W$ direction of fitting. Desire is not like that.

A TABLE OF COMPARISON:

M: Mind, W: World, \rightarrow : to

<u>DESIRE</u>	<u>PERCEPTION</u>	<u>BELIEF</u>	
<u>PRESENTATION/REPRESENTATION</u> representation	presentation	representation	
<u>CAUSALLY SELF-REFERENCIAL</u>	yes	no	no
<u>DIRECTION OF FIT</u> $W \rightarrow M$ ^{to}	$M \rightarrow W$ ^{to}	$M \rightarrow W$ ^{to}	

-complications: What happens if the object of perception is not “stable”

insert duck-rabbit figure here (*the ambiguous figures*)

-pattern recognition

09/04/2025

Wednesday

TWO EXAMPLES (*challenges due to illusions*)

1 – IOOI

(“TOOT, table with 2 cylinders, 1001 with a top line”)

- The same stimulus from an optic point of view
- The same conditions of satisfaction in the visual experiences
- But different visual experiences (due to different backgrounds)

2- The Moon Illusion

- Perceiving that the Moon changes its size
- Content of visual experience: Moon is changing size
- Content of my belief: Moon is **not** changing size

-Two different conditions of satisfaction

→ for perception

→ for (empirical) belief

-In other words, we must perceive that the Moon is changing size

-Rational “correction”

Perception isn't just physiological, societal factors also have an effect on it.

For the midterm make sure that you've completely understood these three point of views regarding perception and compare them.

Midterm only includes perception.

10/04/2025

Thursday

EPISTEMIC JUSTIFICATION

* $KsP \leftrightarrow BsP \wedge JsP \wedge P$

$\wedge \rightarrow$ the element of rationalization

*Are the three conditions sufficient

*Theories of Justification \rightarrow foundationalism

\rightarrow coherentism

*Descartes' journey: Methodical doubt, the question of “how we grasp the identity of objects?”

“which mental faculty is responsible for that?”

-What happens once you show that “I” must exist?

-“Contents of the mind”

-There must be some cause behind the generation of ideas

(Can it be “I” especially in critical cases?)

MIND — MATTER

-Nomologically different substances

Descartes regarding foundationalism, why is he a pillar of it?