

WHAT CONSTRUCTS KNOWLEDGE

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE?

↳ three types of knowledge

→ knowing how (competence)

e.g. I know how to tie my shoelace!

→ knowing who (acquaintance)

e.g. I know Taylor!

→ knowing that (propositional knowledge)

e.g. I know Paris is in France!

↳ defined as

→ justified, true, beliefs

• unlike just belief, knowledge is justified and true

⇒ justification must be strong

↳ not just a thought but a proposition that is justified and true

THEORIES OF TRUTH

↳ correspondence theory

• subject is true if it corresponds with a fact, situation or state-of-affairs (reality)

↳ coherence theory

⇒ be logically consistent

• subject is true if it coheres with some system of other situations

→ none of them are inconsistent, and supports one another

↳ pragmatic theory

• subject is true if it is successful in practice or cognitively useful

→ believing/acting on them leads or otherwise leads to positive results

JUSTIFICATION

↳ to know something, evidence must be good (doesn't guarantee it though)

↳ evidence/reasoning for a claim

↳ theories of justification

• foundationalism

→ our beliefs are justified by another belief

→ foundational beliefs

- beliefs which constitute the evidence of which all other beliefs are justified

→ to find a reason, trace the beliefs until there is no other reason (the foundation of the belief)

WHAT CONSTRUCTS KNOWLEDGE

JUSTIFICATION

→ theories of justification

• coherentism

→ justified by relation to others or the way the parts fit together

→ a bunch of reasons that come together to support the same belief

→ coherence

- probabilistic consistency

↳ degree to which the belief in one's system are jointly probable

- explanatory efficacy

↳ extent to which one's system explains certain phenomena

- inferential stability

↳ number or strength of inferential connections between a particular belief in the system and other beliefs

• reliabilism

→ as long as method is reliable, the belief is justified

• evidentialism

→ based on evidence that is possessed

→ views on evidence

- certainty

↳ to know something, the evidence must be maximally good

↳ evidence guarantees subject to be true

- fallibilism

↳ to know something, the evidence must be good

↳ evidence does not guarantee subject to be true

KNOWLEDGE

↳ approach to knowledge

• internalism

→ grounded in knowledge available to the knower

→ knowledge is what you understand

- accessible upon reflection

• externalism

→ grounded entirely in what is external, but not necessarily what is accessible

→ knowledge can be what you do not understand

- need a right source of connection between belief and reality to obtain knowledge

WHAT CONSTRUCTS KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE

↳ sources of knowledge

• perception

- what you see, hear, smell, feel, taste
- active, most often subconscious interpretation of raw sensory input into meaningful coherent experience
- subjective depending on perceiver

→ strengths

- direct access to reality (first hand experience)
- foundation for learning and experience

e.g. scientific knowledge

↳ comes based on perception of observations

→ weaknesses

- sensory limitations

↳ different animals, even within humans can perceive things differently

- past experiences

↳ people become biased to what they are actually seeing

- illusions

↳ misinterpretation of what is seen

- subjectivity

↳ influenced by emotion/bias

↳ cooked perception
↳ perception after being processed in the brain

vs

raw perception
↳ what people see directly before processing

→ types of perception

- direct realism

↳ what you see is what it is

- indirect realism

↳ object is mind independent, and you have to perceive it

- idealism

↳ shape is dependent on how you see it

- phenomenism

↳ logical conclusions made from sense data

WHAT CONSTRUCTS KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE

↳ sources of knowledge

- reason

↳ process of thinking about something logically

↳ logical justification needs to be valid

- premise logically leads to conclusion

- conclusion must be true if premises are true and sound → conclusion follows premises

↳ logic

- propositions put together, linked

↳ ways of reasoning

- deduction

↳ general theory to a specific case with no causal link to doubt it (thing + thing = thing)

- induction

↳ make a conclusion about a general thing based on specific instances (thing 1 + thing 2 + ... = conclusion)
 probabilistic

- abduction

↳ linking two things together (thing 1 thing 2)

- testimony

↳ how we acquire beliefs based on the word of others
 conclusion (interference)

↳ most of our knowledge comes from testimony

↳ perspectives on testimony

- reductionist

↳ testimonial justification is reducible to other sources of knowledge

↳ someone must have positive reasons to trust the word of others

↳ issues

↳ if testimony is used to outline positive reasons, leads to an infinite loop

↳ trustworthiness determined by the topic

- non-reductionist

↳ testimony is a basic source of knowledge, and is justified by default

↳ issues

↳ hearers are irrationally gullible

- hybrid view

↳ 2 ways

↳ adults need to have possible reasons but children do not

↳ speaker + hearer responsibility

→ hearer needs a reason to believe speaker is trustworthy (reason need not be strong)

→ speaker needs to be trustworthy

WHAT CONSTRUCTS KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE

↳ sources of knowledge

• memory

↳ reliance varies correspondingly with its vividness

↳ allows us to retain, organise and recall past information and experiences

↳ types of retained knowledge

- declarative knowledge

↳ stores factual information

↳ includes semantic memory (general facts) and episodic memory (personal experiences)

- non-declarative knowledge

↳ procedural memory

↳ stores knowledge such as motor skills and habits

↳ priming

↳ exposure to stimulus influences response to another

↳ problems with memory

- episodicity

↳ episodic memory's core purpose is epistemic knowledge ^{not relating to}

↳ memory might be distorted

↳ imaginative simulation rather than perfectly recorded truth

↳ subjective awareness vs reality

↳ episodic memory requires conscious awareness of self experiencing an event in subjective time

→ leads to people confidently hold false beliefs of the past

→ if you later acquire evidence that your memory of an event is wrong, justification disappears

- mnemicity

↳ difficult to distinguish memory from imagination

WHAT CONSTRUCTS KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE

↳ sources of knowledge

• consciousness

↳ foundation of first person perspective

↳ types of consciousness

- creature consciousness

→ sentience

↳ ability to sense and respond to the world

→ wakefulness

↳ being normally alert

→ self-consciousness

↳ being aware that one is aware

- state consciousness

→ awareness of the state

↳ being directly aware you are in that mental state

→ qualitative states (qualia)

↳ experience that makes up our perspective

→ phenomenal states

↳ what an experience feels like

↳ sub-categories

- introspection

→ process we learn about our mental state and processes

→ conditions:

↳ mentality

• must generate knowledge about mental states

↳ first-person

• must generate knowledge about your own mind

↳ temporal proximity

• must target ongoing/recently past mental life

→ philosophical approaches

↳ self detection accounts

• introspection is a quasi-perceptual process that detects pre-existing mental states

↳ introspective pluralism

• no single faculty, but instead many processes for introspection

WHAT CONSTRUCTS KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE

↳ sources of knowledge

consciousness

↳ subcategories

- introspection

→ things that can be introspected

↳ conscious experiences

↳ propositional attitudes

↳ current thoughts

→ products of introspection

↳ acquaintance

• direct, non-judgemental awareness

↳ phenomenal concepts

• concepts partly constituted by the experience they pick out

↳ attention

• pointing at an experience without categorising it

- emotion

→ complex mental state that helps us react to things

→ views

↳ emotions are perceptions of value

e.g. fear means there is danger

↳ emotions as feelings of import

• intentional ways of experiencing what matters to us

- intuition

→ mental state which proposition seems true in a direct non-inferential manner

→ nature

↳ intuition as *Sui Generis* Seemings

• distinctive conscious episode in which a proposition intellectually seems true

→ challenges

↳ lack of independent calibration

• source justified only if we can independently calibrate its reliability

↳ unreliable

• paradoxes and interpersonal disagreements prove it unreliable

Plato (rationalist)

↳ theory of forms

- these forms exist for us to know things (because we observe them)

↳ book called Meno talks about

- that there are things (found through reasoning)
- Socratic questioning

→ you can know things without experiencing it

→ it just needs to be rationalised

↳ allegory of the cave

• shows

→ people are reluctant to accept things outside / contradicts their belief

→ people can only see what is in front of them (narrow perspective)

o they also cherry pick which to believe

→ people can only see a bit of life

Aristotle (empiricist)

↳ Aristotle's 4 causes

- material

→ material of things (e.g. wood makes a table)

- formal

→ forms of the thing (e.g. tables are rectangles)

- efficient

→ cause of the thing (e.g. tables are made via hammering it.)

- final

→ purpose of the thing (e.g. tables are made for us to put things at comfortable height)

↳ came up with syllogisms

- conclusion made from 2 premises

Descartes (rationalist)

- ↳ came up with method of systematic doubt
 - doubt everything that could be possibly false
- ↳ foundationalism
 - knowledge must be structured like a building, requiring a single indubitable foundation
- ↳ believes in innatism
 - beliefs are innate and comes from ourselves
- ↳ Evil Demon Thought Experiment
 - introduces radical skepticism about what we know as true
 - since most of what we know is through perception, if the evil demon exists how can we be sure of reality
 - need to experience truth before knowing things are false
 - proven false via
 - the inescapable self
 - to be deceived, one must exist to do so (I think, therefore I am)
 - idea of perfection
 - an imperfect, finite being cannot invent concept of perfection on his own
 - idea of perfection must be placed by the perfect being (in this case God)
 - God as ultimate guarantee
 - God exists, so as God is perfect and infinitely good, deception is a flaw
 - perfect God would not allow a demon to deceive people about reality
 - erasing the demon
 - God is established as the ultimate foundation of truth, evil demon is disproven and dismissed
- circular reasoning (Cartesian circle)
 - by proving God exists to disprove the evil demon, he relies on clear distinct ideas
 - by Descartes rules, we cannot trust clear distinct ideas unless Demon doesn't exist, which requires non-deceptive God to exist
 - therefore circular

Locke (empiricist)

- ↳ believes in tabula rasa (blank slate)
 - theory that infants are devoid of anything innate
 - all knowledge gained through sensory experience
- ↳ all knowledge reducible to sense perception (even reason)
- ↳ ideas are formed from perception
 - **simple ideas** come from 5 senses and reflecting on our mental processes
 - **complex ideas** come from combining simple ideas to make comparisons
 - types
 - ideas of substances
 - type of object
 - ideas of modes
 - properties of the thing
- ↳ memory allows us to retain past experiences that string together an understanding of the world over time

Hume (empiricist)

↳ came up with the copy principle

- shows that there are 2 kinds of perception

- Impressions

- sensations, desires, passions and emotions

- Ideas

- faded copies of impressions

- all our ideas are impressions

- our imagination is confined to our experiences

Kant

↳ aimed to synthesise both empiricism and rationalism
↳ believed in transcendental idealism → knowledge shaped reality
↳ framework only applies to knowledge not reality

• two realms

→ phenomena

o how the world appears to us

→ noumena

o the reality of things existing independently of our perception

↳ argues that

- time and space are constructs (a priori intuitions)
- reality is beyond human perception
- mind actively structures experience and "unity of consciousness" is necessary for us to comprehend the external world to gain knowledge

Thomas Reid

↳ believed testimony is a fundamental irreducible source of knowledge

↳ humans endowed with innate principles

- principle of veracity

→ innate tendency to speak the truth

- principle of credulity

→ natural default disposition to trust what others say

↳ we are justified to believe testimony, unless given a reason to doubt

↳ believes that memory provides immediate, intuitive knowledge of the past

- our senses connect us to the present, memory naturally justifies our beliefs about past events without needing further justification/proof