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The Theory of Direct Realism

- In the light of Theories of Perception -

1996.

Foreword:

Realism in medieval philosophy meant that universals have *real* existence, meaning that general ideas have an ontological status too, just as the things they were abstracted from. In modern philosophy, the term stands for a theory of knowledge according to which the world is full of independent objects and that it is these we perceive directly when we train our senses on them.

This view is opposed to a variety of views, grouped under the general term *positivism* [1], according to which we perceive something else: whether appearances, sense-data or some other intermediate entity that stands between us and the world. If this is true, then we have no direct perception of the independent objects, therefore we must remain skeptic about the reality of the external world. This view seems to be supported by the argument from illusion: Normally we see, feel, hear things as they are, but exceptionally our senses deceive us. We seem to see things that are not there, or things that appears otherwise than they are. The classical examples: that an oar seems to be broken when put into water, or things look smaller when we move away from them, etc. are known to everybody. Since there are more than one examples to the argument from illusion, it is right to ask: what then is it that we see in such cases?

I would like to give an account of how the theory of perception is formulated around this question, although I will not try to answer the question itself, since that would mean the re-formulation of all the former theories, and that is clearly beyond my reach.



I. Argument from Illusion:

Let's start with the proposed problem, the 'argument from illusion'. This argument is in fact not one, but two arguments merged into one. The *first* argument is that if some of our experiences are illusory then we ought not to trust any of them. This ignores the way in which we settle whether an *experience* is illusory. This ignorance comes from the difficult and highly criticized definition of what we call experience, which is the root of all misunderstanding. This approach to defining experience in this manner has such a deep root in the history of philosophy, that it seems sensible to retrace it's major characteristics.

Problematic definition of experience:

According to **Aristotle**, having an experience of something, is not simply a matter of perceiving things; judgment and memory are needed, and experience is 'with a view to action' [2]. For **Locke**, on the other hand, having an experience of something may simply be a matter of having *sensations*, for sensation is the 'great source of most of the ideas we have' [3]; and Locke's concern is with experience as the source of ideas (as opposed to ideas being innate), not with experience (as opposed to knowledge of theory) as a guide to action. Both of Aristotle's and Locke's approach follow **Plato's**, in imagining that our minds contain a block of wax which, when we perceive something, has an impression imprinted on it as a seal imprints something, an impression on wax [4]; but they used this image differently. Aristotle, like Plato, used it in his account of memory. Memory is the persistence of the 'sense-impression' [5]. To explain sense-perception itself he used his notions of *form* and *matter*: a sense is 'what has the power

of receiving into itself the sensible forms of things without the matter' [6].

Locke used the image not only in his account of memory, but also in what he said about sense-perception. This led him to postulate, within sense-perception an element, *sensation*, in respect of which he is active; and to distinguish between them in terms of whether or not the perceiver can properly be said to be right or wrong: he cannot be if he only senses, he must be if he judges. Locke's use, to explain perception itself, of the image of a seal imprinting an impression on wax, raises a question. How does the perceiver, given the sense-impression or sensation, arrive at a judgment? The answer is a development of the imprinting image. A seal may imprint words on wax in a foreign language. They have to be interpreted. Likewise, in perception, the perceiver 'interprets' the sensation. He interprets in the light of past experience, and judges accordingly. The act of interpretation takes place so quickly that he doesn't notice it, and mistakes what is actually judgment for sensation [7].

Unfortunately Locke's introduction of sensations, as elements of perception not only made the definition of experience even harder, but gave a new ground to a whole new series of questions like: where can the sensations be located, and what is their cause, etc. We will have to come back to the problem of definition and location of sensations, but for now let's try to get back to the main stream of thought.

It must be clear from this small survey, that the main difficulty is that sensation, judgment and experience is very hard to separate, when we have to apply these terms to perception. If we go back to our 'two pencils' example, it is hard to say what we exactly perceive. We have a sensation in our crossed fingers (it may be located elsewhere - see *Ch. III.*), which tells us that there are two pencils, but we have a second visual-sensation in our eyes which tells us the opposite. So if we want to know what we perceive, we *have to make a judgment to construct our experience*. This is, what is overlooked by the *first argument of illusion: It is only by trusting some experiences that we can identify others as illusory*. A pencil held between two crossed fingers feels like two pencils, yet we call *this* perception illusory. We only do this, because we trust our eyes better, than the feeling of there being two pencils between our crossed fingers. The problem from now is as follows: which experience should be regarded as real? Since it would be the most unnerving thing to think, that all of our experiences are illusory. Just because there are perceptions which are illusory, we mustn't conclude that all are.

Therefore the first argument, which said that we mustn't trust any of our experiences, is not necessarily true. If we believe that all of our experiences are illusory than we cannot come to the conclusion that there are illusory experiences. (Since we would lack the experience of real.) It is more likely that we must formulate the *second argument from illusion*, which would say that some of our experiences are illusory, and the real problem is in making the right judgment about which sensations to take as real.



II. Theories of Perception

The argument from illusion points out the main difficulty of all the theories of perception, including the realistic approach. If we want to formulate an elementary theory, supported by the second argument from illusion, we will arrive at what is called the **representative theory** of perception. Behind this theory lie three philosophical assumptions: a) only judgments can be true or false; b) a person, to be justified, must have some basis for judging as he does; c) the basis must ultimately be something other than an other judgment. Therefore there must be an element that is not a judgment (and so not true or false). This might correspond to the stimulation of the sense organs, but must be mental (such that the perceiver is conscious of it) and the basis for the judgment the perceiver makes. This element is called a *sensation* or idea, and is said to 'represent' the external object, by 'interpretation'. It provides the basis for the judgment, and suggests that there is an external object, with such-and-such qualities. Perception is accordingly defined as 'the interpretation of sensations to yield knowledge of the external world'. That the external world exists, is postulated in the act of interpreting, and so knowledge of it is 'mediated' or 'indirect', while the perceiver is 'immediately' or 'directly' acquainted with the sensation.

I have given the definition of realism in the foreword to this paper, as the theory of *direct* perception of independent objects of an external reality. This definition clearly contains one of the main realist theories of perception. If we want to formulate this simplest, and most accepted theory, which supports the realist view of the world, we will arrive at the theory of **direct realism**. This theory states, that we are directly aware of external objects. If we are to accept the validity of the second argument from illusion, then we must question the possibility of direct perception. This is quite evident: if we were to perceive the objects as they are (directly), we would need to have the same experiences every time we come into contact with the same object. Since the second argument from illusion seems to be true, we have to say that we have no direct perception of the object. Directly, we only perceive sensations, which seem to give a description of the object. Unfortunately sensations seem to be under the influence of the circumstances of perception.

Holders of the first theory object to direct realism that for it perception cannot be causal, and misperceiving is impossible (this stands against the argument from illusion). Direct realists object to the representative theory, that they do not experience any interpreting of sensations, and that something not true or false cannot be a basis for something that is. Representationalists hold that knowledge claims should rest on what cannot be false. The active intellect can be right or wrong in interpreting the sensation, but in sensation itself the mind is a passive recipient or what comes to it from the external world. However, this leaves open whether the external world exists at all. One might reply that the existence of material things is merely a hypothesis, or move on to *phenomenalism*, the view that material things are not anything over and above sensations.

One can avoid having to choose between representationalism and direct realism, by denying that only judgments can be true or false. In a visual illusion the look of a thing is non-veridical. In the well-known Müller-Lyer figure (see *Ch. IV.*), one line looks longer than the other, but is not. This is not a matter of judgment. They still look unequal to someone who, knowing it to be an illusion, judges them to be equal. This provides no foothold for generalized skepticism. One cannot be aware of how something looks without being aware of the thing which he looks at.

What is general in every theory of perception, is that it uses sensations as it's basis. Since both theories face the problem of judging what sensations are to be regarded as significant or real, we should try to give an exact definition of what can be understood under this term.



III. Sensations as Elements of Perception

Before we do this, let's try to define what we may call perception, after the former analysis. When we say perception, we not only mean the sensation of what we perceive, but the understanding of that sensation. This understanding is based on the judgment of whether what we sense is real or illusory. If these two predicates are valid, then perception is the cognitive apprehension of something. The problem is, as we have pointed out in the second argument from illusion, is that this *something* is always a sensation; and it is a question of judgment how we understand it. Hallucination, being merely the apparent perception of something (which is not there (there = real)), cannot be discarded as not-perception, although it doesn't have a real basis for it's appearing sensations. It seems that the problem surmounts to what we define as sensations.

The problem of defining sensations:

Descartes said that nature has told him, by his bodily sensations, that he was not present in his body merely as a pilot is present in a ship, but 'as it were mixed up' with his body, so that he and it formed a unity (*Sixth Meditation*). By his mind being 'mixed up with' his body he did not mean that his mind was in the parts of his body in which he had sensations. 'Pain in the hand is not felt by the mind inasmuch as it is in the hand, but as it is in the brain' [8]. That is, for a pain caused by the hand being squeezed to be felt in the hand a nervous impulse must reach the brain, with which the mind has connections via the pineal gland. The problem raised by Descartes is central: where should one locate sensations? For it is not clear at all. Hermann **Lotze's** theory of 'Local

Sign', tried to show that it is the mind, that locates bodily sensations, by understanding the local signs applied to them. Unfortunately this isn't necessarily true. As Oswald **Külpe** has pointed out, the experienced difference between a sensation in one's right hand and one in one's left can be simply one of the places in which it is felt, just as the experienced difference between sound heard as coming from one's left can be simply one of the direction from which the sound is heard as coming. Like the explanation of the locating of sound-sources, the explanation of the locating of bodily sensations can be purely physiological.

Whichever is the case, one can talk of having a sensation of something one is touching, such as the furriness and warmth of a cat. We may say that this involves having bodily sensations, in one's fingers, which give one's sensations their character. Normally one attends to the qualities of the object, but one can attend to the sensations in one's fingers: one infers that the cat is furry and warm when touches it. This seems more plausible in the case of the warmth than in the case of the furriness, since warmth is a recognized bodily sensation. There is a difference of category between feeling the warmth of something with one's finger, and one's finger feeling warm. One's fingers feeling warm is not a matter of feeling the warmth of one's fingers with something (or if it is, we are not talking about a bodily sensation.)

The use of words like 'warm', refer to both qualities of objects and to bodily sensations. This double use of all our adjectives have already been noticed by **Berkeley**, when he argued against calling things warm (*First Argument*). According to him, being sentient, we can feel warm. To be right in calling objects warm we should have to be justified in ascribing to objects something like what we feel when we feel warm. But objects are non-sentient; so there is no basis for the ascription of warmth to objects. If we accept this, then we should rather call sensations, something presented to the mind, by our senses. If this is the case then we arrive at Locke's theory of perception, where sensations are only elements in perception. These elements still need to be interpreted, but that is purely a question of judgment. A person cannot be said to be right or wrong in having a sensation, but can be said to be right or wrong in making a judgment.

Those who distinguish this way (like Locke or Descartes) sometimes accuse the 'vulgar' of mistaking a judgment for a sensation, particularly as regards the distance and three dimensionality of objects. Descartes says that the size, shape and distance of a staff 'clearly depend upon the understanding alone', but 'are vulgarly assigned to sense' because 'custom makes us reason and judge so quickly' that 'we fail to distinguish the difference between these two operations and simple sense perceptions.' [9]

This theory is certainly the source of the 'sense-datum' theory of perception propounded by **Russell** and **Moore** and others in the early part of the 20th century. Of course this clearly reflects the positivist doctrine which holds that we must confine ourselves to what is 'given' to us in sense-experience as sources of knowledge. Now in this positivistic account, what is 'given' in sense-perceptions is the sense-datum. This is just a reformulation of the Locke's mediator, the sensation. Since the positivistic approach is aware of the problem stated in the second argument from illusion, sense-datum is introduced along with the distinction between the mediated awareness of objects in the external world and immediate awareness of the sensation or sense-datum. The only novum in this theory, is whereas a sensation is by definition mental, a sense-datum might be independent from the mind. **Moore**, for example, sought to introduce it by a sort of ostensive definition, a 'picking out' of an element in one's experience of an object, an element that might continue to exist after the experience.



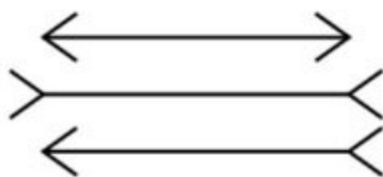
IV. Cognitive Appearance as Perception

It seems, that **Moore's** wishful thinking is some kind of formulation of the realist and positivist approach. What we call perception has to be more than mere presence of sensations; with the introduction of sense-datum, he tries to account for the cognitive apprehension, we defined in the beginning of the previous chapter. After having enumerated the problems around the term 'sensation', we have gained solid ground for saying, that perception consists of sensations, which are presented to the mind, and some kind of mental understanding, which is mainly the judging of sense-datum. This judgment, as we have shown, is about determining the nature of our sensation.

Having to decide when we may call a sensation real, and when can it be merely regarded as appearance or illusion, we have to give a definition of what is really 'given' to our senses as the external reality. To do this, we should look at a psychological approach to perception. The word 'appearance' is usually contrasted to 'reality', but in the following we will have to show, that the two meanings really refer to the same thing, and the ontological distinction between the two is just an interpretation of words. First of all we'll have to make a distinction between two uses of the word 'appearance':

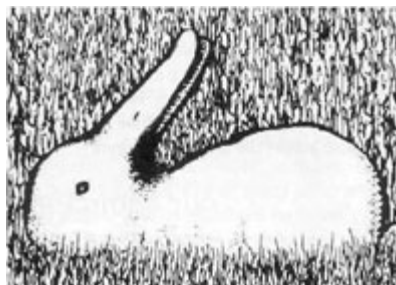
According to the *first use of the term 'appearance'*, the shape (form) something appears to be to a given point of view is determined entirely by the laws of perspective. Thus a round object, seen from a point of view at a certain angle to its surface, will present an elliptical appearance. **Leibniz** called this the 'optical' appearance. To determine what optical appearance an object presents to a point of view it is not good enough to ask someone to occupies the point of view. He is almost certain to err on the side of the real shape he believes the object to be. Only if he erects a transparent screen at right angles to his line of vision of the object, and traces the objects outline on it, will he get its optical appearance right. [10] In the case of an illusion, such as that given by the Müller-Lyer figure [Fig. 1.], lines which are the same length in the original will be the same length in the tracing (i.e. in the optical appearance). In an ambiguous figure, such as the one which can be seen as a duck looking in one direction or a rabbit looking in the other [Fig. 2.], the same ambiguity will appear in the tracing as in the original.

(a)



[1. kép]

(b)



[2. kép]

In a quite different sense of 'appears', the lines in the Müller-Lyer figure -will appear unequal in length, and the ambiguous figure will look to a perceiver either like a duck or like a rabbit. This double use of words seem to undermine every philosophical misunderstanding. The two senses of the use of 'appearance' can be traced in one of **Reid's** writings [11]. He remarks on an artist's need to acquire 'the habit of distinguishing the appearance of objects to the eye, from the judgments we form by sight, of their color, distance magnitude and figure'. If we look at the sea from a cliff-top the 'judgment we form by sight' may be of a sea that is uniformly blue. To create this impression in the picture the artist must use a dark shade of blue for the near sea, a light shade for the far sea, and intermediate shades in between. To know what shade to use must attend to the sea in a manner that must be learnt and may be described as attending to the optical appearance. However, Reid is not writing about the optical appearance when he says that the masters in painting 'know how to make objects appear to be the same color by making their picture really of different color'.

This is the *second use of the term appearance*. He is using the word 'appear' with the sense it has in the true proposition 'the person who draws the Müller-Lyer figure knows how to make lines of equal length appear to be unequal'. How things appear, in this sense, normally determines what people judge themselves to be looking at. We add 'normally' to provide for the exceptional cases in which a person has reason to think that things are not as they appear. This sense of 'appears' may therefore be called the *cognitive appearance* (pertaining to knowledge).

There are four related conceptual differences between cognitive and optical appearances: a) Cognitive appearances are subjective, whereas optical appearances are objective. The optical appearance of an object to a point of view is a function of the object's real figure, color, and spatial position, but of nothing else. There would still be

optical appearances of objects to points of view even if all sentient life ceased to exist. Cognitive appearance of objects appear to sentient beings that can recognize them. b) If something cognitive appears to somebody, he must know that it does; if optically, he need not. Psychological experiments have shown, that even if somebody is trying to attend to the optical appearance he may get it wrong. c) Something can cognitively appear to somebody only if he possesses the appropriate concept. For example: the duck-rabbit can look like a duck only to someone who knows what a duck looks like; not for optical appearances. d) Cognitive appearances are related to their objects by being true or false of them. For example, the lines in the Müller-Lyer figure look unequal in length, but this appearance is non-veridical; really they are equal. Optical appearances are not true or false of the objects of which they are appearances: no more than the size of one angel of a triangle is true (or false) of the other two angels, which determine it's size.

For an understanding of sense-perception as are means of knowing about the world it is the cognitive appearance that matters. This is wholly in accord with the current psychological approach according to which perception is really a hypothesis-making process.



V. Summary

If we accept cognitive appearance as the basis of our sense-perception, then we cannot say that external objects are given to our perception either directly or in their full meaning. Therefore direct realism shouldn't be more than a naive interpretation of what we perceive, that can only serve as a scientific method for a scientist in action.

[» [Read the extended version of this paper](#)]



Footnotes

[1] This generalization is given in Moritz Schlick's article: *Positivism and Realism*

[2] *Metaphysics*, Bk. 1, Ch. 1.

[3] *Essay*, II. i/3.

[4] *Theaetetus*, 191c.

[5] *Posterior Analytics*, 99b 36.

[6] *De Anima*, 424 a 18.

[7] *Essay*, II. ix/8-10.

[8] *Principles*, IV. cxvii.

[9] *Reply to Objections*, VI. 9.

[10] This example can be found in Atkinson et alii: *Psychology*, Ch. III.

[11] *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, VI. 3.

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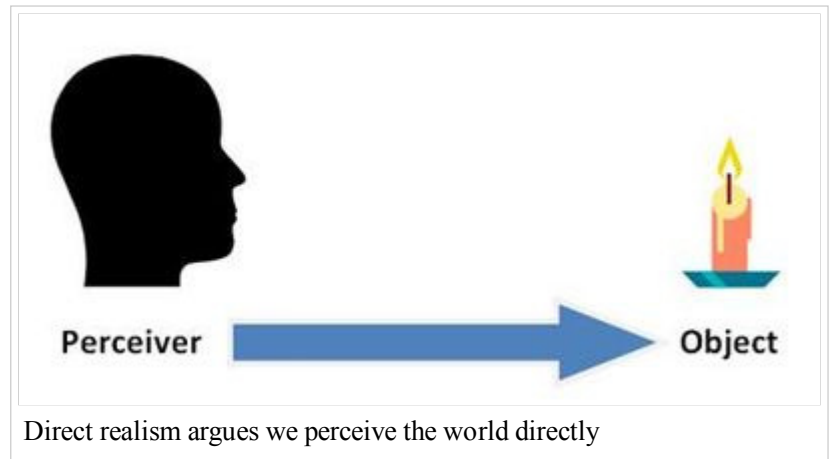
Direct and indirect realism

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The question of **direct** or "naïve" realism, as opposed to **indirect** or "representational" realism, arises in the philosophy of perception and of mind out of the debate over the nature of conscious experience;

[1][2] the epistemological question of whether the world we see around us is the real world itself or merely an internal perceptual copy of that world generated by neural processes in our brain. Naïve realism is known as *direct* realism when developed to counter *indirect* or representative realism,

also known as epistemological dualism,^[3] the philosophical position that our conscious experience is not of the real world itself but of an internal representation, a miniature virtual-reality replica of the world. Indirect realism is broadly equivalent to the accepted view of perception in natural science that states that we do not and can not perceive the external world as it really is but know only our ideas and interpretations of the way the world is^[*citation needed*]. Representationalism is one of the key assumptions of cognitivism in psychology. The representational realist would deny that 'first hand knowledge' is a coherent concept, since knowledge is always via some means. Our ideas of the world are interpretations of sense data derived from an external world that is real (unlike the standpoint of idealism). The alternative, that we have knowledge of the outside world that is unconstrained by our sense organs and does not require interpretation, would appear to be inconsistent with everyday observation.



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History

Aristotle was the first to provide a description of indirect realism. In *On the Soul* he describes how the eye must be affected by changes in an intervening medium rather than by objects themselves and speculates on how sense impressions can form our experience of seeing, reasoning that an endless regress would occur unless the sense itself were self aware. He concludes by proposing that the mind is the things it thinks. He calls the images in the mind "ideas".

Indirect realism has been popular in the history of philosophy and has been developed by many philosophers including Bertrand Russell, Baruch Spinoza, René Descartes, and John Locke, the 17th century philosopher who most prominently advocated this theory. The term he used was not "sense-datum" but "idea". Locke thought objects had two classes of qualities:

- Primary qualities are qualities which are 'explanatorily basic' - which is to say, they can be referred to as the explanation for other qualities or phenomena without requiring explanation themselves - and they are distinct in that our sensory experience of them resembles them in reality. (For example, one perceives an object as spherical precisely because of the way the atoms of the sphere are arranged.) Primary qualities cannot be removed by either thought or physical action, and include mass, movement, and, controversially, solidity (although later proponents of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities usually discount solidity).
- Secondary qualities are qualities which one's experience does not directly resemble; for example, when one sees an object as red, the sensation of seeing redness is not produced by some quality of redness in the object, but by the arrangement of atoms on the surface of the object which reflects and absorbs light in a particular way. Secondary qualities include colour, smell, and taste.

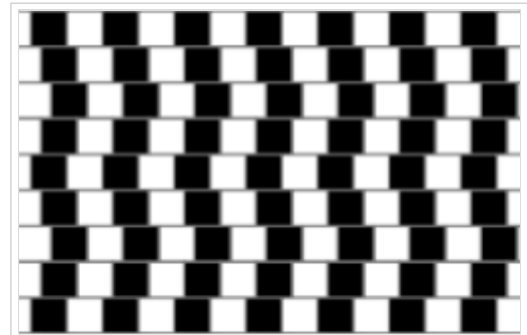
In contemporary philosophy, epistemological dualism has come under sustained attack by philosophers like Wittgenstein (the private language argument) and Wilfrid Sellars in his seminal essay "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind." Indirect realism is argued to be problematical because of Ryle's regress and the homunculus argument. However, recently reliance on the private language argument and the Homunculus Objection has itself come under attack. It can be argued that those who argue for 'inner presence', to use Antti Revonsuo's term,^[4] are not proposing a private 'referent', with the application of language to it being 'private' and thus unshareable, but a *private* use of *public* language. There is no doubt that each of us has a private understanding of public language, a fact that has been experimentally proven;^[5] George Steiner refers to our personal use of language as an 'idiolect', one particular to ourselves in its detail.^[6] The question has to be put how a collective use of language can go on when, not only do we have differing understandings of the words we use, but our sensory registrations differ.^[7]

The reason for continued confusion is that "both direct and indirect realism are frankly incredible, although each is incredible for different reasons".^[1] The direct realist view (Gibson, 1972) is incredible because it suggests that we can have experience of objects out in the world directly, beyond the sensory surface, as if bypassing the chain of sensory processing. The pattern of electrochemical activity that corresponds to our conscious experience can take a form that reflects the properties of external objects, but our consciousness is necessarily confined to the experience of those internal effigies of external objects, rather than of external objects themselves. Unless the principle of direct perception can be demonstrated in a simple artificial sensory system, this explanation remains as mysterious as the property of consciousness it is supposed to explain.^[1] But the indirect realist view is also incredible, for it suggests that the world that we perceive is merely a pattern of energy in the physical brain inside our head. This could only mean that the head we have come to know as our own is not our true physical head, but merely a miniature copy of inside a copy of the world contained within our true physical skull. The external world and its phenomenal replica cannot be spatially superimposed, for one is inside your physical head, and the other is outside. The existential vertigo occasioned by this concept of perception is so disorienting that only a handful of researchers have seriously entertained this notion or pursued its implications to its logical conclusion. (Kant 1781/1991, Koffka 1935, Köhler 1971 p. 125, Russell 1927 pp 137-143, Smythies 1989, 1994, current (<http://canonizer.com/topic.asp/88/14>), Harrison 1989, Hoffman 1998, Lehar current (<http://canonizer.com/topic.asp/88/17>), Hameroff current (<http://canonizer.com/topic.asp/88/20>))^[1]

Arguments against direct realism

The argument from illusion

This argument was "first offered in a more or less fully explicit form in Berkeley (1713)."^[8] It is also referred to as the problem of conflicting appearances (e.g. Myles Burnyeat's article *Conflicting Appearances*). Informed commonsense tells us that our perceptions often depend on our organs of perception. If we had compound eyes, as flies do, we would receive information about the visual world in a completely different form. If we had jaundice, things would look yellow. If we had other sense organs altogether, like infra-red detectors or echo-location devices, we can barely imagine how things would appear to us. Our current perceptual apparatus is obviously not infallible and may misrepresent objects to us even when in full working order (e.g. the Müller-Lyer illusion): we are all familiar with perceptual illusions of various sorts. Sometimes we think we perceive things which in fact aren't there at all, a more radical case of perceptual error than simple illusion; 'hallucination' or 'perceptual delusion')."^[9]



Illusion creates a problem for naïve realists as it suggests our senses are fallible, perceiving things that aren't there. In this illusion, the lines are horizontal, despite how they appear.



Illusions are present in nature. Rainbows are an example of a perceptual delusion. "For, unlike an architectural arch, a rainbow recedes as we approach it, never to be reached."^[10]

The argument from illusion seemingly shows the need to posit sense-data as the immediate objects of perception. In cases of illusion or hallucination, the object has qualities that no public physical object in that situation has and so must be distinct from any such object.^[8] Naïve realism may accommodate these facts as they stand by virtue of its very vagueness (or 'open-texture'): it isn't specific or detailed enough to be refuted by such cases.^[9] A more developed direct realism might respond by showing that various cases of misperception, failed perception, and perceptual relativity do not make it necessary to suppose that sense-data exist. When a stick submerged in water looks bent a direct realist is not compelled to say the stick actually is bent but can say that the stick can have more than one appearance: a straight stick can look bent when light reflected from the stick arrives at one's eye in a crooked pattern, but

this appearance isn't necessarily a sense-datum in the mind. Similar things can be said about the coin which appears circular from one vantage point and oval-shaped from another. Pressing on your eyeball with a finger creates double vision but assuming the existence of two sense-data is unnecessary: the direct realist can say that they have two eyes, each giving them a different view of the world. Usually the eyes are focused in the same direction; but sometimes they are not.

However, this response is presumably based on previously observed data. If one were to be able to observe nothing other than the stick in the water, with no previous information, it would appear that the stick was bent. Visual depth in particular is a set of inferences, not an actual experience of the space between things in a radial direction outward from the observation point.^[11] If all empirical evidence is based upon observation then the entire developed memory and knowledge of every perception and of each sense may be as skewed as the bent stick. Since objects with different qualities are experienced from each of the different perspectives there is no apparent experiential basis for regarding one out of any such set of related perceptual experiences as the one in

which the relevant physical object is itself immediately experienced. The most reasonable conclusion is that the experienced object is always distinct from the physical object or at least that there is no way to identify which, if any, of the immediately experienced objects is the physical object itself. Epistemologically it is as though physical objects were never given, whether or not that is in fact the case.^[8]

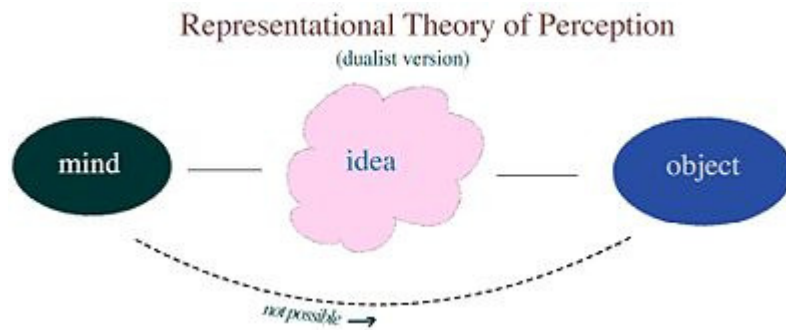
Another potential counter-example involves vivid hallucinations: phantom elephants, for instance, might be interpreted as sense-data. A direct realist response would differentiate hallucination from genuine perception: no perception of elephants is going on, only the different and related mental process of hallucination. However if there are visual images when we hallucinate it seems reasonable that there are visual images when we see. Similarly if dreaming involves visual and auditory images in our minds it seems reasonable to think there are visual and auditory images, or sense-data, when we are awake and perceiving things. This argument has been challenged in a number of different ways. First it has been questioned whether there must be some object present that actually has the experienced qualities, which would then seemingly have to be something like a sense-datum. Why couldn't it be that the perceiver is simply in a state of seeming to experience such an object without any object actually being present? Second, in cases of illusion and perceptual relativity there is an object present which is simply misperceived, usually in readily explainable ways, and no need to suppose that an additional object is also involved. Third, the last part of the perceptual relativity version of the argument has been challenged by questioning whether there is really no experiential difference between veridical and non-veridical perception; and by arguing that even if sense-data are experienced in non-veridical cases and even if the difference between veridical and non-veridical cases is, as claimed, experientially indiscernible, there is still no reason to think that sense-data are the immediate objects of experience in veridical cases. Fourth, do sense-data exist through time or are they momentary? Can they exist when not being perceived? Are they public or private? Can they be themselves misperceived? Do they exist in minds or are they extra-mental, even if not physical? On the basis of the intractability of these questions, it has been argued that the conclusion of the argument from illusion is unacceptable or even unintelligible, even in the absence of a clear diagnosis of exactly where and how it goes wrong.^[8]

Direct realists can potentially deny the existence of any such thing as a mental image but this is difficult to maintain, since we seem able to visually imagine all sorts of things with ease. Even if perception does not involve images other mental processes like imagination certainly seem to. One view, similar to Reid's, is that we do have images of various sorts in our minds when we perceive, dream, hallucinate and imagine but when we actually perceive things, our sensations cannot be considered objects of perception or attention. The only objects of perception are external objects. Even if perception is accompanied by images, or sensations, it is wrong to say we perceive sensations. Direct realism defines perception as perception of external objects where an 'external object' is allowed to be a photon in the eye but not an impulse in a nerve leading from the eye. Recent work in neuroscience suggests a shared ontology for perception, imagination and dreaming, with similar areas of brain being used for all of these. Morvan (2004) argues that such a shared ontology is fatal for direct realism.

Problems with the indirect theory

A problem with representationalism is that if simple data flow and information processing is assumed then something in the brain must be interpreting incoming data as a 'percept'. This something is often described as a homunculus, although the term homunculus is also used to imply an entity that creates a continual regress, and this need not be implied. This suggests that some phenomenon other than simple data flow and information processing is involved in perception. This is more of an issue now than it was for rationalist philosophers prior to Newton, such as Descartes, for whom physical processes were poorly defined. Descartes held that there is a "homunculus" in the form of the soul, belonging to a form of natural substance known as *res cogitans* that obeyed different laws from those obeyed by solid matter (*res extensa*). Although Descartes duality of natural

substances may have echoes in modern physics (Bose and Fermi statistics) no agreed account of 'interpretation' has been formulated. Thus representationalism remains an incomplete description of perception. Aristotle realized this and simply proposed that ideas themselves (representations) must be aware - in other words that there is no further transfer of sense impressions beyond ideas.



A potential difficulty with representational realism is that, if we only have knowledge of representations of the world, how can we know that they resemble in any significant way the objects to which they are supposed to correspond? Any creature with a representation in its brain would need to interact with the objects that are represented to identify them with the representation. This difficulty would seem reasonably to be

covered by the learning by exploration of the world that goes on throughout life. However, there may still be a concern that if the external world is only to be inferred, its 'true likeness' might be quite different from our idea of it. The representational realist would answer to this that 'true likeness' is an intuitive concept that falls in the face of logic, since a likeness must always depend on the way in which something is considered.

A semantic difficulty may arise when considering reference in representationalism. If I say "I see the Eiffel Tower" at a time when I am indeed looking at the Eiffel Tower, to what does the term "Eiffel Tower" refer? The direct realist might say that in the representational account we do not really see the tower but rather 'see' the representation. However, this is a distortion of the meaning of the word see which the representationalist does not imply. For the representationalist the statement refers to the Eiffel Tower, which implicitly is experienced in the form of a representation. The representationalist does not imply that when I refer to the Eiffel Tower, I am referring to my sense experience, and when you refer to the Tower, you are referring to your sense experience.

Furthermore, representative realism claims that we perceive our perceptual intermediaries—we can attend to them—just as we observe our image in a mirror. However, as we can scientifically verify, this is clearly not true of the physiological components of the perceptual process. This also brings up the problem of dualism and its relation to representative realism, concerning the incongruous marriage of the metaphysical and the physical.

The new objection to the Homunculus Argument claims that it relies on naive view of sensation. Because the eyes respond to light rays is no reason for supposing that the visual field requires eyes to see it. Not only are there no light rays in the head, but visual sensation (the argument can be extrapolated to the other senses) bears no direct resemblance to the light rays at the retina, nor to the character of what they are reflected from or pass through or what was glowing at the origin of them. The reason given is that they only bear the similarities of *co-variation* with what arrives at the retinas.^[12] Just as the currents in a wire going to a loudspeaker vary proportionately with the sounds that emanate from it but have no other likeness, so too does sensation vary proportionately (and not necessarily directly) with what causes it but bears no other resemblance to the input. This implies that the colour we experience is actually a cortical occurrence, and that light rays and external surfaces are not themselves coloured. The proportional variations with which cortical colour changes are there in the external world, but not colour as we experience it. Contrary to what Gilbert Ryle believed, those who argue for sensations being brain processes do not have to hold that there is a 'picture' in the brain since this is impossible according to this theory since actual pictures in the external world are not coloured.^[13] It is plain that Ryle unthinkingly carried over what the eyes do to the nature of sensation; A. J. Ayer at the time described Ryle's position as 'very weak'.^[14] So there is no 'screen' in front of cortical 'eyes', no mental objects before one. As Thomas Hobbes put it: 'How do we take notice of sense? -- by sense itself'. Moreland Perkins has

characterized it thus: that sensing is not like kicking a ball, but rather 'kicking a kick'.^[15] Today there are still philosophers arguing for colour being a property of external surfaces, light sources, etc.^[16]

A more fundamental criticism is implied in theories of this type. The differences at the sensory and perceptual levels between agents require that some means of ensuring at least a partial correlation can be achieved that allows the updatings involved in communication to take place. The process in an informative statement begins with the parties hypothetically assuming that they are referring to the 'same' entity or 'property', even though their selections from their sensory fields cannot match; we can call this mutually imagined projection the 'logical subject' of the statement. The speaker then produces the logical predicate which effects the proposed updating of the 'referent'. If the statement goes through, the hearer will now have a different percept and concept of the 'referent' -- perhaps even seeing it now as two things and not one. The radical conclusion is that we are premature in conceiving as the external as already sorted into singular 'objects' in the first place, since we only need to behave *as if* they are already logically singular.^[17] The diagram at the beginning of this entry would thus be thought of as a false picture of the actual case, since to draw 'an' object as already selected from the real is only to treat the practically needful, but strictly false, hypothesis of objects-as-logically-singular as ontologically given. The proponents of this view thus argue that there is no need actually *to believe* in the singularity of an object since we can manage perfectly well by *mutually imagining* that 'it' is singular. A proponent of this theory can thus ask the direct realist feels why he or she thinks it is necessary to move to taking the imagining of singularity for real when there is no practical difference in the outcome in action. Therefore, although there are selections from our sensory fields which for the time being we treat as if they were objects, they are only provisional, open to corrections at any time, and, hence, far from being direct *representations* of pre-existing singularities, they retain an experimental character. Virtual constructs or no, they remain, however, selections that are causally linked to the real and can surprise us at any time -- which removes any danger of solipsism in this theory. This approach dovetails with the philosophy known as social constructivism.^[18]

The character of experience of a physical object can be altered in major ways by changes in the conditions of perception or of the relevant sense-organs and the resulting neurophysiological processes, without change in the external physical object that initiates this process and that may seem to be depicted by the experience. Conversely any process that yields the same sensory/neural results will yield the same perceptual experience, no matter what the physical object that initiated the process may have been like. Furthermore the causal process that intervenes between the external object and the perceptual experience takes time, so that the character of the experience reflects, at the most, an earlier stage of that object than the one existing at the moment:s in observations of astronomical objects the external object may have ceased to exist long before the experience occurs. These facts are claimed to point to the conclusion that the direct object of experience is an entity produced at the end of this causal process, distinct from any physical object that initiates the process."^[8]

The adverbial theory

The above argument invites the conclusion of a perceptual dualism that raises the issue of how and whether the object can be known by experience. The adverbial theory is that this dualism is a dualism of objects, perceptual experience being a more direct experience of objects of a different sort; sense-data.^[8] Perceptual dualism implies "both an act of awareness (or apprehension) and an object of apprehension or awareness; the idea or sense-datum. The fundamental idea of the adverbial theory is that there is no need for such objects and the problems that they bring with them (such as whether they are physical or mental or somehow neither). Instead the occurrence of a mental act or mental state with its own intrinsic character is enough to account for the character of immediate experience."^[8]

According to the adverbial theory, when, for example, I experience a silver elliptical shape (as when viewing a

coin from an angle) I am in a certain specific state of sensing or sensory awareness or of being appeared to: I sense in a certain manner or am appeared to in a certain way, and that specific manner of sensing or of being appeared to accounts for the content of my experience: I am in a certain distinctive sort of experiential state. There need be no object or entity of any sort that is literally silver and elliptical in the material world or in the mind. I experience a silver and elliptical shape because an object or entity that literally has that color and shape is directly before my mind. But the nature of these entities and the way in which they are related to the mind are difficult to understand. The adverbial theory has the advantage of being metaphysically simpler, avoiding issues about the nature of sense-data, but we gain no real understanding of the nature of the states in question or of how exactly they account for the character of immediate experience."^[8]

See also

- Perception
- Enactivism
- Naive realism
- Consciousness
- Representation
- Philosophy of mind
- Philosophy of perception
- Qualia
- Hallucinations in the sane
- Aspectism
- The Treachery of Images
- Map-territory relation

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External links

- Online papers on representationalism (<http://consc.net/online1.html#represent>) , by various authors, compiled by David Chalmers
- This is a simulation (<http://www.chainsoffreason.org/this-is-a-simulation>) - A short article, aimed at the general public, arguing for the representative theory of perception.
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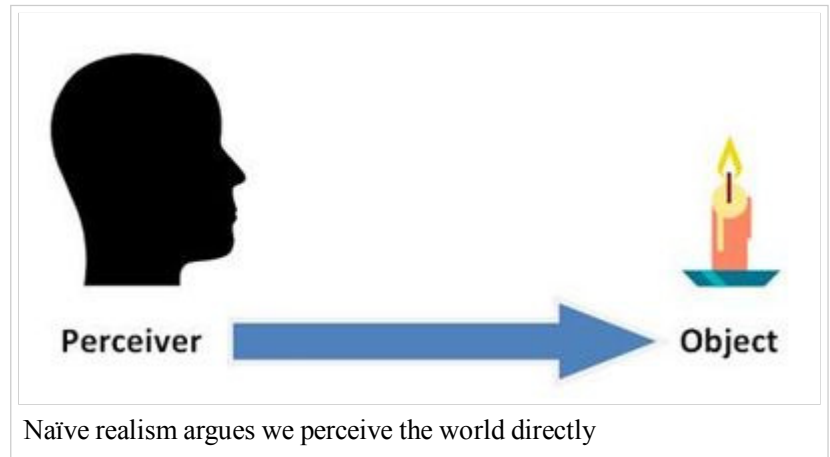
Categories: [Perception](#) | [Epistemological theories](#) | [Realism](#) | [Dualism](#) | [Philosophy of mind](#)

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Naïve realism

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
(Redirected from Naive realism)

Naïve realism, also known as **direct realism** or **common sense realism**, is a philosophy of mind rooted in a common sense theory of perception that claims that the senses provide us with direct awareness of the external world. In contrast, some forms of idealism assert that no world exists apart from mind-dependent ideas and some forms of skepticism say we cannot trust our senses. The realist view is that objects are composed of matter, occupy space and have properties, such as size, shape, texture, smell, taste and colour, that are usually perceived correctly. We perceive them as they *really* are. Objects obey the laws of physics and retain all their properties whether or not there is anyone to observe them.^[1]



Naïve realism is known as *direct* as against *indirect* or *representative* realism when its arguments are developed to counter the latter position, also known as epistemological dualism;^[2] that our conscious experience is not of the real world but of an internal representation of the world.

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- 2 Naive and scientific realism
 - 2.1 Realism and quantum physics
- 3 Virtual reality and realism
- 4 References
- 5 Sources and further reading
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Theory

The naïve realist theory may be characterized as the acceptance of the following five beliefs:

1. There exists a world of material objects.
2. Statements about these objects can be known to be true through sense-experience.
3. These objects exist not only when they are being perceived but also when they are not perceived. The objects of perception are largely perception-independent.
4. These objects are also able to retain properties of the types we perceive them as having, even when they are not being perceived. Their properties are perception-independent.

5. By means of our senses, we perceive the world directly, and pretty much as it is. In the main, our claims to have knowledge of it are justified."^[3]

In the area of visual perception in psychology, the leading direct realist theorist was J. J. Gibson. Other psychologists were heavily influenced by this approach, including William Mace, Claire Michaels,^[4] Edward Reed,^[5] Robert Shaw, and Michael Turvey. More recently, Carol Fowler has promoted a direct realist approach to speech perception.

Naïve and scientific realism

Naïve realism is distinct from scientific realism, which states that the universe contains just those properties that feature in a scientific description of it; not properties like colour *per se* but merely objects that reflect certain wavelengths owing to their microscopic surface texture. Naïve and direct realism propose no physical theory of experience and do not identify experience with the experience of quantum phenomena or the twin retinal images. This lack of supervenience of experience on the physical world means that naïve realism is not a physical theory.^[6]

An example of a scientific realist is John Locke, who held the world only contains the primary qualities that feature in a corpuscularian scientific account of the world (see corpuscular theory), and that other properties were entirely subjective, depending for their existence upon some perceiver who can observe the objects."^[1]

Realism and quantum physics

Main article: Principle of locality

Realism in physics refers to the fact that any physical system must have definite properties whether measured/observed or not. Physics up to the 19th century was always implicitly and sometimes explicitly taken to be based on philosophical realism.

Scientific realism in classical physics has remained compatible with the naïve realism of everyday thinking on the whole but there is no known, consistent way to visualize the world underlying quantum theory in terms of ideas of the everyday world. The general conclusion is that in quantum theory naïve realism, although necessary at the level of observations, fails at the microscopic level."^[7] Experiments such as the Stern–Gerlach experiment and quantum phenomena such as complementarity lead quantum physicists to conclude that "[w]e have no satisfactory reason for ascribing objective existence to physical quantities as distinguished from the numbers obtained when we make the measurements which we correlate with them. There is no real reason for supposing that a particle has at every moment a definite, but unknown, position which may be revealed by a measurement of the right kind... On the contrary, we get into a maze of contradiction as soon as we inject into quantum mechanics such concepts as carried over from the language and philosophy of our ancestors... It would be more exact if we spoke of 'making measurements' of this, that, or the other type instead of saying that we measure this, that, or the other 'physical quantity'."^[8] It is no longer possible to adhere to both the principle of locality (that distant objects cannot affect local objects), and counterfactual definiteness, a form of ontological realism implicit in classical physics. Some interpretations of quantum mechanics hold that a system lacks an actualized property until it is measured, which implies that quantum systems exhibit a non-local behaviour. Bell's theorem proved that every quantum theory must either violate local realism or counterfactual definiteness. This has given rise to a contentious debate of the interpretation of quantum mechanics. Although locality and 'realism' in the sense of counterfactual definiteness, are jointly false, it is possible to retain one of them. The majority of working physicists discard counterfactual definiteness in favor of locality, since non-locality is held

to be contrary to relativity. The implications of this stance are rarely discussed outside of the microscopic domain but the thought experiment of Schrödinger's cat illustrates the difficulties presented. As quantum mechanics is applied to larger and larger objects even a one-ton bar, proposed to detect gravity waves, must be analysed quantum mechanically, while in cosmology a wavefunction for the whole universe is written to study the Big Bang. It is difficult to accept the quantum world as somehow not physically real, so "Quantum mechanics forces us to abandon naïve realism",^[9] though it can also be argued that the counterfactual definiteness 'realism' of physics is a much more specific notion than general philosophical realism.^[10]

" "[W]e have to give up the idea of realism to a far greater extent than most physicists believe today." (Anton Zeilinger)... By realism, he means the idea that objects have specific features and properties — that a ball is red, that a book contains the works of Shakespeare, or that an electron has a particular spin... for objects governed by the laws of quantum mechanics, like photons and electrons, it may make no sense to think of them as having well defined characteristics. Instead, what we see may depend on how we look."^[11]

Virtual reality and realism

"Virtual realism"^[12] is closely related to the above theories.

In the research paper *The reality of virtual reality* it is proposed that, "virtuality is itself a bonafide mode of reality, and that 'virtual reality' must be understood as 'things, agents and events that exist in cyberspace'. These proposals resolve the incoherences found in the ordinary uses of these terms... 'virtual reality', though based on recent information technology, does not refer to mere technological equipment or purely mental entities, or to some fake environment as opposed to the real world, but that it is an ontological mode of existence which leads to an expansion of our ordinary world."^[13]

"The emergence of teleoperation and virtual environments has greatly increased interest in "synthetic experience", a mode of experience made possible by both these newer technologies and earlier ones, such as telecommunication and sensory prosthetics... understanding synthetic experience must begin by recognizing the fallacy of naïve realism and with the recognition that the phenomenology of synthetic experience is continuous with that of ordinary experience."^[14]

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See also

- Philosophy of mind
- Philosophy of perception
- Qualia
- Representative realism
- Eliminative materialism
- Scientific realism
- Confirmation holism
- Critical realism
- Disjunctivism
- Instrumentalism
- Objectivism
- Misconception
- Consciousness
- Worldview
- Étienne Gilson
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- John F. X. Knasas
- Thomas Reid
- James J. Gibson
- James McCosh
- History of philosophy in Poland

External links

- James Feiser, "A Bibliography of Scottish Common Sense Philosophy" (http://www.rrbld.co.uk/bibliographies/scottish_v5_bibliog.pdf)
- Theory of knowledge: Naïve Realism (<http://www.theoryofknowledge.info/naiverealism.html>)
- Naïve Realism and the Argument from Illusion (<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/AcaDepts/ld/Philos/jmp/Theory%20of%20Knowledge/NaiveRealism.htm>)
- The Function of Conscious Experience (<http://cns-alumni.bu.edu/~slehar/webstuff/consc1/consc1.html>)
- Representationalism (<http://sharp.bu.edu/~slehar/Representationalism.html>)
- Naïve Realism in Contemporary Philosophy (<http://sharp.bu.edu/~slehar/epist/naive-philos.html>)
- The Science and Philosophy of Consciousness (<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~lka/contr.htm>)
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Epistemological Problems of Perception (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/perception-episprob/>)
- Physics and Commonsense: Reassessing the connection in the light of quantum theory (<http://arxiv.org/abs/0708.1536>)
- Quantum Theory: Concepts and Methods (<http://books.google.com.au/books?id=-yLkUyCsb7cC>)
- Nature Journal: Physicists bid farewell to reality? (<http://www.nature.com/news/2007/070416/full/070416-9.html>)
- Quantum Enigma: Physics Encounters Consciousness (<http://books.google.com.au/books?id=hKrvv35-gcMC>)
- Virtual Realism (<http://books.google.com.au/books?id=4nyKP2-KIXAC>)
- The reality of virtual reality (<http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/Xplore/login.jsp?url=/iel5/7657/20918/00969726.pdf?arnumber=969726>)
- IEEE Symposium on Research Frontiers in Virtual Reality: Understanding Synthetic Experience Must Begin with the Analysis of Ordinary Perceptual Experience (<http://www.psych.ucsb.edu/~loomis/Loomis%20presence%20IEEE%2093.pdf>)
- *Realism* (<http://www.science.uva.nl/~seop/entries/realism/>) , article from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- *Sense Data* (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sense-data/>) , article from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Philosophy.

- *Skepticism and the Veil of Perception* (<http://home.sprynet.com/~owl1/book1.htm>) , book defending direct realism.
- Pierre Le Morvan, "Arguments against direct realism and how to counter them" (http://www.tcnj.edu/~lemorvan/DR_web.pdf) , *American Philosophical Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2004): 221-234. (pdf)
- Steven Lehar, "Gestalt Isomorphism" (<http://cns-alumni.bu.edu/~slehar/webstuff/bubw3/bubw3.html>) (2003), paper criticizing direct realism.
- *A Direct Realist Account of Perceptual Awareness* (<http://home.sprynet.com/~owl1/dis.htm>) , dissertation on direct realism.
- Epistemological debate on PSYCHE-D mailing list (<http://cns-alumni.bu.edu/~slehar/cartoonepist/EpistDebate.html>)
- A Cartoon Epistemology (<http://cns-alumni.bu.edu/~slehar/cartoonepist/cartoonepist.html>)

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Categories: Theories of mind | Perception | Epistemological theories | Realism | 18th century in Scotland | 19th century in Scotland | 18th-century philosophy | 19th-century philosophy | Philosophical schools and traditions | Scottish Enlightenment | Scottish society

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Common Sense Realism

From Cognopedia

Common Sense Realism or **Scottish Common Sense Realism** is a school of philosophy that originated in the ideas of Scottish philosophers Thomas Reid, Adam Ferguson and Dugald Stewart during the 18th century Scottish Enlightenment.

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Teachings

Its basic principle was enunciated by its founder and greatest figure, Thomas Reid:

"If there are certain principles, as I think there are, which the constitution of our nature leads us to believe, and which we are under a necessity to take for granted in the common concerns of life, without being able to give a reason for them--these are what we call the principles of common sense; and what is manifestly contrary to them, is what we call absurd."^[1]

The school taught that every person had ordinary experiences that provided intuitively certain assurance of a) the existence of the self, b) the existence of real objects that could be seen and felt; and c) certain "first principles" upon which sound morality and religious beliefs could be established.

The approach was a response to the "ideal system" which, starting with Descartes' conception of sense experience, had led in John Locke and David Hume, to a skeptical outcome. This skepticism called Christianity into question. The Common Sense Realists found skepticism to be absurd and so contrary to common experience that it had to be rejected.

Influence

Common Sense Realism not only dominated Scottish thought in the 19th century, it had a major influence as well and France, the United States, and other countries. Victor Cousin (1792–1867) was the most important proponent in France.

United States

Common Sense Realism swept American intellectual circles in the 19th century. James McCosh (1811–1894) brought it directly from Scotland 1868 when he became president of Princeton University, which soon became a major stronghold of the movement. Noah Porter (1811–1892) taught Common Sense realism to generations of students at Yale.

Fundamentalism

It greatly influenced conservative religious thought and was strongest at Princeton Seminary until the Seminary moved in new directions after 1929. The Princeton theologians built their elaborate system on the basis of "common-sense" realism, biblicism and confessionalism.^[2] James McCosh was brought from Queen's College, Belfast, to Princeton College's Chair of Moral Philosophy and Presidency because of his book "The Method of Divine Government", a Christian philosophy that was precursory to Charles Darwin's "The Origin of Species" (1865). The Princeton Theologians followed McCosh to adopt a stance of theistic evolution). They heavily influenced John Gresham Machen (1881–1937), a leader of the Fundamentalists in the 1920s. McCosh's goal was to develop Princeton as a Christian university in North America, as well as forefront intellectual seminary of the Presbyterian Church. The faculty of the College and Seminary included both evolutionary thinkers and non-evolutionary thinkers. Much evangelical theology of the 21st century is based on Princeton theology and thus reflects Common Sense Realism.^[3]

See also

- Direct realism
- Francis Hutcheson (philosopher)
- James Frederick Ferrier
- James McCosh
- Thomas Brown (philosopher)

Notes

1. ↑ Cuneo and Woudenberg, eds. *The Cambridge companion to Thomas Reid* (2004) p 85
2. ↑ James C. Livingston and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, *Modern Christian Thought: The Enlightenment and the nineteenth century* (2006) p. 303
3. ↑ Stanley J. Grenz, Brian McLaren, John R. Franke, *Renewing the center: evangelical theology in a post-theological era* (2006) pp 79, 177

Further reading

- Ahlstrom, Sydney E. "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," *Church History*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Sep., 1955), pp. 257–272 in JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3162115>)
- Cuneo, Terence, and René van Woudenberg, eds. *The Cambridge companion to Thomas Reid* (2004)
- Hollinger, David A. "Scottish Common Sense Realism" in Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg, eds. *A companion to American thought* (1995) pp 618–20
- Graham, Gordon. "Scottish Philosophy in the 19th Century" *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2009) online (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/scottish-19th/>)
- Marsden, George M. *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (2006) excerpt and text search (<http://www.amazon.com/Fundamentalism-American-Culture-George-Marsden/dp/0195300475/>)
- Rosenfeld, Sophia. *Common Sense: A Political History* (Harvard University Press; 2011) 346 pages; traces the history of common sense as a political ideal since England's Glorious Revolution (1688).
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Thomas Reid and the Story of Epistemology*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. ISBN 0521539307

Primary sources

- *Selections from the Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense*, ed. by G.A. Johnston (1915) online (http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=2044&Itemid=28) , essays by Thomas Reid, Adam Ferguson, James Beattie, and Dugald Stewart

External links

- James Feiser, "A Bibliography of Scottish Common Sense Philosophy" (http://www.rrb ltd.co.uk/bibliographies/scottish_v5_bibliog.pdf) de:Common-Sense-Philosophie

is: Hin skoska heimspeki heilbrigðrar skynsemi ja: スコットランド常識学派 ru: Шотландская школа здравого смысла



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