

**PSY 3360 / CGS 3325
Historical Perspectives
on Psychology
Minds and Machines since 1600**

**Dr. Peter Assmann
Spring 2012**

Midterm Exam Review Benefit

- Extra credit assignment
- Due **Mon Feb 29 (same date as midterm exam)**
- Instructions online:

http://www.utdallas.edu/~assmann/PSY3360/midterm_exam_review_benefit.html

George Berkeley (1685-1753)



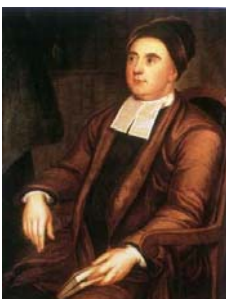
- Born in Kilkenny, Ireland
- Lecturer at the University of Dublin
- Traveled to America, hoping to set up a new college in Bermuda
- Bishop of Cloyne for last 18 years of his life

George Berkeley (1685-1753)



- Dissatisfied with the prevailing metaphor of a clockwork universe
- Materialism responsible for decline in morals and religion
- Denied existence of matter (material world)

George Berkeley (1685-1753)



- Mental monism (idealism) denies the existence of a physical world distinct from our perceptions of it.
- *esse is percipi*
“to be is to be perceived”

George Berkeley (1685-1753)



- All we can ever know about the world comes from sensory perception.
- No “external reality” beyond our perceptions of the world.

George Berkeley (1685-1753)



- Problem: if perception determines existence, then do things cease to exist when we no longer perceive them?
- Do perceptions vary from one individual to another?

*There was a young man who said, "God
Must think it exceedingly odd
If he finds that this tree
Continues to be
When there's no one about in the quad"*

Dear Sir:

*Your astonishment's odd
I am always about in the quad.
And that's why the tree
Will continue to be
Since observed by*

*Yours faithfully,
God*

George Berkeley (1685-1753)



- Human knowledge is based on *ideas*: sensory experience plus reflections of the mind

George Berkeley (1685-1753)



- Our psychological experiences reflect the world as it actually is
- distinction between primary and secondary qualities makes no sense

George Berkeley (1685-1753)



Principle of association

- An *object* is nothing more than a combination of its perceived qualities
- *Apple*=color+smell+taste+shape+size

George Berkeley (1685-1753)



There are no abstract ideas.

- Attributes are grouped together on the basis of contiguity and similarity

George Berkeley (1685-1753)



- (1) the active mind or spirit, perceiving, thinking, willing
- (2) passive objects of mind, ideas derived from sensation, memory or imagination

Theory of vision



- *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* (1709)
- Molyneux's problem
- Distance perception is **learned**, not **innate**

Theory of vision



- Distance perception is **not** based on **abstract geometrical relationships**, but on **learned associations** between cues derived from different senses (visual & kinesthetic)
- eye movements (convergence and divergence)

David Hume (1711-1776)



- Scottish philosopher, economist, historian
- Radical skepticism
- Foundations of human knowledge
- Theory of meaning
- Causality

Theories of perception

- **Causal theory of perception:** The philosophical position that our perceptual experiences are *caused* by external objects in the real world.
- **Representative theory of perception:** The idea that our percepts *resemble* these external objects, or *represent* them to us.
- **Naïve realism:** The belief that our perceptions *are* the external objects, that they are one and the same.

Disagreement with Locke

- Hume sees a problem in Locke's realism.
- If our ideas are **representations** and our thoughts are simply **copies** of those **representations**, then we can never know how accurate our sensory representations are, nor can we ever form any ideas of the real world, outside of our impressions of it.

Does perception provide us with *representations* of objects?

"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, as all other questions of a like nature. But here experience is and must be entirely silent. The mind has never anything present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connections with objects. The supposition of such a connection is, therefore, without any foundation in reason."

David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

Hume's reply to Berkeley

"To have recourse to the veracity of the Supreme Being in order to prove the veracity of our senses is surely making a very unexpected circuit. If his veracity were at all concerned in this matter, our senses would be entirely infallible, because it is not possible that he can ever deceive. Not to mention that, if the external world be once called into question, we shall be at a loss to find arguments by which we may prove the existence of that Being or any of his attributes."

[Inquiry XII(i)]

Epistemology

- For Hume, there are **no innate ideas**.
- All **ideas** are derived from sensory experience, or from inner feelings.
- We cannot conceive of anything that is fundamentally different from the things we have experienced.

Epistemology

- No statement of fact can ever be proved by reasoning *a priori*. The only way to establish the truth of a **factual** statement is through experience.

Hume's microscope

- To understand a complex idea, first reduce it to its simple constituent ideas. If any of these remains obscure, produce the impression from which it is derived.

Hume's razor

- If a term cannot be shown to evoke an idea that can be analyzed into simple constituent parts, then it has no meaning.

Theory of meaning

- *How can words stand for ideas?*
 1. they can be derived from empirical facts (**matters of fact**)
 2. they can be derived analytically, based on the relationships among the ideas they contain (**relations of ideas**)

Theory of causality

- *What creates the link between **cause** and **effect**?*
 1. no **necessary** link between cause and effect
 2. **habitual association**
 3. **feeling of necessity** (natural belief)

Abstract concepts

- For Locke, **general concepts** like triangle, motion, and redness are constructed by a process of **abstraction**.
- **particular ideas** derived from **sensory experience** are combined to arrive at **general ideas**, which represent all of the things held in common by all the examples, and omit the features they do not share.

- For Hume, all abstract concepts are derived from experience (from impressions). These include:
 - Space
 - Time
 - Mathematical truths
 - Causality (cause and effect)
 - Matter, force, energy
 - Necessity

Abstract concepts

- **Berkeley**: if you eliminate all the features that are unique to a triangle, chair, or a person, you have nothing left behind. There are no abstract ideas.
- **Hume** agrees with Berkeley and proposes that a general idea is used to stand for a set of particular ideas as a result of a process of habitual association.

Free will vs. determinism

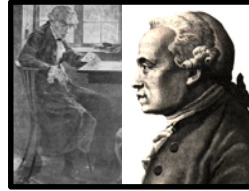
- Hume's view of free will is linked to his theory of causality
 - there is no logical necessity in events
 - the feeling of necessity is an *illusion*, a psychological projection based on the association of ideas
 - This illusion has great **utility** for everyday life.



What is this Necessity, save an empty shadow of my mind's own throwing?

Thomas Huxley, *The Physical Basis of Life*, p. 161

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)



- born in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad, in Russia)
- never left his home town, never married; taught at the University of Königsberg
- attracted students and researchers from all over Europe and Britain



Königsberg, with Kant's house in the foreground and the castle in the background

Kant's theory of causality

- Hume's rejection of causality
 - Co-occurrence of events
 - Habitual association
 - (Illusory) feeling of necessity
- Kant's answer: Causality is
 - fundamental to science and human knowledge
 - a relationship not based on observation or logic
 - imposed by the structure of the human mind