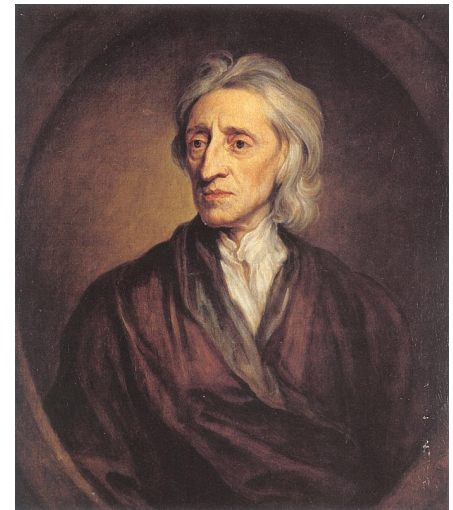


Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 110W
Fall 2014
Russell Marcus

Classes #4-5 - Sense Experience
Descartes and Locke



Business

- Emma and the Writing Center
- Précis number 2
- One last précis for Tuesday on either Moore or Wittgenstein
- Then the Exegesis on Thursday
- Grades
 - As, Bs, and Cs
- Today:
 - Overview on Descartes
 - The resemblance hypothesis
 - Locke's primary/secondary distinction
 - Get started on Berkeley

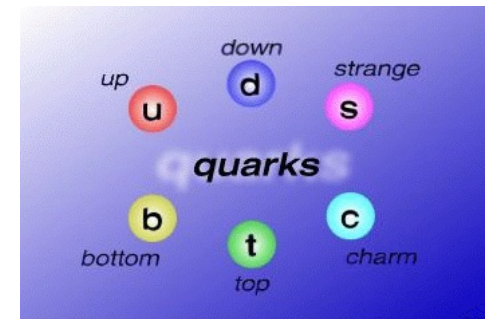
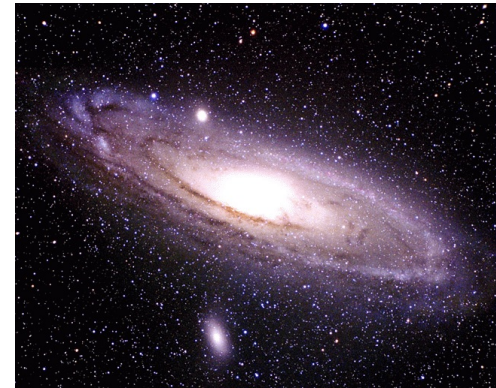
Descartes's Doubt

- Three reasons to doubt that the world is as we perceive it
- His larger project is to use these doubts to rid ourselves of preconceptions.
- Remove our false beliefs
- Replace them with true ones
- Let's carefully distinguish the three doubts.



Illusion

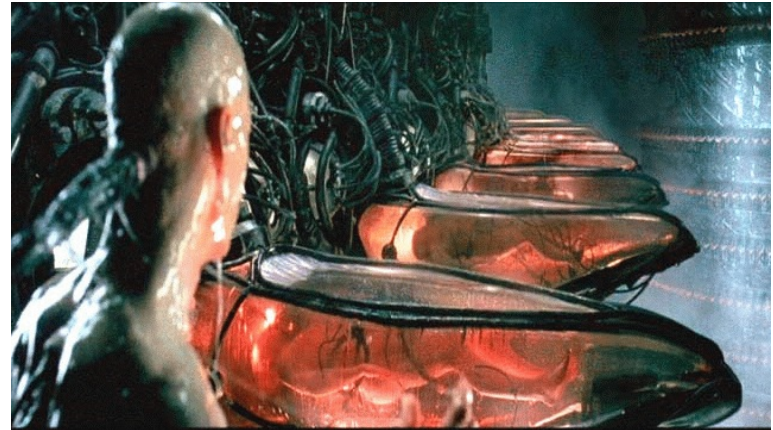
- Sensory illusions undermine our sensory beliefs.
 - Distant or ill-perceived objects
 - Very small objects
- Our knowledge of close, medium-sized objects, like our own bodies, resists doubts deriving from illusions.



Dreams

- We can dream of things that do not exist.
- We can dream that things which do exist have different properties than they actually do.
- There is no mark to distinguish waking from dreaming.
- If we can not be sure that we are not dreaming, then we can not be sure of anything our senses tell us.
- Non-sensory beliefs resist the dream doubt.
 - '2+2=4'
 - 'the tangent to a circle intersects the radius of that circle at right angles'
 - Universals: color, shape, quantity, place, time

The Deceiver



- What if there were a powerful deceiver who can place thoughts directly into our minds?
- The deceiver hypothesis is consistent with the non-existence of the physical world.
 - We could be disembodied minds, whose thoughts are directly controlled by an independent source.
- When we apply the deceiver hypothesis to our beliefs, we notice that just about all of them can be called into question.
- Nothing, it seems, is certain.

Descartes's Goal

- Descartes does not want to defend skepticism.
- His goal is to provide a new foundation for knowledge.
- He seeks a single, unassailable truth, one that resists all reason for doubt.
- “Archimedes asked only for one fixed and immovable point so as to move the whole earth from its place; so I may have great hopes if I find even the least thing that is unshakably certain” (66).



The Cogito

Whenever I am thinking, even if I am doubting, I must exist.

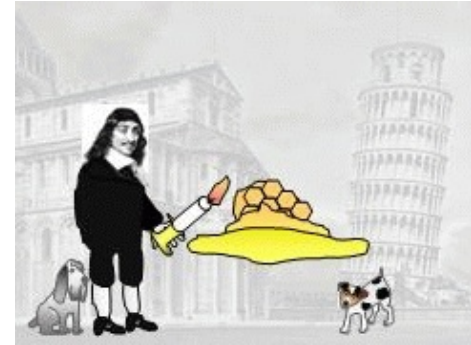
- Establishes the existence of a thinker, as long as the thinker thinks
- Our thoughts, though, may not tell us anything true about the world.
 - The doubts about the content of thought remain.
- Even a dream world consists of appearances, with certain characteristics.
- I have direct access to my thoughts in a way that I seem to lack access to thoughts of others.
 - privileged access
- Ideas can not be false, considered only as images in our minds.

Solipsism

Only I exist



Descartes's Wax and the Scientific Revolution



- All of the sensory properties of physical bodies (e.g. the wax) can change.
 - ▶ “I grasp that the wax is capable of innumerable changes of this sort, even though I am incapable of running through these innumerable changes by using my imagination... The perception of the wax is neither a seeing, nor a touching, nor an imagining...even though it previously seemed so; rather it is an inspection on the part of the mind alone “(46a).
- According to the new science, the wax is just a body which can take various manifestations, hot or cold, sweet or tasteless, etc., but is identified with none of these particular sensory qualities.
 - ▶ “Perhaps the wax was what I now think it is: namely that the wax itself never really was the sweetness of the honey, nor the fragrance of the flowers, nor the whiteness, nor the shape, nor the sound, but instead was a body that a short time ago manifested itself to me in these ways, and now does so in other ways... Let us focus our attention on this and see what remains after we have removed everything that does not belong to the wax: only that it is something extended, flexible, and mutable.”

Appearance and Reality

- The world is not as it appears.
 - ▶ Our senses may be misleading.
 - In small ways, as when we perceive an illusion.
 - In larger, systematic ways, if we are dreaming or deceived.
- The wax example shows that physical objects are essentially none of their sense characteristics.
 - ▶ The world out there is unlike the world as it appears to us.

The Resemblance Hypothesis

RH: Our sensory ideas are like the world.

- Aristotle took sensory qualities to be real properties of external objects.
 - ▶ The redness and sweetness of an apple are real properties of the apple itself.
 - ▶ Our senses are attuned to the external environment.
 - ▶ I see the apple as red because my eye itself is able to change to red.
 - ▶ Aristotle accepts RH.
- Descartes claims that the senses are irrelevant to knowledge
 - ▶ Descartes rejects RH, and with it the senses as sources of knowledge.
 - The sun
 - ▶ Knowledge of physical objects comes from the intellect (or mind) alone.
 - ▶ Our most secure knowledge, like that of mathematics, is innate.



Locke and the Blank Slate



- Locke denies Descartes's claims about innate ideas.
 - ▶ “Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any *ideas*. How does it come to be furnished? From where does it come by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? From where does it have all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from *experience*; our knowledge is founded in all that, and from that it ultimately derives itself” (II.I.2).
- We learn particulars, first, beginning with sense experience.
 - ▶ “The senses at first let in particular *ideas*, and furnish the yet empty cabinet, and the mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the memory, and names got to them. Afterwards the mind proceeding further abstracts them, and by degrees learns the use of general names” (I.II.15, AW 321a).
- Let's look at his arguments.

Locke and the Primary/ Secondary Distinction

- Some apparent properties of physical objects are misleading.
 - Objects do not really have those properties.
 - Secondary qualities
- Some apparent properties of objects are veridical.
 - Primary qualities
- Locke accepts the Resemblance Hypothesis, for primary qualities only.
 - 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 (II.VIII.15).
 - Our ideas of extension resemble extension in the world.
- On the basis of my ideas of primary qualities, then, I can justify significant conclusions about the world (i.e. the new science) without appealing to innate ideas.

Galileo and Locke on the Primary/Secondary Distinction

- ...that external bodies, to excite in us these tastes, these odours, and these sounds, demand other than size, figure, number, and slow or rapid motion, I do not believe, and I judge that, if the ears, the tongue, and the nostrils were taken away, the figure, the numbers, and the motions would indeed remain, but not the odours, nor the tastes, nor the sounds, which, without the living animal, I do not believe are anything else than names (Galileo, *Opere* IV, 336).
- Take away the sensation of them; let the eyes not see light, or colors, nor the ears hear sounds; let the palate not taste, nor the nose smell; and all colors, tastes, odors, and sounds as they are such particular *ideas* vanish and cease, and are reduced to their causes, i.e., bulk, figure, and motion of parts (Locke, II.VIII.17, AW 334b).

Ideas of an Apple



- Red ■ Misrepresentative
- Round ■ Real
- Cool to the touch ■ Misrepresentative
- Sweet, though a bit sour ■ Misrepresentative
- Shiny ■ Misrepresentative
- Smooth ■ Misrepresentative
- Sits still on the table ■ Real
- Crunchy ■ Misrepresentative (But consider its brittle texture)
- Weights 4 oz. ■ Misrepresentative
- Has a mass of 120 grams ■ Real
- Is one apple ■ Real
- Is being considered by you ■ Misrepresentative
- Smells apple-y ■ Misrepresentative
 - “These I call *original* or *primary qualities* of body, which I think we may observe to produce simple *ideas* in us, namely, solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number. *Secondly*, such *qualities* which in truth are nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their *primary qualities*...these I call *secondary qualities*” (II.VIII.9-10).

Primary Qualities and Secondary Qualities

- Primary
 - Solidity
 - Extension
 - Figure
 - Motion/ Rest
 - Number
- Secondary
 - Color
 - Odor
 - Hot/ Cold
 - Sound
 - Texture
 - Taste
- We can justify our beliefs on the basis of sense experience without worrying that we will be forced to accept errors as true because we are relying on our senses, rather than pure reason.

Locke's First Principle

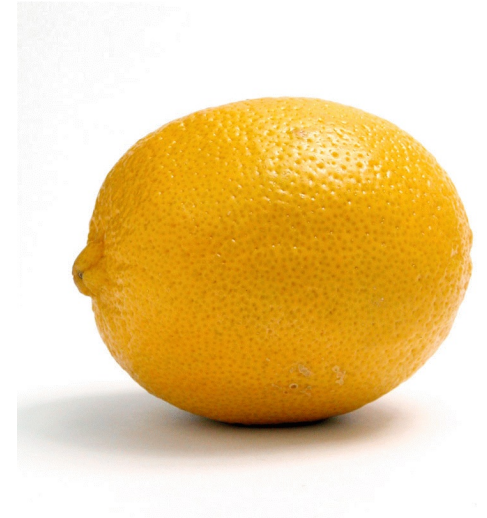
- Locke tacitly presumes two principles to distinguish veridical ideas from misrepresentative ones.
- LP1: If one perceives an object as having two (or more) incompatible ideas, then those ideas do not represent real properties of the object.
 - Besides hot and cold, other sense ideas are not veridical, according to LP1.
 - Porphyry (II.VIII.19)
 - Almond (II.VIII.20)
 - Descartes's wax example
- LP1C1: Even if a change in us entails the change in the perceived quality, the ideas which change can not be veridical.
 - Orange juice
- LP1C2: Qualities that appear different to different observers are not veridical.
 - Color-blindness

Locke's Second Principle

- LP2: If an idea of an object is the same under all conditions, that idea is veridical.
 - ▶ “We may understand how it is possible that the same water may, at the same time, produce the sensations of heat in one hand and cold in the other; which yet figure never does, that, never producing the *idea* of a square by one hand, which has produced the *idea* of a globe by another” (II.VIII.21).
- LP2C: If every observer receives the same idea from an object, then that idea is veridical.

Experience and Reality

Locke's View



- The world is nothing but particles in motion.
- Sense qualities of objects are not really in the world.
- Lemons are not really yellow, or sour.
- They are made of particles (atoms or corpuscles) that appear yellow or sour to normal human senses.
- These minute particles unite in varying ways.
- Depending on how they unite, they affect us in different ways.
- We have ideas which arise from the interaction between our senses and the material world.