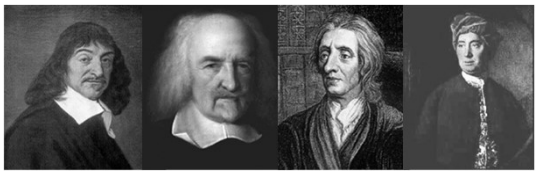
General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

General Philosophy

Dr Peter Millican, Hertford College

Lectures 1 and 2:
Historical Background



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What is "General Philosophy"?

- Some central issues of epistemology ("What can we know?") and metaphysics ("What is the nature of things?").
- Illustrates how philosophy is done: types of arguments, methods of enquiry etc.
- Historical focus: all but one of the topics (Knowledge) are introduced through the writings of "Classical" philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries.

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Why Study Philosophy Historically?

- How the agenda got set: when and why did these problems become important?
- Learning the labels: "Cartesian dualism", "Lockean veil of perception", "Berkeleian idealism", "Berkeleian instrumentalism", "Humean compatibilism", "Cartesian" or "Humean" scepticism etc.
- Great original thinkers, writing for a general audience: so their ideas are profound, and they don't take too much for granted.

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The Value of Historical Perspective

- Philosophical ideas tend to have broad and deep interconnections.
- Studying classic "battles of ideas" enables us to view these interconnections in context and with the perspective of history.
- Many classic themes recur throughout the history of thought, sometimes hidden under the surface of contemporary debate.
- Ignoring the past can make us slaves of fashion, and blinker us to other options.

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The Topics (1)

- **Scepticism**: Descartes' evil genius, Locke's veil of perception
- **Knowledge:** Responding to scepticism
- **Perception**: Locke's representative theory of perception, Berkeley's criticisms
- **Primary and secondary qualities**: Boyle and Locke's theory, Berkeley's criticisms
- **Induction**: Hume's sceptical argument, and his denial that nature is "intelligible"

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The Topics (2)

- **Free Will**: Hobbes' and Hume's compatibilism, and their naturalistic view of man as part of nature
- **Mind and Body**: Descartes' dualism, various philosophers on the limited powers of matter and their religious implications
- **Personal Identity**: Locke's attempt to ground this independently of "spiritual substance"

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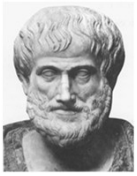
The Birth of Philosophy



- The ancient Greeks, distinctively, aimed for rational understanding independent of religious tradition.
- Many different philosophers and "schools":
  - Various "Pre-Socratics" (c. 600 - 400 BC)
  - Plato and his *Academy* (387 BC -)
  - Aristotle (pictured) and his *Lyceum* (335 BC -)
  - Pyrrhonian sceptics (c. 320 BC -)
  - Epicureans (c. 307 BC -)
  - Stoics (c. 300 BC -)

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The Institution of Scholasticism

- Roman Empire became Christianised:
  - Pagan temples and libraries destroyed 391 AD;
  - Non-Christian "schools" closed down 529 AD.
- Plato and Aristotle adopted:
  - Christian Platonism (e.g. Augustine 354-430)
  - Christian Aristotelianism (e.g. Aquinas 1225-74)
- The Christian Aristotelian worldview became dominant in the medieval monastic schools, hence "Scholasticism".

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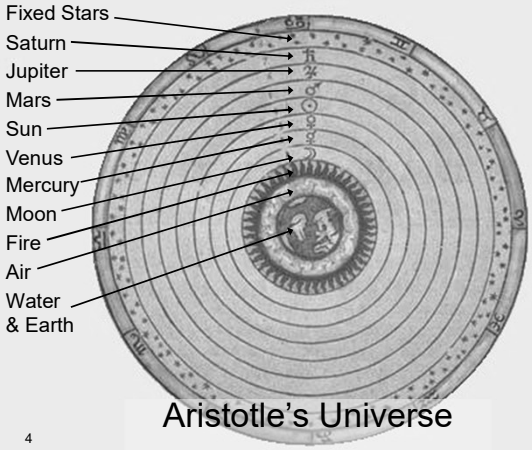

Aristotle's Universe

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Rediscovery of the Classics

- Ancient texts survived in the Byzantine Empire, or in the Arabic world.
  - Manuscripts brought West when the Ottoman Turks attacked, fostered the development of Humanism in Renaissance Italy.
- Printing (invented 1450) gave them much wider circulation, e.g.:
  - Lucretius (rediscovered 1417, printed 1486)
  - Sextus Empiricus (translated into Latin 1562)

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Upheaval and Instability

- Many factors contributed to Western instability in the period 1500-1650, e.g.:
  - growth of population and trade;
  - discovery of the New World (America etc.);
  - consequent economic disruption;
  - realisation that ancient maps etc. were wrong;
  - suggestions of cultural relativity;
  - technology of gunpowder and consequent centralisation of power.

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The Hereford "Mappa Mundi" (c. 1290)

based on the writings of Orosius, a pupil of Saint Augustine, part of a compendium of knowledge to refute the pagans

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The Reformation

- The Reformation added to this crisis:
  - Luther rebelled against the Church of Rome, starting in 1517;
  - Many parts of Europe (especially in the North) became Protestant;
  - Savage wars throughout Europe arising from religious differences (e.g. Thirty Years' War 1618-48, English Civil War 1639-51);
  - Peace "of exhaustion" at Westphalia, 1648 led to greater religious toleration.

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The Problem of the Criterion

- A sceptical problem raised by Sextus Empiricus in his *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*:

  How can any criterion of reliable knowledge be chosen, unless we already have some reliable criterion for making that choice?

  - Roman Catholics appeal to tradition (Church, Bible, Aristotle); Protestants appeal to the believer's personal response to the Bible;
  - How to know who is right? (Maybe neither?!)

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Aristotelian Science

- Elements and Natural Motions
  - Four elements: fire, air, water, and earth.
  - Fire/air naturally move upwards, water/earth downwards, each seeking its natural place.
  - Heavier things fall faster, in proportion to weight. *(Physics, IV 8)*
- A Teleological Physics
  - *S*trivings, horror of a vacuum etc.
  - Everything strives towards the eternal, hence heavenly bodies move in circles, and must be made of a fifth element, *aether*.

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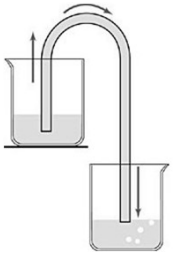
Intelligibility, or Empty "Explanation"?

- "Why does water rise up a siphon pipe?"

  "Because Nature abhors a vacuum."



- "Why does opium make one sleep?"

  "Because it contains a *dormitive virtue,* whose nature is to make the senses soporific."

  Molière (1673)

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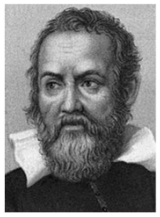
Galileo's Experiments



- Aristotle couldn't explain:
  - the flight of a cannonball;
  - a sledge sliding on flat ice;
  - water dripping from a gutter.
- Galileo was reported (by Viviani) to have performed another critical experiment:
  - dropping a large and a small ball together from the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Contrary to Aristotle, they fell at similar speeds.

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Galileo's Telescope

- The telescope was invented in Holland in 1608, and Galileo made his own in 1609.
- What he saw with it refuted Aristotle's cosmology:
  - Mountains and valleys on the moon;
  - Four moons orbiting around Jupiter;
  - Innumerable stars too dim for the naked eye;
  - Phases of Venus, sometimes "full" (implying that it is then on the opposite side of the Sun).

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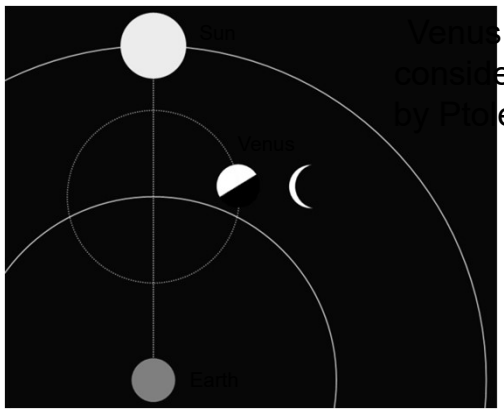

Venus as considered by Ptolemy

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From Final to Efficient Causes

- Aristotelian science was based on purposes, or "final" causation:
  - Things *strive* to reach their natural place, or to avoid abhorrent situations (e.g. a vacuum);
- Galileo preferred "efficient" causation:
  - The outcome depends on where the causal sequence happens to lead.
  - Matter doesn't *strive*; it is *inert*, remaining in its state of motion or rest unless acted on.

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The "Mechanical Philosophy"

- The paradigm of efficient causation is via *mechanical* contact:
  - Interaction between contiguous particles of matter by pressure and impact.
- Compared with pseudo-explanations involving "occult" qualities (horror of a vacuum, dormitive virtue etc.), this seems:
  - genuinely *explanatory*;
  - genuinely *intelligible*.

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Inertia and the Orbiting Heavens

- Thus Galileo claimed, against Aristotle:
  - Matter does not "strive".
  - Left to itself matter is "inert": it continues in a uniform state of rest or motion until acted upon by a force (e.g. pushed along).
  - The heavenly bodies are not composed of a special "aether", but of ordinary matter, and therefore subject to the same laws.
- BUT: why then does the Moon orbit the Earth, and the planets orbit the Sun?

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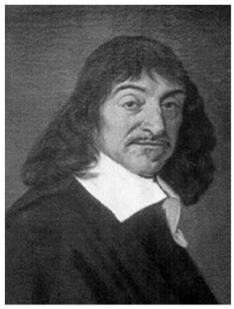
The Father of Modern Philosophy



- Attacks Aristotlian tradition
  using the sceptical problem of the criterion;
- Builds on Galileo's mechanical philosophy
  grounding it on a theory of matter's "essence";
- Makes room for mind
  as an "essence" radically distinct from matter.

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Descartes – Epistemology

- Seeks reliable anti-sceptical basis for knowledge, not appealing to authority:
  - "I think therefore I am", provides a first example of something known, and reveals what is needed: *clear and distinct perception*.
  - Then prove clearly and distinctly that the idea of God implies a perfect cause: i.e. God.
  - A perfect God cannot deceive, so our faculties must be reliable *if used properly*.
  - Hence the importance of Descartes' *Method*.

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Descartes – Science

- Descartes was a major natural philosopher:
  - First to explain the rainbow in detail;
  - Discovered co-ordinate geometry;
  - Suggested circulation of the blood;
  - Concluded that the Earth orbits the Sun.
- His most important intellectual legacy:

  The ideal of a mechanistic science of the world, based on the simple mathematical properties of extended matter.

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Descartes and Essences

- The real qualities of matter follow from its essence, simple geometrical *extension*.
  - This essence, known through God-given innate ideas, implies mathematical laws of motion.
  - Bodies are passive, remaining in the same state *(inertia)* until a force is applied.
  - Qualities perceived by the senses (Locke's "secondary qualities") are observer-dependent.
- Mind is a distinct, active *immaterial* substance, whose essence is *thinking*.

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Descartes' Physics

- Since matter's essence is *extension*, non-material extension is impossible. Thus:
  - The physical world is a *plenum* (no vacuum);
  - All motion must take the form of *circuits* of matter within the plenum.
  - This can be expected to give rise to *vortices*, circular motions like whirlpools.
  - A vortex can explain why the planets orbit the Sun without shooting off under inertia.

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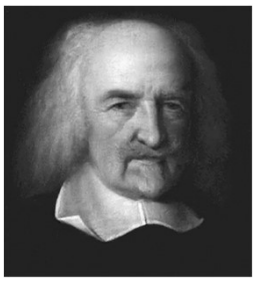
The Monster of Malmesbury

(and Magdalen Hall = Hertford College!)



- Hobbes denies
  - immaterial substance;
  - witchcraft;
  - reliance on revelation.
- Hobbes asserts
  - universal determinism;
  - obedience to sovereign in religion and morals.

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Hobbes' Leviathan (1651)

- In the state of nature, the life of man is 'solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short'.
- The only solution is *absolute* sovereignty.

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Hobbes' Materialism

- Hobbes, like Descartes, is a plenist, but he recognises *only* material substance, and does so on logical grounds:

  "When men make a name of two Names, whose significations are contradictory and inconsistent", the result is "but insignificant sounds", "as this name, an *incorporeall body*, or (which is all one) an *incorporeall substance*". *Leviathan* ch. 4
- So Descartes' supposed mental "immaterial substance" is a contradiction in terms!

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Hobbes' Compatibilism

- Hobbes is the first classic *compatibilist*, who takes *determinism* (i.e. all that happens is completely determined by causal laws) to be fully compatible with genuine free will.

> "LIBERTY, or FREEDOME, signifieth (properly) the absence of Opposition (by Opposition, I mean externall Impediments of motion;) … *A* FREEMAN, *is he, that in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindred to doe what he has a will to.*"
>
> *Leviathan* ch. 21

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Materialism and Atheism

- Hence for Hobbes, all that exists is material, even God, and everything is determined.
- Many took Hobbes to be an atheist.
  - In 1666 Parliament cited his "atheism" as probable cause of the plague and fire of London!
  - His "Pernicious" books were publicly burned in Oxford in 1683, because of their "Damnable Doctrines … false, seditious, and impious, and most of them … also Heretical and Blasphemous … and destructive of all Government".

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The Evils of "Hobbism"

- In 1668, Daniel Scargill of Corpus Christi Cambridge was expelled. In his public recantation, he confessed:

> "I have lately vented and publickly asserted … divers wicked, blasphemous, and Atheistical positions … professing that I gloried to be an *Hobbist* and an *Atheist* … Agreeably unto which principles I have lived in great licentiousness, swearing rashly, drinking intemperately … corrupting others …"

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Opposing Materialism

- The main *argument* against Hobbist materialism was to insist on the limited powers of "brute matter", which:
  - is necessarily *passive* or *inert* (as demonstrated by the phenomenon of inertia);
  - in particular, cannot possibly give rise to mental activity such as perception or thought.
- This point was pressed by Ward (1656), More (1659), Stillingfleet (1662), Tenison (1670), Cudworth (1678), Glanvill (1682), Locke (1690).

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Boyle's Corpuscularianism

- Though Hobbist materialism was anathema, *physical* mechanism thrived in England:
  - Robert Boyle, with an interest in chemistry and based in Oxford, speculated that material substances are composed of imperceptible "corpuscles" made of "universal matter". His term "corpuscularianism" conveniently avoided the atheistic associations of ancient "atomism"

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Atoms and the Void

- Boyle's universal matter is both extended and *impenetrable*, so unlike Descartes he can draw a distinction between:
  - impenetrable extension (i.e. matter)
  - penetrable extension (i.e. empty space)
- He retains Descartes' primary-secondary quality distinction: observable "secondary" qualities of substances flow from how the corpuscles are physically arranged.

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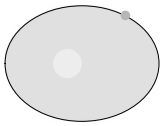
Meanwhile, in the Heavens …



- In 1627 Johannes Kepler published tables enabling the calculation of planetary positions to an accuracy which turned out to be over 1000 times better than any previous method.
- Kepler's method is based on the hypothesis that each planet moves in an *ellipse* around the Sun (which is at one "focus" of the ellipse).
- The method's sheer accuracy led over time to general acceptance of that hypothesis.

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Newtonian Physics

- Isaac Newton took Descartes' concept of inertia, and Boyle's theory of "atoms and the void", but postulated a force of gravity acting through it.
  - If gravity acts in inverse proportion to the square of the distance between two objects, and bodies accelerate in proportion to the total force acting on them, then the elliptical motion of the planets around the Sun can be elegantly explained.

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Refuting Aristotle and Descartes

- Newton's theory could also predict – using the very same equations – the motion of cannonballs etc. on Earth.
  - Another nail in the coffin of the Aristotelian supposition that heavenly bodies act differently.
- In his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687), Newton also proved mathematical results indicating that a vortex could not possibly generate elliptical motion.
  - Descartes' theory was thereby discredited.

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Gravitation and Intelligibility

- Newtonian gravity acts at a distance with no intermediate mechanical connexion.
  - But this is deeply "unintelligible".
  - Descartes had objected to the idea of gravity as "occult": one body would have to "know" where the other was to move towards it.
  - Many Newtonians took the operation of gravity to be proof of divine action, a new resource against Hobbist materialism.
  - Newton took a more *instrumentalist* attitude.

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Newton's Methodological Instrumentalism

- Newton's public response to the objection:
  "Hypotheses non fingo"
  - "I feign no hypotheses"; there's no obligation to invent speculations about how gravity operates (at least until more evidence comes to light giving a basis for more than *mere* hypothesis).
  - If the gravitational equations (etc.) correctly describe the observed behaviour of objects, then that theory should be accepted whatever the unperceived underlying reality might be.

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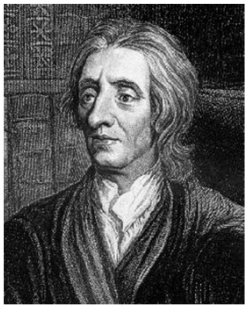
John Locke



- Established "British Empiricist" tradition;
- Hugely influential also in political philosophy;
- Christ Church, 1652-84;
- *Essay concerning Human Understanding* and *Two Treatises of Government*, 1690.

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Locke and Corpuscularianism

- Locke's *Essay* took Boyle's "corpuscularian hypothesis" as the best available:
  - Boyle's "universal matter" becomes "substance in general"; "impenetrability" becomes "solidity".
  - Underlying substance has *primary qualities*: shape, size, movement etc., texture, solidity.
  - *Secondary qualities* (e.g. colour, smell, taste) are *powers* to cause ideas in us.
  - Primary qualities in objects *resemble* our ideas of them; secondary qualities do not.

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Empiricism and Essences

- Locke is *empiricist*, and modest …
  - All our ideas are derived from experience, so we can't rely on Cartesian "innate ideas".
  - (Virtually) all knowledge of the world comes from experience, and hence must be tentative.
  - We presume a "real essence": an underlying structure giving rise to the observed properties of substances, and their similarity.
  - However we have to make do with relying on "nominal essence": the observable properties by which we identify and sort things.

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Locke's Probabilism

- Reason is a *perceptual* faculty: rational argument involves *perceiving* truths and inferential connexions.
  - *Demonstration* is when a sequence of *intuitive* connexions leads from premise to conclusion.
- But reason does not operate only through logical demonstration, yielding certainty:
  - Reason can also perceive *probable* connexions, which can be sequenced together to generate *probable reasoning*.

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Locke's Rationalism

- Despite his epistemological modesty, Locke seems committed to an ideal of intelligibility:
  - "if we could discover the … Texture [etc.] … of the minute Constituent parts of … Bodies, we should know without Trial several of their Operations …" (*Essay* IV iii 25)
  - The existence of God is provable with certainty, since "it is as impossible that incogitative Matter should produce a cogitative Being, as that nothing … should produce … Matter." (IV x 11)

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Thinking Matter and Inertness

- But Locke speculated that God could, if he wished, "superadd" thought to matter.
  - Provoked great hostility, opponents arguing that thought is an "active" power, requiring an immaterial soul rather than brute matter.
  - Matter only has primary qualities and what directly flows from them.
  - Matter is clearly "passive" or "inert", as indicated by phenomenon of *inertia*.
  - If matter could think, what of immortality?

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Locke on Personal Identity

- Agnosticism about substances gave Locke a particular problem with personal identity.
  - Our experience gives us no insight into the nature of mental "substance", only its activity.
  - Analogy with plants suggests an organism's identity is not tied to its constituent substance.
  - The notion of personal identity is "forensic": vital in issues of morality and responsibility.
- Locke attempts to ground this vital notion in consciousness and memory.

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The Powers of Matter

- Most were deeply unhappy with a view of man that was compatible with materialism, which they saw as atheistical and *mortalist.*
- Again, their main argument was that matter is passive and inert, so it cannot *perceive* or *think* (Descartes, Cudworth etc.), or *attract gravitationally* (various Newtonians); hence there must be a non-material substance with these effects.
- *Occasionalism* and *Immaterialism* pushed this line of thought much further …

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Nicolas Malebranche

- The leading Cartesian of the late 17th century.
- Often now ignored, but influential in England as well as his native France.
- Built on the claim of matter's inertness, developing the theory of *occasionalism*.
- Though considered a "rationalist", he was a major influence on the "empiricist" Berkeley.

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Malebranche and Causation

- Matter is inert, and has no causal impact on the world; the only cause is God.
  - A real cause must *necessitate* its effect, but we can conceive any physical "cause" occurring without its "effect", so it can't be a real cause.
  - Only the will of an omnipotent Being can truly necessitate an effect in this sense.
  - God sustains the world, in effect re-creating it from moment to moment (as Descartes taught), hence again He brings everything about.

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Malebranche's Occasionalism

- Malebranche's theory implies that physical objects are not real causes.
  - Instead they are "occasional" causes: when one billiard ball hits another, this provides the *occasion* for God to cause the second to move (by re-creating it in a sequence of positions).
  - God also creates the visual perceptions in our mind corresponding to this physical reality.
  - But then why not do away with the physical reality entirely, as it seems to play no role?

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George Berkeley

- Irish Anglican, 1685-1753, buried in Christ Church.
- "British empiricist", but closer to Malebranche than to either Locke or Hume.
- *Immaterialism*: the only things that exist are (active) spirits and (passive) "ideas".
- God orchestrates our ideas, so objects in the world appear in an orderly fashion.

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Berkeley's Immaterialism

- Berkeley's immaterialism is essentially occasionalism without the material world. But he uses a different set of arguments, appealing to perception and meaning-empiricism rather than to metaphysics:
  - Combines Lockean principle that only ideas are immediately perceived, with plain man's belief that trees etc. are immediately perceived;
  - Denies intelligibility of perceived objects (or anything resembling them) existing unperceived.

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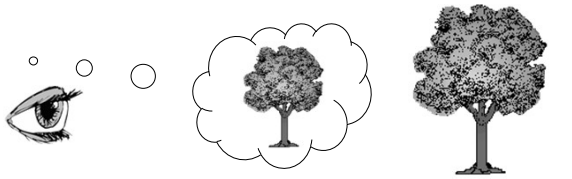
Perception According to Locke



Idea in the mind (directly perceived) *Material object (cause of the idea)*

- The "Veil of perception" problem: how can we know whether there *is* a real material object?

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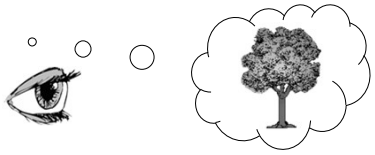
Perception According to Berkeley



Idea in the mind = the tree (directly perceived; caused by God)

- No veil of perception problem, because what we directly perceive (i.e. the idea) *is* the tree.

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Berkeley on Primary and Secondary Qualities

- We can be mistaken about PQs just as about SQs: they too are *in the mind*.
- All ideas are derived from experience, hence our ideas of PQs (e.g. shape) are infused with those of the sensory SQs by which we perceive them (e.g. a colour that fills the space). PQs without SQs are *inconceivable*.
- We cannot make any sense of something non-mental *resembling* an idea.

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Berkeley's Instrumentalism

- Immaterialism might seem to undermine physical science, but Berkeley (following Newton) advocated instrumentalism:
  - The aim of science is to discover "laws" that generate true predictions about phenomena.
  - It is irrelevant whether the theoretical entities (e.g. forces) invoked have any real existence.
  - God benevolently arranges the observed phenomena to follow these patterns, as "signs" to enable us to direct our lives.

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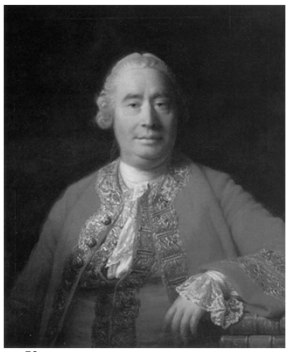
David Hume, The Great Infidel



- Scottish, 1711-76
- *Treatise of Human Nature 1739*
- *Essays* (various) 1741-
- *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding* 1748*, and Principles of Morals* 1751
- *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* 1779

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Building on Newton and Locke

- Newtonianism
  - Newton provides a model of good science, modestly aiming "to reduce the principles, productive of natural phenomena, to a greater simplicity, and to resolve the many particular effects into a few general causes". (*E* 30)
- Probabilism
  - Locke is right to emphasise *probability* rather than *demonstration* as the basis for our discovery of truths about the world. BUT …

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

Hume on Mechanical Causation

- Suppose we see a white billiard ball moving towards a red one and colliding with it. Why do we expect the red one to move?
- Imagine Adam, newly created by God, trying to envisage what would happen: how could be possibly have any idea at all in advance of experience?
- The "intelligibility" of mechanical causation is just an illusion, engendered by familiarity.

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Science and Intelligibility

- Methodological Instrumentalism
  - *All* causation is "unintelligible": we don't really *understand* why *anything* causes *anything*.
  - Malebranche and Berkeley had the right idea about natural causes: there is no intelligible connexion between cause and effect, so we must view *all* "natural laws" instrumentally (and not just Newton's law of gravitation).
  - But in Hume's universe there's no role for God: it's a sort of atheistic occasionalism!

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Hume on Induction

- Does *experience* of impacting billiard balls give me a good reason for expecting the red ball to move after the collision?
- If so, I must have a good reason for taking my past experience as a guide to the future.
- But resemblance of the future to the past isn't self-evident, and I can't know it through the senses. Nor can it be proved logically, while appealing to experience to support it would be "begging the question": arguing in a circle.

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Humean "Reason"

- Against *Lockean* "Rationalistic Probabilism"
  - Lack of "intelligibility" does not merely imply that our judgements about the world are *uncertain*; we cannot even claim to have any rational grasp of, or insight into, *probable* connexions.
- The Foundation of Induction
  - Scientific (like all empirical) reasoning is founded not on insight, but on a brute assumption *that the future will resemble the past*, for which no solid basis can be given.

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Man's Place in Nature

- Not "Made in God's Image"
  - Our Reason is a natural faculty (rather than any sort of godlike insight). There's no basis for thinking of man as supernaturally privileged; instead, he should be viewed as part of the natural world, alongside the beasts.
- A Subject of Empirical Study
  - The human world, like the natural world, can be known only through observation, experiment, systematisation and generalisation.

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Hume on Free Will

- Hume, like Hobbes, is a *compatibilist*, seeing moral freedom as compatible with determinism.
- Human actions are *necessary* in the same sense as material interactions (indeed we can only understand necessity in one way, based on our own habits of prediction).
- Free will is simply having the power to act as our will dictates.
- This doesn't undermine moral responsibility because morality is based on *sentiment*.

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

The Elephant in the Room

- Theological concerns underlie most philosophy over this period.
- In the Medieval picture, things operate through "natures" and purposes laid down by God. Moving from an Aristotelian to a mechanical model of nature removes the purposes, and threatens an atheistic universe.
- Religious disagreement also undermines appeal to traditional authority – encouraging a search for something to take its place.

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A (Very Simplistic) "Big Picture"

	Physics	*Morals*	*Politics*
Medieval	Governed by natural motions	Revealed truth and natural law	King is divinely ordained
Early Modern	Inert matter, mechanical causation, forces	Revelation? Reason? Moral sense? Feeling?	Natural right? Reason? Contract? Raw power?

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In the Wake of Mechanistic Science

- The world differs radically from how it appears: our best theory attributes *primary qualities* to bodies, with *secondary qualities* explained through a *representative theory of perception*.
- This invites *scepticism*: if we can't trust our natural faculties to yield truth directly, then how can we know what things are really like?
- If the actions of *body* are explained mechanically, then how can *mind* fit in? The relation between them seems completely mysterious.

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- Moreover a completely mechanical account of the actions of body implies that our behaviour is determined. What then of *free will*, and how can divine punishment be justified?
- Reward or punishment relies on the premise of *personal identity* over time, and the afterlife requires this to withstand bodily dissolution. How can we make sense of this, so as to safeguard both religion and morality?
- If Hume is right, we can't. And our attempts to make sense of the world are anyway doomed by the limits of our faculties, as shown by our inability to justify even basic *induction*.

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Immanuel Kant (1783)

- Hume *has to be* wrong, because we have clear examples of "synthetic *a priori*" knowledge: truths about the world knowable independently of experience, that we see *had to be* that way:
  - Metaphysical principles (e.g. universal causation)
  - Euclidean geometry (e.g. Pythagoras' theorem)
  - Newtonian mechanics (e.g. conservation of momentum).

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Hume's Triumph!

- Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859)
  - We are evolved from animals, part of nature.
- Einstein's General Relativity (1915)
  - Space is gravitationally "curved".
  - So Euclid's axioms probably aren't true, and they're certainly not knowable *a priori*.
- Quantum Mechanics (1925)
  - Fundamental particles don't work at all as we (or Newton) would have expected: their behaviour is *describable*, but not "intelligible".

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

General Philosophy

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Lecture 3:
Induction

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Hume's Fork

- *Enquiry* IV starts with a vital distinction between types of proposition:
  - Relations of ideas can be known *a priori* (i.e. without dependence on experience) by inspecting ideas; hence their falsehood is inconceivable and they are necessarily true.
    e.g. Pythagoras' Theorem. (*E* 4.1)
    3 × 5 = ½ × 30. (*E* 4.1)
    All bachelors are unmarried.
  - The modern term is analytic (as understood e.g. by Ayer): "true in virtue of its meaning".

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Matters of Fact

- Matters of fact can't be known *a priori*, and their truth / falsity are equally conceivable:
  e.g. The sun will rise tomorrow. (*E* 4.2)
  The sun will not rise tomorrow. (*E* 4.2)
  This pen will fall when released in air.
- The modern term is synthetic: a proposition whose truth "is determined by the facts of experience" (Ayer, *LTL* 1971, p. 105).

- So how can I discover a matter of fact which I neither perceive directly, nor remember?

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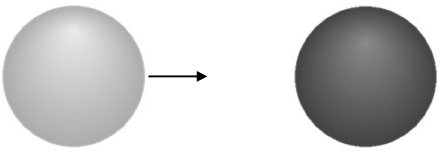
- Suppose we see a yellow billiard ball moving towards a red one and colliding with it. We expect the red one to move – but why?



- Because we suppose a *causal* connexion between the two events. But in that case …
- How do we learn about causes and effects?

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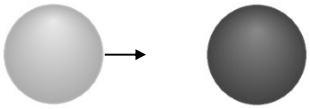
A Thought Experiment

- Imagine Adam, newly created by God, trying to envisage the effect of the collision:
  - how could he possibly make any prediction at all in advance of experience?



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The Need for Extrapolation

- All inference to matters of fact beyond what we perceive or remember seems to be based on causation, and all our knowledge of causal relations comes from experience.
- Such learning from experience takes for granted that observed phenomena provide a guide to unobserved phenomena.
- We thus *extrapolate* from past to future on the assumption that they resemble. But do we have a rational basis for doing so?

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

Four "Kinds of Evidence"

- "It is common for Philosophers to distinguish the Kinds of Evidence into *intuitive*, *demonstrative*, *sensible*, *and moral"*. (*Letter from a Gentleman*, 1745, p. 22)
- By "intuition", Hume means immediate self-evidence: the way we know that something is identical with itself, or that 2 is greater than 1.
- "Sensible" evidence means *from the senses*.
- "Demonstrative" and "moral" reasoning are now commonly called "deduction" and "induction" …

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Locke on Reasoning

- In demonstrative reasoning, each link in the inferential chain is "intuitively" certain.
  - "reasoning concerning relations of ideas" [Hume]
- In probable reasoning, some links in the inferential chain are merely probable.
  - "moral reasoning", "reasoning concerning matter of fact" [Hume]: "factual inference" for short
- For Locke, both types of reasoning involve rational *perception* of the links (IV xvii 2).

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Hume on Inferring Uniformity

- What ground can we give for extrapolating from observed to unobserved?
  - Self-evident intuition? No.
  - Demonstrative reasoning? No: neither of these, because it's clear that extrapolation *could* fail, so it can't be a matter of pure logic.
  - Sensory knowledge? No: what we perceive of objects gives us no insight into the basis of their powers, hence no reason to extrapolate.
  - Factual inference? No: that would be circular.

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Review: The Part (i) Argument

- All factual [moral, probable] inference is founded on causation
  - Because causation is the only relation that enables us to infer from one thing to another.
- All knowledge of causal relations is founded on experience
  - A priori, we can know nothing of causation.
- Hence all factual inference is founded on experience.

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The Pivot

- All factual inference is founded on experience.
- All inference from experience is founded on a principle of uniformity or similarity.
  - Because it requires that we extrapolate from our experience, on the basis that what we have not yet experienced will be similar.
- Hence all factual inference is founded on this Uniformity Principle.

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The Part (ii) Argument

- But neither intuition, nor sensation, nor demonstration can ground such a principle.
- And factual inference – as we have seen – itself depends on the Uniformity Principle, so any attempt to establish the Principle by factual inference will be arguing in a circle.
- It follows that there is no rational basis for the supposition of Uniformity, and hence no rational basis for factual inference.

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

The Basis of Factual "Reason"

- Our "reason" is fundamentally based on a brute assumption of uniformity, rather than any insight into the nature of things.
  - Hence human reason differs from animal reason only in *degree*.
  - Locke's supposed "perception" of probable connexions is wishful thinking.
  - No causal interactions are really *intelligible*: we discover what causes what not by pure thought, but by observation of uniformities.

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Does This Imply Irrationalism?

- Does Hume deny that inductive inference is founded on any sort of rational insight into why nature should be uniform?
  - YES!
- Does Hume think that all inferences about "matter of fact" are equally hopeless, so that there's no rational ground for preferring one to another?
  - NO!

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The Problem of Demarcation

- Religious belief is founded on "whimsies and prejudices" of the imagination.
- Science is founded on the instinctive, non-rational belief in uniformity.
- So what right has Hume to prefer "science" over "superstition"? His answer is to favour reasoning *consistently* with this irresistible instinctive belief, which is so utterly essential to human life and thought.

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Implications for Science

- Systematisation rather than Intelligibility
  - "the utmost effort of human reason is, to reduce the principles, productive of natural phenomena, to a greater simplicity, and to resolve the many particular effects into a few general causes … But as to the causes of these general causes, we … in vain attempt their discovery." (*E* 4.12)
- Instrumentalism
  - Newton's instrumentalist attitude to gravitation thus provides a model of good science.

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The Gap in Hume's Argument

- Hume takes for granted that all "probable" arguments must be based on experience.
- So it might be possible to escape his argument if induction could be justified using *a priori* probabilistic considerations.
- Though most philosophers are sceptical, interesting attempts have been made by:
  - Bruno De Finetti (1937), D.C. Williams (1947), David Stove (1986), Sir Roy Harrod (1956), Simon Blackburn (1973), J. L. Mackie (1979)

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Other Attempts to Answer Hume

- "Analytic" Justification of Induction
  - Induction is rational by definition: it is partly constitutive of our concept of rationality.
- "Inductive" Justification of Induction
  - Induction is justified by its past success.
- "Pragmatic" Justification of Induction
  - We are pragmatically (rather than epistemically) justified in relying on induction, because it will work if any method of prediction will.

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

Hume versus Strawson

- P. F. Strawson (Univ and Magdalen) famously advocated the "Analytic Justification".
- However it's not clear that it really engages with Hume's problem. Hume himself would agree that we *call* induction "rational", and even that we're right (in a sense) to do so.
- His sceptical result doesn't concern this use of words: it questions our *epistemic justification* for inductive extrapolation.

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The Inductive Justification

- Max Black (1958) argued that induction can be justified inductively without vicious circularity, by distinguishing between an inductive *rule* and an inductive *premise*.
- But Hume's question concerns the *rational well-foundedness* of taking the observed as evidence for the unobserved. A rule or premise can confer this rational grounding only if it is itself rationally grounded. So any circularity here is indeed vicious.

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The Pragmatic Justification

- Hans Reichenbach (1949) argued that if there is any general rule, deterministic or statistical, to be found – e.g. that 61% of As are Bs – then induction will find it, and is better than any alternative method.
- But this argument just takes for granted that we are looking for an inductively consistent rule: one that stays the same over time.
- Besides, Hume's pragmatic justification is stronger: we can't help reasoning inductively!

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Mellor on Warranted Induction

- Mellor takes an "externalist" approach: induction is *warranted* if the world is such as to make inductive predictions probably true (e.g. because the world does in fact behave consistently over time), *even if we are unable to know that this is the case*.
- For the externalist, a belief can be justified by how things are, even if the believer is unaware of what justifies his or her belief.
- We'll consider externalism in "Knowledge".

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Goodman's "New Riddle" of Induction

- Call something *grue* if it is first examined before noon on 1st April next year and is *green*, or first examined later and is *blue*. *(Bleen* is the other way round.*)*
- Suppose all emeralds examined so far are *green*. Then we have two rival theories, both supported by all the available evidence:
  - (a) All emeralds are *green*. ("straight" theory)
  - (b) All emeralds are *grue*. ("bent" theory)
- How can we justify preferring (a) over (b)?

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- "Grue" seems artificial because it's defined in terms of "green" and "blue". But "green" can be defined in terms of "grue" and "bleen"!
- The easiest answer is to say that Goodman's bent predicates don't latch on to *real properties*, and inductive support depends on *real similarities* between things, not on purely *syntactic* relationships between sentences (unlike formal deductive validity).
- To back this up, consider a how miner on 1st April could know the colour of an emerald that he digs up: to tell whether it's grue or bleen, he'd have to know the time.

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

General Philosophy

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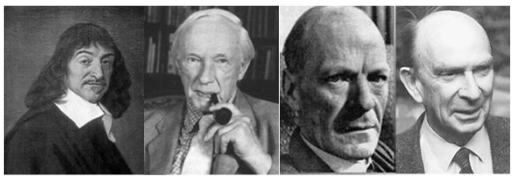
Lecture 4:
Two Cartesian Topics



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Scepticism, and the Mind

- Last Time …
  - … we looked at scepticism about INDUCTION.
- This Lecture …
  - … will move on to SCEPTICISM concerning the external world, most famously exemplified in Descartes' first *Meditation*, and his related claims about the nature of MIND AND BODY.
- The Next Lecture …
  - … will say more about modern responses to SCEPTICISM, and focus on KNOWLEDGE.

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Two Kinds of Scepticism

- Vertical Scepticism
  - Inferring from one kind of thing to *a different kind* (e.g. inferring from one's sensations or appearances, to the existence of real physical objects that cause them).
- Horizontal Scepticism
  - Inferring things *of the same kind* as one has experienced (e.g. inferring from one's sensations or appearances, to expect similar sensations or appearances in the future).

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External World Scepticism

- It can seem that ("vertical") external world scepticism is far more worrying than ("horizontal") inductive scepticism:
  - Maybe I am just dreaming, and there is no external world at all.
  - Maybe an evil demon is causing me to have illusions of an external world.
  - Maybe a wicked scientist has my brain in a vat, and is creating these illusions.

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Descartes' Approach

- The only way to defeat scepticism is to withhold assent from anything that isn't completely certain.
- When I consider "I think, therefore I am", it is quite impossible for me to be mistaken. So I am completely certain of this, at least.
- By contemplating this first certainty, I understand what makes it certain is that I *clearly and distinctly perceive it* to be true.

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Descartes and God

- Hence I can establish as a general rule that *anything I clearly and distinctly perceive is true*.
- I clearly and distinctly perceive that God must exist, because only a perfect being could be the ultimate cause of such a perfect idea as my idea of God.
- A perfect God cannot deceive, so I know that my faculties are essentially reliable.

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

The Cartesian Circle

- Descartes seems to be "boot-strapping":
  - proving the existence of God by relying on his mental faculties.
  - then appealing to the existence of God to justify reliance on his mental faculties.
- Isn't this viciously circular?
  - If my faculties might be defective, then how can I trust my proof of the existence of God in the first place? How can any anti-sceptical argument even get off the ground?

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Moore's Response

- G.E. Moore famously claimed to refute this sort of scepticism by appeal to common-sense knowledge:
  - Here's one hand [he holds up a hand], and here's another [he holds up the other].
  - If this is a hand, then there is an external world.
  - Therefore there is an external world, and scepticism is refuted.

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Two Arguments from "P implies Q"

- *Modus Ponens*

P implies Q		$P \rightarrow Q$
P is true		P
therefore Q is true	$\therefore$	Q

- *Modus Tollens*

P implies Q		$P \rightarrow Q$
Q is false		$\neg Q$
therefore P is false	$\therefore$	$\neg P$

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One person's *modus ponens* …

Deuteronomy 20:16-17 commands multiple genocide to avoid religious pollution.

- The religious fundamentalist might say:
  - Everything in the Bible is true.
  - Therefore genocide is sometimes desirable.
- The humane philosopher would say:
  - Genocide is never desirable.
  - Therefore not everything in the Bible is true.
- Which underlined premise is more plausible?

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… is another's *modus tollens* …

- If this is a hand, then there is an external world.

- Moore says:
  - We know this is a hand.
  - Therefore we know there is an external world.
- The sceptic says:
  - We don't know that there is an external world.
  - Therefore we don't know that this is a hand.
- Moore will claim that his premise is more plausible than the sceptic's.

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Internalism and Externalism

- We'd like to agree with Moore, but it seems hard to justify a claim to knowledge so crudely: don't we need some *philosophical argument* rather than a bare common-sense claim to justify knowing that this is a hand?
- But "internalist" arguments, like Cartesian boot-strapping, have difficulty doing the job. So many recent philosophers have moved towards externalism (next lecture, and compare Mellor's approach to induction).

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

Cartesian Dualism

- The view for which Descartes is now best known:
  - The body is *material*, composed of matter whose essence (i.e. fundamental property from which other properties follow) is *extension*.
  - The mind is composed of *immaterial substance* whose essence is *thinking*.
- This *substance dualism* is to be contrasted with *property dualism* (i.e. there are both physical and non-physical *properties*).

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A Bad Argument for Dualism

- In his *Discourse*, Descartes argues like this:

  I can doubt that my body exists.

  I cannot doubt that I exist.

  ∴ I am not identical with my body.
- Compare:

  I can doubt that Hesperus is Phosphorus. *

  I cannot doubt that Phosphorus is Phosphorus.

  ∴ Hesperus is not Phosphorus.

* *Hesperus = the Evening Star; Phosphorus = the Morning Star; in fact <u>both</u> are appearances of the planet Venus.*

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Leibniz's Law

- If *a* and *b* are the same thing, then any property of *a* must also be a property of *b*:

  $Fa, a=b \models Fb$
  - If *F* is the property of being doubted by me to exist, *a* is me, and *b* is my body, we get Descartes' argument from the *Discourse.*
  - Likewise *F* could be the property of being doubted by me to be Prime Minister *(etc.)*
- To simplest way to avoid the fallacy is to deny that these are genuine properties.

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A Better Argument for Dualism

- Descartes' argument in *Meditation* VI is less fallacious, but has questionable premises:
  - I have a clear understanding of myself as (potentially) a thinking, non-extended thing.
  - I have a clear understanding of body as (potentially) extended and non-thinking.
  - Anything I clearly and distinctly understand could be created by God accordingly.
  - So I could exist separately from my body, and it follows that I am genuinely distinct from it.

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From Doubt to Essence

- Even in the *Meditations*, Descartes tries to motivate his claim to know the essence of mind (as thinking) from his doubt argument:

  "what shall I now say that I am [when I might be deceived by an evil demon, or dreaming]? … At present I am not admitting anything except what is necessarily true. I am, then, in a strict sense only a thing that thinks; that is, I am a mind, or intelligence, or intellect, or reason … what kind of thing? … a thinking thing.

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Epistemology → Metaphysics?

- *The way in which we come to know*, or be certain, of something need not reflect its ultimate nature (or *why it is that way*).
  - From <u>I am thinking</u>, it plausibly follows that (in at least one sense) <u>I am a thing that thinks</u>.
  - But it does *not* necessarily follow that <u>I am something whose essence is to think</u>.
  - Nor does it follow that the thing that thinks could exist without being extended. (Imagine if a piece of matter were made able to think.)

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

Possibly Distinct → Actually Distinct?

- The final move of Descartes' argument seems more defensible, in a sense:
  - God could have created my mind and body as separate entities.
  - ∴ It is possible for my mind and body to exist separately.
  - ∴ My mind and body are in fact distinct things.
- But "could have" must be *metaphysical* possibility, not *epistemology* ("might have for all I know"). So this begs the question.

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The Distinct Substances Problem

- "How can two such distinct substances interact at all?"
  - A problem for Descartes, who takes causation to be ultimately *intelligible*.
  - Not a problem *in principle* on a Humean view of causation: causation is a matter of lawlike correlation rather than intelligible connexion.
  - But it's hard to see what such "laws" could be like, so a difficulty remains (cf. the "explanatory gap" between physical and mental).

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The Causal Closure Principle

- The *causal closure principle* is that physical events (or their probabilities) are determined entirely by physical causes.
  - Also called "the completeness of physics".
  - In this form, the principle is compatible with physical events' being to some extent *random*.
  - Casts doubt on *non*-physical causation.
- Commonly believed, though its evidential base is not *so* clear.

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Problems Explaining Interaction

- The causal closure principle seems to leave no room for a distinct mental substance capable of influencing the body.
- Even if we deny the principle, mind/body interaction seems mysterious.
- It's hard to see how an immaterial mind could have *evolved* alongside the body.
  - Do animals have one too?
  - Is having a mind "all or nothing"?

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Mind and Body: Different Views

- Interactionism
  - The mind can causally influence the body (e.g. movement), and *vice-versa* (e.g. pain).
- Epiphenomenalism
  - The mind is an "epiphenomenon" – caused by events in the brain, but itself causally inert. *(this account is particularly hard to square with evolution – how could such a mind evolve?)*
- Physicalism
  - Only physical things exist, hence there is nothing to the mind beyond the physical brain.

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The Knowledge Argument (Jackson)

- Imagine a scientist (Mary) who learns all the physical facts about colour and colour perception, but who can see only in black, white, and shades of grey.
- If she then acquires normal sight, when she sees colours she learns what they look like, something she didn't know before.
- Hence these phenomenal colour properties cannot be physical. We are forced into *property* dualism, if not *substance* dualism.

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

What is a Physical Cause?

- What are the properties of physical matter?
  - If matter is just inert, extended (and possibly impenetrable) stuff, then it's hard to see how it could possibly be the causal basis of thought.
  - But quantum "matter" has all sorts of weird properties: charge, spin, "charm", "strangeness".
  - Could matter have some proto-psychic property too (*panpsychism*: mind is a fundamental feature of the universe)? Would this then be *physical?!*
  - Physicalism generally shuns such "spooks".

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Non-Physical Explanation

- Even with "non-spooky" physicalism, it doesn't follow that everything in the world can be explained in physical terms.
  - Why does my calculator show "132" when I type "11 x 12 =" ?
  - Answer: because 11 x 12 is equal to 132. The explanation appeals to *mathematical* facts, not just *physical* facts about the calculator.
- Likewise evolutionary explanation etc. (e.g. in terms of the logic of game theory).

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The Hardware/Software Analogy

- It is tempting to see the relation between brain and mind as analogous to that between hardware and software.
  - This treats the mind as clearly *distinguishable* from the body, but not a *distinct substance*.
- Explains away another Cartesian argument:

  Body is divisible.

  Mind is not divisible.

  ∴ Body and mind are distinct.

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Ryle and Category Mistakes

- The classic category mistake:
  - "I've seen all these colleges and offices, but *where is the University*?"
  - Supposes the University to be a separate thing.
- "Mind" as a category mistake:
  - "People behave in these various ways, so *they must have a mind* distinct from their body."
  - Instead, "having a mind" just is a matter of how one behaves. It's not a separate *thing*.

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Strawson and "Many Minds"

- If one does think of the mind as a separate thing from the body, an "entity" in its own right, then this raises the question of how such entities are to be *individuated*.
- How can I know my brain isn't linked to lots of different minds thinking in unison?
  - Possible answer: I can't be certain, but it's an extravagant and arbitrary hypothesis.
  - However Strawson would probably see even the possibility as a *reductio ad absurdum*.

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The Hard Problem

- Physicalism can comfortably accommodate:
  - Non-physical explanation (e.g. in terms of purposes, as with a chess computer);
  - A notion of "mind" analogous to software.
- But the "hard problem" (Chalmers) remains:
  - Why is all this accompanied by *phenomenal consciousness* (i.e. conscious experience)?
- Can this justify substance dualism after all?
  - Or should we rather admit that we simply don't (yet) understand it? Maybe we never will!

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

General Philosophy

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Lecture 5:
Knowledge and Scepticism

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From Scepticism to Knowledge

- Sceptical arguments, such as those of Descartes, suggest that we know very little. But we still want to distinguish between things that we consider we have a right to believe (e.g. on the basis of experience or strong testimony), and other less secure beliefs (e.g. "superstitions").
- If the sceptical arguments can't be answered, then it's tempting to attack the problem by (re-?) defining "knowledge".

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What is Knowledge?

- "What is X?" questions:
  - X might be "truth", "perception", "reason", "the mind", "personal identity", "freedom", etc.
  - Seen as important in Philosophy since Plato.
- But they are puzzling. Are we asking:
  - "When do we apply the word 'X'?" *or*
  - "What is a *genuine* case of X?"
- The former seems merely linguistic; the latter – if different – can appear senseless.

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What is Geography?

- "Geography" as a discipline:
  - Initially, perhaps, described the study of places in terms of location, physical characteristics, mineral resources, natural flora and fauna etc.
  - Then extended to cover land-use, farming, and other economic factors, even culture …
  - Suppose one were now to ask "But is culture *really* part of the discipline of geography?"
  - Well, if "geography" as actually used does cover the study of culture, the answer is "Yes!"

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The Concept of Knowledge

- Core *normative* concept, *versus* particular judgements:
  - The concept of "knowledge" plays a central role in distinguishing *reliable* beliefs from others.
  - This makes it *normative*: calling something "knowledge" does more than just categorising it as something we standardly *call* knowledge.
  - Hence it does seem to be possible to ask "Everyone *calls* this knowledge, but is it *really*?"
  - Compare the response to Strawson on induction: we *call* it reasonable, but is it *really* good evidence?

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Intuitions, Puzzle Cases, and Conceptual Analysis

- Conceptual analysis can involve:
  - Appeal to linguistic "intuitions" (i.e. judgements that we are naturally inclined to make).
  - Puzzle cases ("intuition pumps") that can put pressure on those intuitions.
  - Argument, in which we draw out implications of these plausible judgements and principles.
  - Systematisation, in which we try to clarify the concept coherently in the light of all this.

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

Three Kinds of Knowledge

- Acquaintance
  - "I know Oxford", "Do you know John Smith?".
- Knowing How
  - "I know how to drive", "Do you know how to open this?"
- *Knowing That*, or *Propositional Knowledge*
  - "I know *that* this building is the Exam Schools", "Do you know *that* it will rain?"
  - Where *P* is the proposition concerned, this is often referred to as "Knowledge that *P*".

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The Traditional Analysis of Knowledge that *P*

- A subject (i.e. a person) *S* knows that *P* if, and only if:
  - *P* is true
  - *S* believes that *P*
  - *S* is justified in believing that *P*
- A.J. Ayer gives the last two conditions as:
  - *S* is sure that *P* is true
  - *S* has the right to be sure that *P* is true

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P is true

- If *S* knows that *P*, does it follow that *P* must be *true*? Distinguish two claims:
  - *S* knows that $P \rightarrow P$ is necessarily true

    false: I know that I exist, but it doesn't follow that I exist necessarily.
  - Necessarily (*S* knows that $P \rightarrow P$ is true)

    convincing: We wouldn't allow *S*'s belief that *P* to be counted as a case of *knowledge* unless the belief is, in fact, *true*. So it is a necessary truth that anything known is true.

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Complications?

- Knowing Falsehoods?
  - "I know that France is hexagonal"

    In a sense this can be considered true, because France is *roughly* hexagonal, but in that same sense, it is also true that France is hexagonal.
- An Abomination
  - *Never* confuse "*P* is true" with "*P* is *believed* to be true". *Don't* say "*P* is true for me, but *P* is false for him" when what you mean is simply "I believe *P*, but he does not". It was never true than the Sun orbits the Earth, even when everyone thought so!

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S believes that *P*

- If *S* knows that *P*, does it follow that *S* believes that *P*? Not so clear:
  - Reliable guessing

    Suppose that I am not aware of knowing anything about some topic, but my "guesses" in a quiz are always accurate. I might be reported as *knowing P*, even though I don't believe *P*.
  - Blindsight

    Someone with blindsight has no conscious visual awareness, but can "guess" fairly reliably when asked to point towards objects.

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Knowing that One Knows

- Suppose that knowledge must always be "conscious". Then if I know that *P*, will it follow that I must know that *I know that P?*
  - The principle is tempting, but we can iterate …
    - I know that *P*
    - I know that *I know that P*
    - I know that *I know that I know that P*
    - I know that *I know that I know that I know that P* …
  - It is clearly impossible to have conscious belief in all of this infinite sequence.

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S is justified in believing that *P*

- Perhaps the central role of the concept of knowledge is to distinguish between beliefs that are "secure" and those that aren't.
- So what makes the difference between:
  - *believing* that *P* (where *P* happens to be true)
  - *knowing* that *P?*
- "Surely", if a belief that *P* is to count as a case of *knowledge*, it must be a *justified* belief: one must have *the right* to believe it.

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The Regress of Justification

- Suppose that I believe that *P*, and this belief is to be justified. Its justification will typically involve other beliefs. But then if *P* is to be justified, these other beliefs must be justified too, and so on … ?
- How to prevent an infinite regress? We could take the whole web of interlocking beliefs as mutually justifying in some way *(coherentism),* or else some beliefs must be justified in a way that does not depend on any other belief. Descartes was a *foundationalist*, taking some beliefs to be totally secure. A more modern approach is *externalism*.

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Internalism and Externalism

- An *internalist* account of justification requires all relevant factors to be *cognitively accessible* to *S*. We'll see that this faces difficulties …
- An *externalist* account (e.g. Armstrong, Goldman) allows that some factors relevant to judging *S*'s justification (for belief that *P*) can be *inaccessible* to *S*; or *external* to *S's* cognitive perspective.
- So justification could be a matter of a *reliable* causal link between facts and beliefs. I might know that *P* (because my belief reliably depends on *P*'s truth) without knowing <u>how</u> I know.

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Gettier Cases

- Suppose that:
  - *S* is justified in believing that *P.*
  - *P* clearly implies *Q*.

  Does it follow that *S*, after inferring *Q* from *P*, is justified in believing that *Q*?
- On internalist interpretations of "justified", this does seem to follow. But it leads to so-called "Gettier counterexamples" to the traditional analysis of knowledge.

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A Gettier-style Counterexample

"There's an oasis over there" *Mirage* *Real Oasis (out of sight)*

- *S*'s belief is true, and apparently justified, since he infers it from the (apparently justified) belief that he can see an oasis. But we would not say he *knew* that there's an oasis there.

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"No Dependence on False Beliefs"

- Should we add a fourth condition? For example, *S* knows that *P* if, and only if:
  - *P* is true
  - *S* believes that *P*
  - *S* is justified in believing that *P* …
  - … in a way that doesn't depend on any falsehood
- But this seems too strong. If you tell me "there were exactly 78 people there", but you slightly miscounted (in fact there were 77), can't I *know* that there were more than 40 people there, even though I've inferred this from a falsehood?

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The Lottery Paradox

- Another approach would be to understand justification as involving *very high probability* of truth (given the evidence available to *S*).
- But then consider a billion-ticket lottery:
  - I believe that ticket 000000000 won't win
  - I believe that ticket 000000001 won't win
  - …
  - I believe that ticket 999999999 won't win
- Each of these is extremely probable, but we're reluctant to call any of them "knowledge". So it seems that no probability threshold will do.

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Non-Accidental Truth

- To deal with the lottery paradox, it's plausible to count a belief as *knowledge* only if it's not an *accident* – not a "mere" matter of chance (of whatever numerical degree) – that it's true.
- But how do we pin this down?
  - Is it mere "chance" that my corroding speedometer is still sufficiently reliable to provide an accurate reading (when perhaps in a month's time it won't be)?
  - Suppose I very occasionally hallucinate that *P*, is it "chance" that my current perceptual belief that *P* is not an hallucination?

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Contextualism

- Yet another problem, especially pressing for an "internalist" account of knowledge, is that sometimes our criteria can vary.
  - "I know that the train leaves at 17:36" (because I always take that train).
  - "But do you really *know* that it does? It really is essential that I make that appointment."
  - "OK, I'll check on the Web to make sure. Then I'll know."
- This suggests that the "hurdle" for what counts as adequate justification can vary.

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The Role(s) of the Concept of Knowledge

- Consider the contrast between:

  "Does she know that her husband is cheating on her?"

  which could just mean "Does she believe that he's cheating on her, as we all do?"

  "Do you know that her husband is cheating on her?"

  which is more likely to mean "Is it genuinely the case?", rather than an epistemological enquiry.

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Is "Knowledge" a Genuine Category?

- It is very unusual, in ordinary life, to ask "Does *S* know that *P*" in a situation where:
  - We are totally confident that *S* believes that *P; and*
  - We are totally confident that *P* is true.
- This might suggest that it's a mistake to search for some single consistent account of what "knowledge" is, which can deal with all the contexts in which it is applied.
- But we can still ask whether *P* is true …

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Back to G.E. Moore's Hands

- If we agree with Moore, then we may see externalism about knowledge and justification as a way of reconciling his claim that we know this is a hand, with the sceptical arguments that seem to show that we can't know that we know.
- An externalist can say to the sceptic:

  "I can't prove to you that I know this is a hand, or that my belief is justified, but nevertheless I claim that I do know it, and it is justified."

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

Externalism and Scepticism

- Suppose we accept an externalist account of justification. So *if*, say, my perceptual beliefs are, *in fact*, caused by a reliable causal process, *then* I do in fact know that this table is in front of me.
- But of course the sceptic can still ask: "How do I *know* – or if you prefer, *what right do I have to be at all confident* – that my beliefs are in fact so caused?" Externalism does not exclude sceptical doubt "from the inside".

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Putnam's Semantic Externalism

- The sceptic claims "I might be a brain in a vat (BIV), so this hand might be just part of the image created artificially."
- But what do I mean by "hand"? According to Putnam, meanings aren't purely mental.
- If I am a BIV, then my word "hand" actually means a "hand-in-the-image" …
- … in which case this is genuinely a "hand", because it is a hand-in-the-image.

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Sceptical Responses (1)

- Is the meaning of "hand" just determined by what we're actually referring to when we think we're pointing to a real hand?
- Or do we have some further idea of the kind of thing that a hand really is?
- Can we thus make sense of the possibility of a "God's eye view" (unavailable to us), from which it would be clear that it is all a clever simulation, rather than involving a real entity something like what we take a hand to be?

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(2) Post-Linguistic Envatting

- Suppose that I am "envatted" after I have become linguistically competent.
- So then my word "hand" has already established its "outside vat" meaning.
- It seems to follow that when I later say "this is a hand" from within the vat, I can manage to mean a real hand rather than a mere "hand-in-the-image". If so, I can raise the question as to whether this really is a hand.

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Back to Induction

- With vertical scepticism (evil demon, BIV, *The Matrix* etc.), it's tempting to ask in a semantic externalist spirit: "Why should I care if it's all an illusion? I'm quite happy to continue with 'life as I experience it' either way."
- But Hume's "problem of induction", as a form of horizontal scepticism, evades this response: whether the world I experience is real or not, I still have the problem of inferring from past to future, from "observed" to "not yet observed".

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The Ethics of Belief

- Hume avoids indiscriminate scepticism by rejecting Descartes' "ethics of belief" – the view that we should withhold assent to anything that's not known with total certainty.
- Hume sees belief as typically involuntary, so withholding assent isn't even an option.
- Note that epistemological externalism also involves a similar rejection.
- We seem to be forced to accept this, if we are to hold out against the sceptic.

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

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Lecture 6: Perception and the Primary/Secondary Quality distinction

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The Mechanisms of Perception

- The "mechanical philosophy" of Descartes and others had to explain perception in terms of particles (or waves) affected by the objects and in turn impacting on our sense organs.
- Most discussion focused on *sight* and *touch*, the two senses that seem to come closest to presenting external objects as a whole.
- Locke's account was particularly influential, emphasising the primary/secondary distinction which had been implicit in Descartes.

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What are Objects Like?

- Mechanical explanations of perception imply that our impressions of objects are conveyed by mechanisms whose stages (e.g. impact of particles on our sense organs) bear no resemblance to the objects themselves.
- The mechanical paradigm also suggests that objects' fundamental properties will be those involved in mechanical interaction – i.e. geometrical and dynamic properties.

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Locke and Corpuscularianism

- Locke takes Boyle's "corpuscularian hypothesis" (IV iii 16) as plausible:
  - Properties of substances arise from their particular micro-structure: composed of "corpuscles" of "universal matter" (Boyle) or "pure substance in general" (Locke).
  - Underlying substance has *primary qualities*: shape, size, movement etc., texture, and "impenetrability" (Boyle) or "solidity" (Locke).
  - *Secondary qualities* (e.g. colour, smell, taste) are *powers* to cause ideas in us.

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Pains, Colours, and Shapes

- Suppose a circular hotplate on an oven is glowing red hot. I bring my hand close to it and feel warmth, then pain …
  - The sensations of felt warmth and pain are clearly "in the mind".
  - The circular shape of the hotplate is, we are inclined to say, "really in the object".
  - So is the red colour of the hotplate "in the mind" or "in the object"?

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A Problematic Text

- Locke's *Essay,* II viii 10:

  "Such *Qualities*, which in truth are nothing in the Objects themselves, but Powers to produce various Sensations in us by their *primary Qualities*, *i.e.* by the Bulk, Figure, Texture, and Motion of their insensible parts, as Colours, Sounds, Tasts, *etc.* These I call *secondary Qualities*.
- The comma before "but" is unfortunate. Locke means "nothing … but powers".

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In Objects, or Just In the Mind?

- Locke sees *both* PQs and SQs as genuine properties of objects, but the SQs are nothing but *powers due to their PQs*.
- Berkeley read Locke as saying that SQs are only "in the mind" and *not* really properties of objects.
- But Locke is clear that our simple perceptions of objects' colour etc. are "adequate": they *faithfully* represent their "archetypes" (II xxxi 1, 12):

  "*Simple* Ideas … are … certainly *adequate*. Because being intended to express nothing but the power in Things to produce in the Mind such a Sensation …"

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Why Resemblance?

- Hence Locke's emphasis on *resemblance*, rather than *real existence in objects*, as the key distinction between PQs and SQs:

  "the *Ideas of primary Qualities* of Bodies, *are Resemblances* of them, and their Patterns do really exist in the Bodies themselves; but the *Ideas, produced* in us *by* these *Secondary Qualities, have no resemblance* of them at all. There is nothing like our *Ideas*, existing in the Bodies themselves." (*Essay* II viii 15)

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Can an Idea Resemble an Object?

- Berkeley (*Principles* I 8) is emphatic that:

  "an idea can be like nothing but an idea; a colour or figure can be like nothing but another colour or figure."
- His attack on Locke's resemblance thesis seems to be based on the principle that ideas are *intrinsically* "perceivable".
- This is very plausible for SQs – nothing can be like a *sensed* smell, or colour, unless it is *mental* (as with a *felt* pain).

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Structural Resemblance?

- But ideas of PQs seem to lack this intimate connexion with mentality – they are more *abstract* and *structural*, as illustrated by their use in geometrical mechanics.
- We can use these "mathematical" properties to calculate predictions about objects' behaviour, and find that these "work".
- So it's plausible that ideas of PQs *can* resemble non-mental reality in a *structural* way (cf. Lowe on Locke, pp. 57, 63-4).

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Solidity

- However *solidity* seems to be an odd man out – our idea of solidity seems clearly to be the idea of a *power* (or rather, perhaps, the unknown *ground* of a power), and without any resemblance to a property of objects.
- Solidity is a power – or a *disposition* – to exclude other bodies. But what *is* a body?
- Body is distinguished from empty space by its solidity, so the whole thing is circular!

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Hume's Criticism (*Treatise* I iv 4)

"Two non-entities cannot exclude each other from their places … Now I ask, what idea do we form of these bodies or objects, to which we suppose solidity to belong? To say, that we conceive them merely as solid, is to run on *in infinitum*. … Extension must necessarily be consider'd either as colour'd, which is a false idea [because it's a SQ, supposed not to be "in" objects]; or as solid, which brings us back to the first question. … [Hence] after the exclusion of colours (etc.) from the rank of external existences, there remains nothing, which can afford us a just and consistent idea of body."

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

Empiricism and Understanding

- The attack on resemblance thus leads naturally to an attack based on our lack of understanding of the qualities concerned.
- If all our ideas are derived from experience (as Locke had insisted), then our ideas of PQs (e.g. shape) will naturally be infused with those of the SQs by which we perceive them (e.g. a colour that fills the space).
- And if these SQs cannot be understood as existing outside a mind …

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The Attack on Abstraction

- So Berkeley and Hume attack Locke on the grounds that we can't form a coherent idea of matter without using ideas of SQs.
- They see Locke as illegitimately trying to "abstract" a purely PQ idea of body away from our actual idea which is inextricably bound up with perceptual notions.
- Hence their focus on abstraction (see the Introduction to Berkeley's *Principles*).

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The Case for Idealism

- Berkeley concludes from this argument that bodies independent of mind are literally inconceivable.
- If this works, it seems to show that the only way we can make sense of the world is as fundamentally consisting of *mental* entities (i.e. "spirits" and "ideas".

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"Something I Know Not What"

- To defend realism we should accept that our idea of body is "inadequate" – we can't conceive of what it is that fills space except in terms of "what it does" (cf. *Essay* II xxiii 2).
- More modern concepts such as *mass* and *electric charge* make this clearer: we are under no illusion that the basic properties employed in our scientific theories have to be directly perceivable, or understandable in non-dispositional terms.

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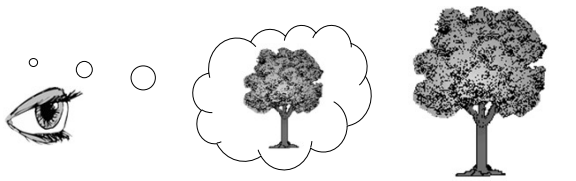
Locke's Indirect Realism



Idea in the mind (directly perceived) *Material object (cause of the idea)*

- The "Veil of perception" problem: how can we know whether there *is* a real material object?

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An Unacceptable Interpretation

- Indirect realism is sometimes parodied as the view that in order to perceive a tree, I must perceive an image-of-a-tree (as though some sort of "homunculus" is sitting in my head viewing a little projector screen).
- However this clearly doesn't *explain* perception, because it presupposes that the image-of-a-tree is itself perceived. If it can be "directly" perceived, why can't the tree?

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

Sense Data

- Twentieth-century philosophers such as Ayer prefer the term "sense-data" to Locke's "idea", but this rather lends itself to the unacceptable interpretation.
- It's better to say that awareness of a "sense-datum" *counts as* perception of an external object if it was caused appropriately by such an object.
- But how can I know that it was so caused? Again we face the "veil of perception".

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How To Prove the Causal Link?

"It is a question of fact, whether the perceptions of the senses be produced by external objects, resembling them: How shall this question be determined? By experience surely … But here experience is, and must be entirely silent. The mind has never any thing present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects. The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning."

(Hume, *Enquiry* 12.12)

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Phenomenalism

- Phenomenalism is the view that physical objects are *logical constructions* out of sense-data. So statements about such objects are interpreted as stating *what would be perceived* in certain circumstances.
  - This aims to evade the Berkeleian argument that one cannot make sense of physical objects in abstraction from perceptions;
  - It also aims to answer the Humean argument of the veil of perception.

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Direct Realism

- Rather than resort to phenomenalism, a more popular recent view (since J. L. Austin and P. F. Strawson) has been to insist that we perceive objects *directly*.
  - This seems right, in so far as it is intended to counter the Unacceptable Interpretation.
  - However it doesn't solve the sceptical problems, and can seem merely verbal: it is accepted that our perception is *mediated physically* (by light rays etc.); the point is just that *we do perceive objects (and see them <u>as objects</u>)* by that means.

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Is a Lockean View Defensible?

- A live Lockean option is to see an "idea" as an *intentional object – the object as it appears* (cf. Mackie on Locke, pp. 47-51).
- This is purely mental, not any sort of image on a screen (or a retina). Indeed it is not really any sort of *object* at all. Nor is it an attempt to *explain* perception. The point is to insist that our visual experience (though only *describable* in terms of apparent objects) is in principle distinguishable from the *existence* of those objects. In that sense it is still a "representative" theory of perception.

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Explanatory Realism

- Then Lockean "indirect" realism can be defended as *scientifically explanatory* (in line with its original motivation).
  - How things appear to us is explicable in terms of mechanisms involving external objects, physical intermediaries etc.
  - These explanations appeal to objects' "real" qualities (which need not *resemble* our ideas) …
  - … and explain illusions, <u>*both*</u> of SQs and PQs (to answer Berkeley's argument from illusion).

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General Philosophy

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Lecture 7: Free Will

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The Problem of Free Will

- We think of people as *morally responsible* for what they do "freely".
  - But we don't blame them for what they are *forced* to do. Then we say they're not *free*, and *have no choice* in the matter.
- Suppose that what I do is *caused*, or *causally determined*.
  - So it was causally *necessary* that I did what I did. How, then, can I properly be blamed?

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Determinism

- Determinism is the thesis that all events are "determined" by prior causes. So for any event *E*, given the causal laws that govern the universe, and the prior state of the world, *E* was inevitable.
  - "[It is agreed that] matter, in all its operations, is actuated by a necessary force, and that every natural effect is so precisely determined by the energy of its cause, that no other effect, in such particular circumstances, could possibly have resulted from it. …" (Hume, *Enquiry*, 8.4).
  - Hume thought this also true of human actions.

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Taxonomy of Positions

- Is the thesis that we have genuine free will compatible with determinism?
  - **NO**: Then at most one of them can be true …
    - We have free will; determinism is false = Libertarianism
    - We do not have free will; determinism is true = Hard determinism
  - **YES**: They are compatible = Compatibilism
    - We have free will; and determinism is true = Soft determinism

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The Consequence Argument

- If determinism is true, then all human actions are causally determined consequences of the laws of nature and prior conditions.
- Hence I cannot do otherwise than I actually do, except by falsifying the laws of nature or changing past conditions.
- But clearly I can't do either of these.
- If I cannot do otherwise than I actually do, then I do not have free will.
- So if determinism is true, we lack free will.

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"I Could (Not) Do Otherwise"

- The traditional way of opposing the consequence argument is to interpret "I could do otherwise" differently. Instead of the incompatibilist's reading:
  - "It is causally possible, in that exact situation, for me to do otherwise",

  the compatibilist will prefer something like:
  - "It would be possible for me to do otherwise in a similar (but not identical) situation in which I chose to do so". So I can do as I choose.

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General Philosophy 1 & 2: Historical Background

Frankfurt Cases

- Harry Frankfurt has argued that freedom doesn't really require the possibility of doing otherwise (in either sense).
- Suppose that I choose to go through door *A* rather than door *B*, and accordingly do so.
  - This is a free action, even if it happens that (unbeknown to me) door *B* is actually locked, so I would have had to go through door *A* anyway.
- This illustrates that what makes an action inevitable doesn't always bring it about.

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Choice and "Could Do Otherwise"

- Freedom seems very closely connected with the concept of choice, and this may lie behind the "could do otherwise" intuition.
  - In the Frankfurt cases, I do make a choice, though in a sense I don't have a choice.
- But the notion of choice is quite slippery:
  - Suppose someone holds a gun to my head and asks for my mobile phone: do I have a choice?
  - Suppose a clever neuropsychologist can predict that I'm going to hit you: do I have a choice?

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"I had no choice"

- We must be very careful to distinguish:
  - What happened was in no way dependent on my decisions or actions.
  - My actions were physically forced upon me.
  - My actions were predetermined in some way by non-rational factors (e.g. drugs, brainwashing).
  - My actions were predetermined by my own desires and consequent reasoning.
  - It was blindingly obvious what I should do (so "I had no choice" is rather like "it was no contest").

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The Paradigm Case Argument

- We learn the meaning of the word "choice" from early childhood. To make a choice is, standardly, to be presented with a range of alternatives – say between ice cream, cake, and fruit – and then to select one according to our own preferences.
- This is a paradigm of what we mean by a choice. So it's abusing words to deny that it's a choice just because it's determined.
- Of course settling our use of words doesn't decide the important issues of determinism and moral responsibility, though it can remove confusions.

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Hobbes' Compatibilism

- Hobbes argues for compatibilism in a similar spirit, defining freedom in a very common-sense way that is entirely compatible with determinism:

  "LIBERTY, or FREEDOME, signifieth (properly) the absence of Opposition (by Opposition, I mean externall Impediments of motion;) … *A* FREE-MAN, *is he, that in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindred to doe what he has a will to.*"

  Leviathan ch. 21

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The Contrastive Argument

- "Free" implies a contrast between acts that are not free, and those that are free.
- However the libertarian is mistaken to see this as the contrast between acts that are *caused* and those that are *uncaused*.
- Instead, the relevant contrast is between those that are *coerced*, *compelled*, or *constrained*, and those that are "free" of such influences.

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Freedom and Responsibility

- The Contrastive Argument seems quite persuasive, because it aims to link free will with *moral responsibility*.
- It seems plausible that I can be absolved of responsibility for something if:
  - I didn't do it at all.
  - I was compelled to do it.
  - I was coerced into doing it.

in short, if I didn't do it freely

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Ayer and Hume

- Ayer, like Hobbes, uses the Contrastive Argument:

  "For it is not, I think, causality that freedom is to be contrasted with, but constraint"

  ("Freedom and Necessity", in Watson, p. 21)
- Hume is often thought to use the argument also, but in fact he does not.

  (His *Treatise* contrasts "liberty of indifference" with "liberty of spontaneity", and this has misled many commentators.)

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Hume's Notion of "Liberty"

- Hume's definition is in fact significantly different from those of Hobbes and Ayer:

  "By liberty, then, we can only mean *a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will*; that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may. Now this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to every one, who is not a prisoner and in chains." (*E* 8.23)

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Three Concepts of Freedom

- 1. Contra-causal, libertarian free will (opposed to determinism).
- 2. Intentional agency; that in virtue of which a person is an agent in respect of what he or she does.
- 3. The absence of unwelcome restrictions affecting choice of action (e.g. coercion, compulsion, or an influence that is resented by the agent).

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"Give Me the Money, Or Else!"

- If I work in a bank, and someone takes my family hostage and threatens to murder them unless I open the safe, I am acting under coercion but still acting from choice.
  - I choose to open the safe given this situation.
- So I am morally responsible for what I do, but what I do is the right thing (in that situation). I do not need to plead diminished responsibility to avoid blame.

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Four Ways to Leave a Lecture

- Contrast four possible situations:
  - Someone forcibly binds me, and carries me out of the lecture theatre (I am like Hume's "prisoner and in chains").
  - Someone threatens to shoot me unless I abandon the lecture, so I obey.
  - I have a blind panic at the thought of giving the lecture, and run out in confusion.
  - I realise my lecture is going really badly, so I pretend I'm ill and leave early.

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Clarifying the Options

- In the first case (bound and carried), my leaving the lecture is not even an action of mine; it is something that is done to me.
- In the second case, I leave of my own choice, and this is the *right* thing to do.
- In the third case, I have done something *wrong* (abandoning the lecture), but there are mitigating circumstances.
- In the fourth case, I am fully responsible for leaving, and significantly at fault.

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Hume's Distinctive Contribution

- If "liberty" is a matter of our actions' following our will, then we do have such liberty, even if our will itself is causally determined.
- So Hume's definition of "liberty" makes it *compatible* with determinism.
- Hume's most distinctive contribution is to provide a novel argument for the determinism of human actions, appealing to the understanding of "necessity" reached in *Enquiry* Section VII.

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Applying the "Definitions of Cause"

- "Our idea … of necessity and causation arises entirely from the uniformity, observable in the operations of nature … Beyond the constant *conjunction* of similar objects, and the consequent *inference* from one to the other, we have no notion of any necessity, or connexion." (*E* 8.5)
- "If these circumstances form, in reality, the whole of that necessity, which we conceive in matter, and if these circumstances be also universally acknowledged to take place in the operations of the mind, the dispute is at an end." (*E* 8.22)

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Satisfying the Two Definitions

- To prove his case, Hume must show that human actions satisfy the two "definitions of cause". So most of Section VIII Part i is devoted to arguing:
  - that human actions manifest such uniformity;
  - that they are generally recognised as doing so;
  - that people standardly draw inductive inferences accordingly, just as they do about physical things.
- Hence "all mankind … have … acknowledged the doctrine of necessity, in their whole practice and reasoning", even while "profess[ing] the contrary opinion" (*E* 8.21).

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Why Is Determinism Denied?

- People deny the determinism of human actions in part because they have
  "a strong propensity to believe, that they penetrate farther into the powers of nature, and perceive something like a necessary connexion between the cause and the effect" *(E* 8.21*)*.
- On Hume's account such penetration is just a seductive illusion. And in learning that the necessity of *physical* operations amounts to no more than constant conjunction and consequent inference, we come to see that *human* actions too are subject to the same necessity.

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Morality requires Determinism?

- Hume then goes on to argue (*E* 8.28-30) that viewing human behaviour as causally determined, so far from being *contrary* to morality, is actually *essential* to it, since blame and punishment are useful and appropriate only where actions are caused by the agent's durable character and disposition.
- Requiring complete determinism may be going too far, but the argument has a point: it's hard to see how "free will" can be morally relevant if it simply involves an element of *randomness*.

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Is Free Will Incoherent?

- On either account, it can seem hard to spell out a coherent notion of free will:
  - The challenge to the determinist is to explain how I can be genuinely responsible for what I do, if every detail of my behaviour was "pre-ordained" before I was born.
  - The challenge to the libertarian is to make sense of free will in a way that is *neither* determined *nor* merely random. (Some have tried to respond in terms of "agent causation", though the notion is very obscure.)

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Morality as Founded on Sentiment

- Hume's way of squaring determinism with morality is based on his *sentimentalism*:

  A man, who is robbed of a considerable sum; does he find his vexation for the loss any wise diminished by these sublime reflections? Why then should his moral resentment against the crime be supposed incompatible with them? (*E* 8.35)

- Morality is founded on *emotions* that naturally arise within us in certain circumstances, so we shouldn't expect these emotions to disappear just because we reflect on the inexorable chain of causation which led to the criminal's action.

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Freedom and Autonomy

- Though Hume is able to accommodate morality within his approach, it may seem too crude, in treating freedom as simply a matter of "power to act as we will".
- There seems to be a significant difference between those who are *autonomous* – able to control their will to some extent – and those (such as drug addicts or obsessives) who are, in a sense, "slaves to their will".

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Higher-Order Desires

- Harry Frankfurt distinguishes between "first-order" desires (e.g. to smoke a cigarette) and "second-order" desires (e.g. to quit smoking, and to cease to desire them).
- If one's second-order desires are unable to overcome first-order cravings, then one is not fully autonomous and thus less "free".
- Thus a determinist *can* consistently distinguish various degrees of freedom.

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Kane on Indeterminism

- Robert Kane:

  http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctytho/dfwVariousKane.html

  addresses these issues from an indeterminist perspective. He points out that an element of randomness is compatible with responsibility.
  - e.g. suppose that I try to shoot someone, but my aim is unsteady. If I succeed, then I am clearly responsible, despite the element of randomness.
  - Likewise, if it is chancy which intentions within my mind will dominate on some occasion, this is quite compatible with responsibility for whichever "wins".

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Why Does Indeterminism Matter?

- Kane argues that through such indeterminist choices over the course of our lives, we forge our own character, and this makes us responsible even for those actions that are fully determined by our formed character.
- The difficulty for Kane is in explaining why indeterminism – an element of genuine *randomness* – makes a difference here:
  - What's so valuable about randomness?
  - If *unpredictability* is what matters, wouldn't deterministic "chaos" do just as well?

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General Philosophy

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Lecture 8: Personal Identity

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Personal Identity

- Distinguish two questions:
  - What is it to be a person?
    - This invites a discussion of mind and body etc.
  - What is it for *a* and *b* to be *the same* person?
    - This raises the issue of *personal identity*
- Another important distinction:
  - Sameness = qualitative similarity
  - Sameness = numerical identity
    - Often best to avoid the words "same" and "identity". Instead say "similar" or "one and the same".

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Leibniz's Law Again

- If *a* and *b* are the same thing, then any property of *a* must also be a property of *b*:

  $Fa, a=b \models Fb$
- Let *a* = Peter Millican as a baby.
  b = Peter Millican today.
  F = "weighs less than a stone".
  - We have *Fa*, ¬*Fb*, hence apparently ¬(*a*=*b*) ?!
  - This can be dealt with by specifying *F* more precisely: "weighs less than a stone *in 1958"* or "weighs less than a stone *in 2009"*.

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Cross-Temporal Identity

- We thus avoid the fallacy – most famously made in Hume's *Treatise* – of supposing that strict *identity* ("one and the sameness") over time implies exact *similarity* over time.
- But this still leaves the question of *what constitutes personal identity over time*: is it physical constitution, or immaterial substance, or organic life, or psychological continuity?
- This is not the same as asking *how we judge personal identity in practice* (e.g. by the body).

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Locke on the Identity of Matter

- The appropriate *criterion of identity* over time depends on the kind of thing it is:
  - A single particle of matter retains its identity as long as it continues in existence. So *a* and *b* are *the same* particle of matter if there is a continuous history connecting them.
  - The identity of a body of matter depends on the identity of the particles that constitute it. It's the same body *iff* it's the same collection of particles, even if differently arranged. (However this too seems to require a *continuous history*.)

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Sorites Arguments

- A sorites argument is one that depends on *iteration* of a small variation, for example:

  A man with just 1 hair is bald.

  If a man with just *n* hairs is bald, then a man with just *n+1* hairs is bald too.

  ∴ A man with 1,000,000 (etc.) hairs is bald.
- If we try to relax Locke's strict criterion of bodily identity, we run into this problem:
  - Remove 1 atom from a body, and it's still the same body …

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Locke on the Identity of Organisms

- A plant or animal is not a mere collection of matter, but "*an Organization of Parts in one coherent Body, partaking of one Common Life"* (*Essay* II xxvii 4).
- Hence the identity of an organism over time is constituted by a continuous history of such an organised life.
- Likewise the identity of a man or woman: a human is a living organism.

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Locke on Personal Identity

- A person is "a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider it self … the same thinking thing in different times … which it does only by that consciousness, which is inseparable from thinking … and … essential to it" (9).
- Hence personal identity over time is a matter of *continuity of consciousness* (which depends on memory).

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Personal Identity as "Forensic"

- Personal identity concerns morality, desert, reward and punishment etc. Hence Locke wants to avoid any dependence on identity of immaterial substance (which may be turned over like bodily substance, for all we know).
- Williams' thought experiment:
  - Suppose your brain is to be switched with mine, after which various things will befall "us". Which future person are you more concerned about, my-body-your-brain, or your-body-my-brain?

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Reid's Problem Case

- Suppose that a young lieutenant can remember what he did as a child, and the later general can remember what the lieutenant did but not what the child did.
- It seems that according to Locke we have:

  $L = C$
  $G = L$
  $G \neq C$

  But identity is *transitive*, so this is inconsistent.

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The Ancestral Relation

- *x* is an ancestor of *y* if <u>either</u>:
  - *x* is a parent of *y*;
  - *x* is a parent of an ancestor of *y*.
- We can generalise this: "ancestor" is the "ancestral" relation of "parent".
- Reid's problem can be avoided if personal identity is based not on direct memory, but on its ancestral relation, "memory chains".
- However lots of other problems remain …

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Memory and Quasi-Memory

- One problem with basing personal identity on memory is that something only *counts as a genuine memory* if it concerns one's own experiences. Suppose I wake up apparently remembering your experiences: would this count as a memory? If not …
  - the criterion is circular: I have to know that it was really <u>me</u> to know that it's a real memory;
  - instead, we can talk of "quasi-memory", that is, *apparent* memory.

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Sleep, Coma, Forgetfulness

- Another problem is that our memory and consciousness do not seem to be continuous. We sleep, forget, and can even lapse into coma before recovering.
- All this suggests that some element of bodily (or at least brain) continuity is desirable, to "bridge over" the gaps in conscious awareness or memory. But might bodily continuity be sufficient?

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Human Animals

- Since we are animals, it is tempting to identify personal identity with the identity of the human organism.
- However this has significant implications:
  - If I was once a fetus (the same human organism as me), then it seems to follow that I was once not a person (which seems to require some significant mental life).
  - So being a person is an *accidental* property of mine, rather than an *essential* property.

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Relying on the Brain

- An amalgam of the two views is to identify the person with the developed functioning *brain* rather than the whole organism.
- This removes the problem of seeing a tiny embryo as a person.
- It also makes sense of the Williams case: if our brains are swapped between our bodies, then I'm personally concerned about the future of my-brain-your-body.

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Split Brains

- But things are not so simple. If the nerves between the cerebral hemispheres are surgically cut (a procedure called *commissurotomy)*, then a single brain can give rise to two conflicting behaviours – for example, two hands doing different things!
- Now suppose that a single brain were split and put into two bodies: we could have two new persons, both having brain *and* memory continuity with the original person.

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What We Should Care About

- Maybe if this happened, we'd give up the notion of strict personal identity. Maybe, as Parfit suggests, we should instead treat it as a matter of degree.
- If what matters is our concern about our future self (or selves), then this seems to reflect the way we would judge about a split brain case: we care about the future of *both* future invididuals.

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"Open Texture"

- Friedrich Waismann coined this term for concepts which become vague in radically novel situations: straightforward application depends on things being generally normal.
- For example, can a man "marry" a sex-changed woman (or a sex-changed man)?
- This suggests there may be *no right answer* to some puzzle cases: if they occurred, conceptual innovation would be required.

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