

## 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."

Out → Nature, perceptible world, later writing, social contact, quantum computers.

In → Inside the conscience

**\*AI\*** and out storage of information/knowledge.

-Black-boxing of AI

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.

*Nomological → Laws of operation*

27/02/2025

Thursday

J. LOCKE

\*Ontological question: What do we mean by "qualities ↔ properties (*same thing*) of objects"?

-Gold is a shiny thing

-God 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. (*I cannot deny the fact that I perceive the sun and not the moon*)

In those cases "imagination" and "perception"

differs.

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

(4) If you doubt it [3], 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 primary qualities change."*

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.

Ex: the Sun is heating up objects → a piece of wax melts

(A) (B)

Subatomic event 1 occurs                      → subatomic event 2 occurs  
which causes (A)                                      which (causes B)

- Causation is observed at a phenomenal level
- We have no evidence for **II** 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; material 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."

13/03/2025

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 imply 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 ~ intention

Something being about something is an example as to things being about things.

\*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 the garden. Thinks he sees a white sheep at the far corner  
Actually he is looking at the 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 Mind→World direction of fitting. Desire is not like that.

### A TABLE OF

**COMPARISON:** M: Mind, W: World, → : to

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

-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 → foundationalism  
→ 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?

**17/04/2025**

**Thursday**

**R. AUDI** (*non-traditional foundationalism*)

- Traditional foundationalism: Cartesianism
- Difference of the contemporary literature: shifting emphasis from mental states to propositions
- Perceptual vs. inferential beliefs
  - a logical notion
  - arriving at a proposition from the consideration of premises

**Ex:** I believe that this rose I am perceiving is yellow

- The inflation rate of this year will be 50%

-What is the status of the majority of our beliefs in this regard?

**Ex:** I hear a key turning inside the lock of my house

-The idea of an "~~epistemic~~ justificatory chain"

### Possibilities

(1) Going infinitely

(2) Circle onto itself

(3) terminate at non-J Bs

(4) terminate at JBs where J does not arise out of other Bs

^^^

### CHAIN

$B_1 \leftarrow J \leftarrow B_2 \leftarrow J \leftarrow B_3 \dots \leftarrow B_i \leftarrow J^?$

Could include a starting point of justification