

Philosophy 136  
The Philosophy of Perception  
Handout 8  
Tuesday 27 September 2005

1. *Figuring Out Hume's Argument*

- (1) The table appears to shrink in size
- (2) The table does not alter in size

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(C+) DH perceives an image of the table  
(C-) DH does not perceive the table

Question 1: Why does Hume suppose (1) is true? One can contrast the constancy of the table in one's experience with the shift in the way things appear.

Question 2: Why does Hume suppose (C+) is true?

Hypothesis:

Hume thinks that for some  $F$ s if it appears to you as if there is an  $F$  there, then something  $F$  must appear to you

Hume thinks that the table is not  $F$  (that is, premiss (2) or analogous premiss for the relevant example of visual illusion) so the table is not the  $F$  which is apparent to one. But which  $F$  is it then which appears to one?

If there are no suitable physical  $F$ s around when one has the illusion, then it must be something else which is  $F$  – the image or impression.

Raises the further question:

Is Hume right to suppose that (S2) follows from (S1)

- (S1) It appears to DH as if there is a small brown thing there
- (S2) There is a small brown thing which appears to DH there

You might think that this raises the general problem of intentionality.

2. *Intentionality and Intentional Objects*

$X$ 's thinking of  $Y$  constitutes a relation between  $X$  and  $Y$  when  $Y$  exists, but (b) not when  $Y$  doesn't; but (c)  $X$ 's thinking of  $Y$  is the same sort of thing whether  $Y$  exists or not. Something plainly has to be given up here; what will it be? (A.N. Prior, *Objects of Thought*, p.130.)

- (1) James wants Ellen to give him a truck
- (2) James wants Santa Claus to give him a motorbike

Three linguistic marks:

(a.) Failure of Truth-Functionality

$$\Omega(p) \Rightarrow p / \Omega(p) \Rightarrow \neg p$$

- (1) John believes that the Tower of London is in Berkeley
- (2) John believes that the Golden Gate Bridge is reddish orange

(b.) Failure of Substitutivity:

$$\Phi(a), a = b \Rightarrow \Phi(b)$$

- (3) Mary thinks that Cary Grant is a paragon of style
- (4) Cary Grant is identical with Archibald Leech
- (5) Mary thinks that Archibald Leech is a paragon of style

(c.) Failure of Existential Generalization

$$\Phi(a) \Rightarrow \exists x \Phi(x)$$

- (6) John thinks that someone stole the beer from the fridge
- (7) There is someone who John thinks stole the beer from the fridge

- (8) John wants a cup of tea  
(9) There is a cup of tea which John wants

A linguistic context for which *any* of these principles fails is called *non-extensional* or (misleadingly) *intensional* (note the 's' — the origin of this usage traces back to Carnap and his theory of modality see *Meaning & Necessity*). (The extension of a sentence is its truth value, the extension of a one-place predicate is the set of objects it is true of; the extension of a singular term is the object it stands for.)

*Explanation:* The roof fell down because the timbers were rotten  
*Modality:* There might have been thirty three people in this room

The linguistic form does not define then what it is for a state to be intentional (with a 't') but the form may still indicate something about the underlying nature of mental states.

### 3. Anscombe and Intentional Objects

I will introduce the phrase "intentional object" to mean "object" in the older sense which still occurs in the "object of desire"... an intentional verb [is] a verb taking an intentional object  
I have mentioned the history of the word "object" to forestall any impression that "an intentional object" means "an intentional entity" (56)

That is, Anscombe does not mean to say that there is a special class of things or entities which are the intentional ones. Talk of intentional object is supposed to tell us something about sentences which talk of psychological states. What does it tell us? Look back at the quotation from Prior (itself a comment on Anscombe).

Why shouldn't we think that the intentional object is a special kind of entity? Cf. Reid on this matter:

The philosopher says, I cannot conceive a centaur without having an idea of it in my mind... He surely does not mean that I cannot conceive it without conceiving it. That would make me no wiser. What then is this idea? Is it an animal, half horse and half man? No. Then I am certain it is not the thing I conceive...

This one object which I conceive is not the image of an animal—it is an animal. I know what it is to conceive an image of an animal, and what it is to conceive an animal; and I can distinguish the one of these from the other without any danger of making a mistake. (Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, Essay IV, Ch. II)

Anscombe supposes that there are two uses of 'see' one which takes a *material* object and one which takes an *intentional* object.

Berkeley (and Hume) supposedly mistakes the intentional object of sight (i.e. mistake uses of sentences which employ an intentional object in Anscombe's sense) for material objects (i.e. uses of sentences which specify the material object of sight). 'Ordinary language philosophers' supposedly miss the use of 'see' which involves intentional objects.

Questions:

Are there really two senses of 'see'?

(If the answer is 'No' is that a problem for Anscombe? Is there another way of formulating her main thought.)

Do Hume and Berkeley really make the mistake that Anscombe supposes?

In relation to the second question – does Hume (or Berkeley) make the same supposition about *thinking* as he does about *sensing*? If not, why should he think that sensing is special?

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