



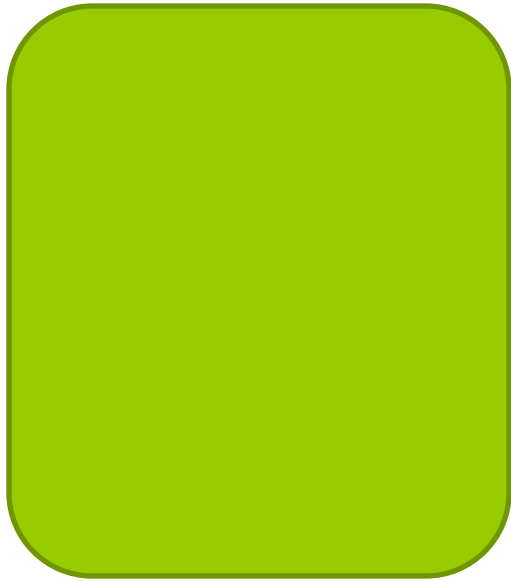
# V71LAR: Locke, Appearance and Reality

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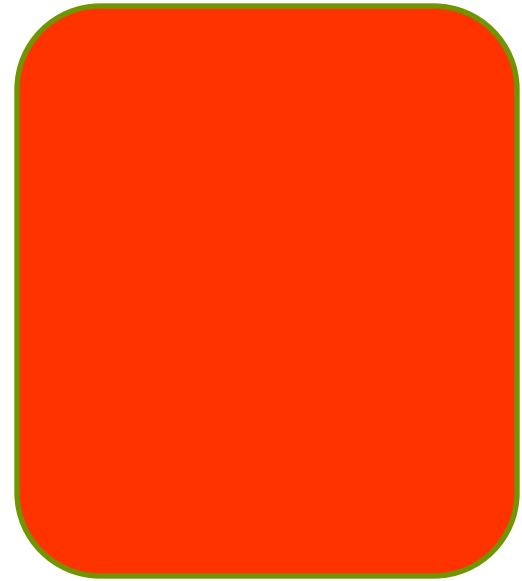
TOPIC 2: WHAT IS IT TO PERCEIVE  
AN OBJECT? Continued...

Are you getting this?

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Yes



No

# Summary of theories of perception

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<b><i>Type of theory</i></b>	<b><i>Things we are directly aware of</i></b>	<b><i>Things we are ultimately aware of</i></b>	<b><i>Talk of tables and chairs is talk of...</i></b>
<b>Indirect Realism</b>	Ideas	External objects	External objects
<b>Direct Realism</b>	External objects	External objects	External objects
<b>Eliminativism</b>	Ideas	Ideas	Nothing at all (so should be abandoned)
<b>Idealism</b>	Ideas	Ideas	Actual Ideas
<b>Phenomenalism</b>	Ideas	Ideas	Actual and possible ideas

# 1. Criticisms of The Argument from Illusion

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- 1) In illusion it appears to the agent as if there is an object which is F.
- 2) In illusion there is no external object which is F.
- 3) Whenever it appears to an agent that there is an object which is F, there is some object which exists and which is F (and this is the immediate object of awareness).

Therefore:

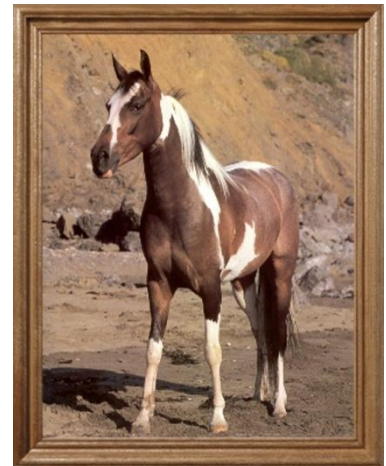
- 4) In illusion there is some internal mental object which is F (and this is the immediate object of awareness).  
[From 1, 2 & 3]
- Problem with (3): Why not say instead that the thing we are immediately aware of (the pencil, for e.g.) appears bent, but actually is not bent?
    - Reply: Hallucination (or 'delusion' - Austin)

# An analogy

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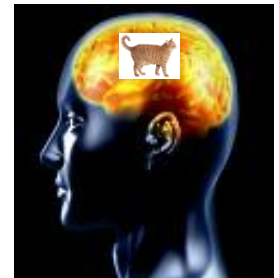


Real horse



Idea

???



Mind

# 1. Criticisms of the Argument from Illusion, ctd.

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- 5) Illusion and veridical perception can be subjectively indistinguishable.
- 6) If illusion and veridical perception involved different immediate objects of awareness, then they would never be subjectively indistinguishable.

Therefore

- 7) Illusion and veridical perception do not involve different immediate objects of awareness. [From 5 & 6]

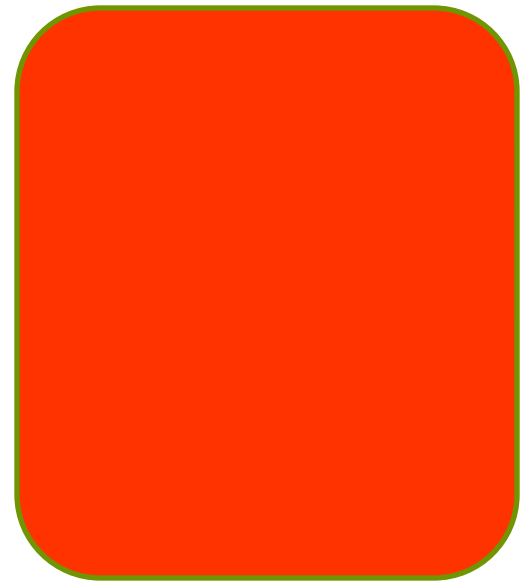
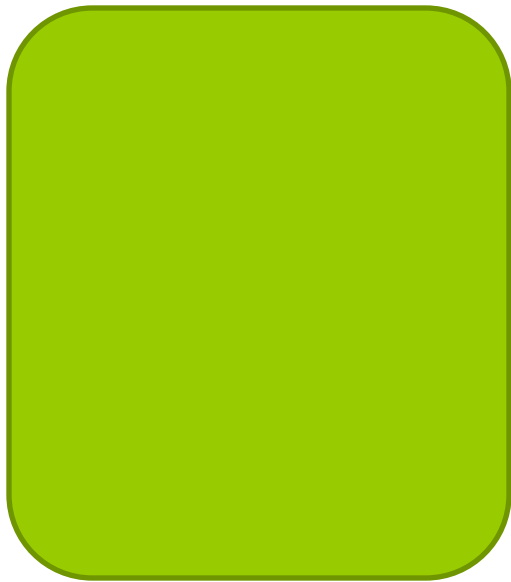
Therefore

- 8) In both illusion and veridical perception there is some internal mental object which is F (and this is the immediate object of awareness). [From 4 & 7]

- Problem with (6): States can be subjectively indistinguishable and yet distinct e.g. sunburn & chemical scarring

Clear?

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## 2. Another Argument for Indirect Realism

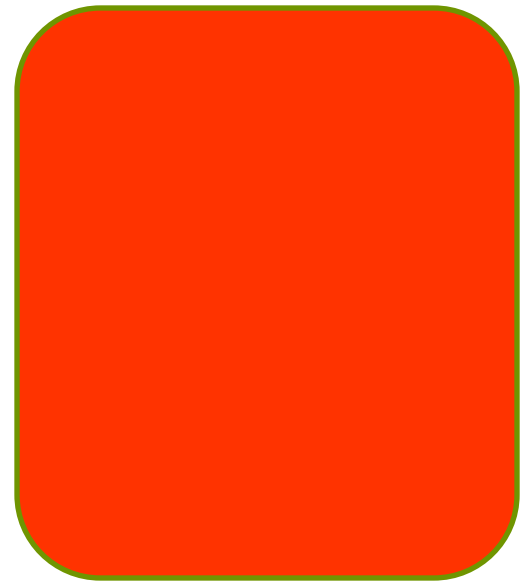
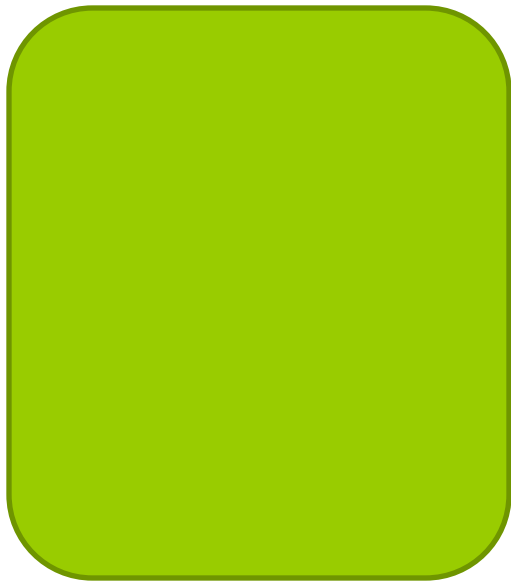
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- **The time-lag argument**
- **See Huemer §2.6, Dancy chapter 10.4.**
- There is always a time-delay (however small) between an event in the physical world and an agents' perception. Hence we cannot be directly aware of events in the physical world.
- Problem: Why assume that direct awareness is *instantaneous*? (Recall the definition of 'direct')



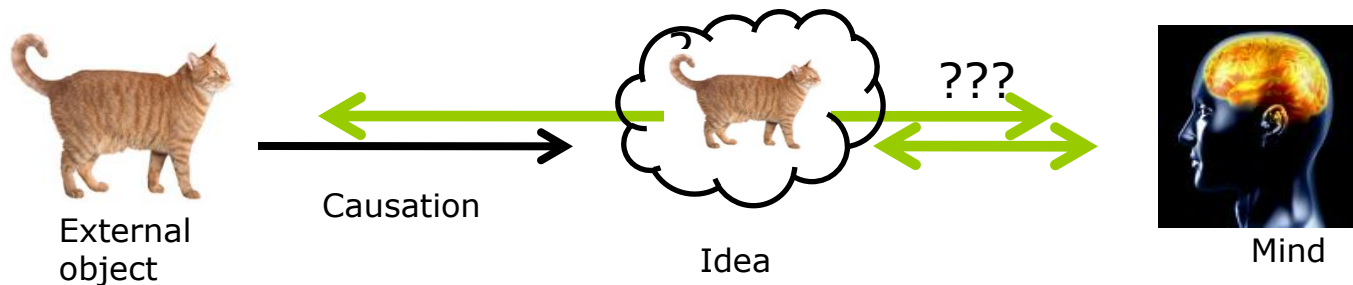
Clear?

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# 3. Objections to Indirect Realism

- **The regress problem (see Lowe pp.39-40).** Indirect realism explains the perception-of-material-objects in terms of the perception-of-Ideas.

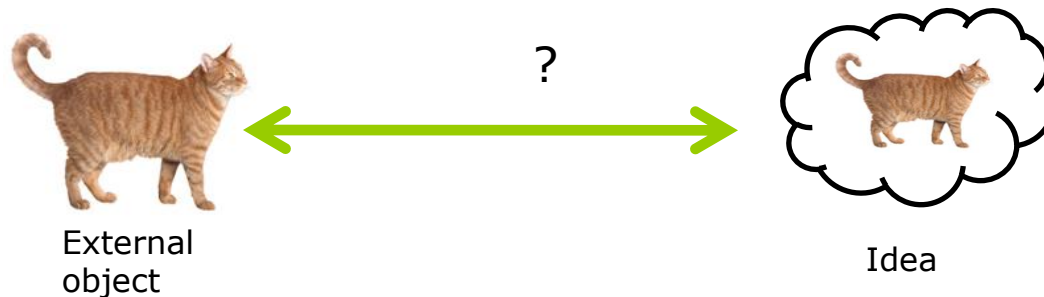


- But: if the '???' relation is explained in the same way as the '?' relation (i.e. via an intermediate object), we get a regress.
- If the '???' relation is taken as basic we haven't explained perception at all.
- **Reply:** Accept that perception of Ideas *is* basic, but still helps understand perception of material objects, and the overall picture is well-motivated. (Lowe: All analyses must stop somewhere).

### 3. Objections to Indirect Realism, ctd.

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- **The Sceptical Problem (see Dancy chapter 11.2, Huemer §3.2).** Indirect realism leaves us behind a 'veil of perception' unable to form justified beliefs about material objects.



- In particular, we cannot *deduce* the nature of the external world, nor use *induction* (which requires establishing correlations between independently observed phenomena).
- **Possible response:** We can use *abduction* to infer the nature of the external world (e.g. Russell).

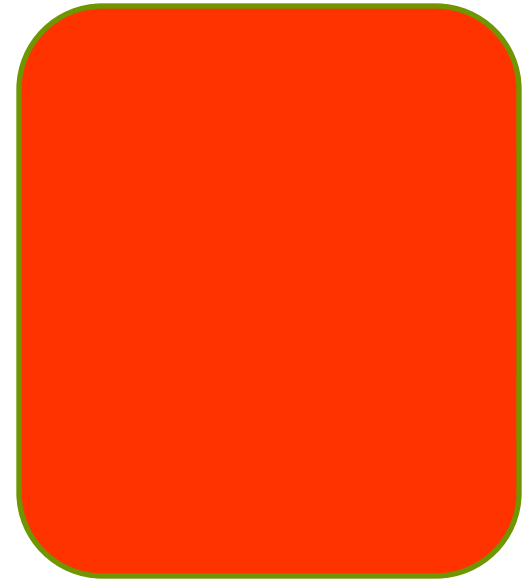
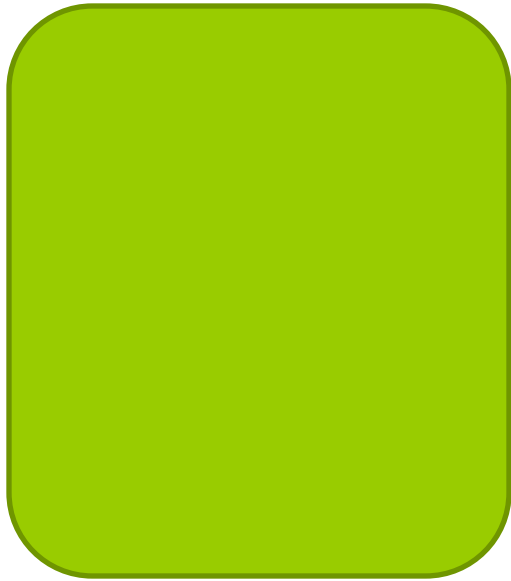
# 3. Objections to Indirect Realism, ctd.

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- **Ontological problems with the idea of 'sense-data'.**
- Sense-data are supposed to be:
  - Genuine objects
  - Representative of external, physical objects (e.g. by resembling them)
  - **First problem: location (see Huemer §3.3).** Where are sense-data? If they are material then they don't seem to be in the head (there is nothing table-shaped in the head when one perceives a table). If they are non-material, mental, objects then how can they interact with material objects?
  - **Second problem: independence (see Lowe pp.41-2).** If two things stand in a genuine relation they must have logically independent existences.
  - **Third problem: representational powers (See Dancy chapter 11.2).** How do sense data get to represent external objects? Sense data themselves don't have size or shape, for example.

Clear?

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## 4. Arguing for Phenomenalism

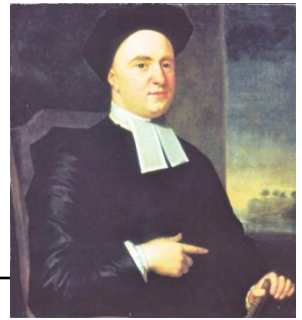
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- **Epistemological motivation:** Suppose you are convinced of the existence of sense-data and also of our knowledge of material objects, but are impressed by the sceptical objection. Then you might think that material objects *just are* sense data. I.e. you might argue
  - (1) We are only ever directly aware of sense-data.
  - (2) We know facts about material objects e.g. We know that: this table is brown.
  - (3) If we are only ever directly aware of sense-data, we can know nothing beyond sense-data (the sceptical objection)

Therefore, material objects such as tables *just are* collections of sense-data.

## 4. Arguing for Phenomenalism

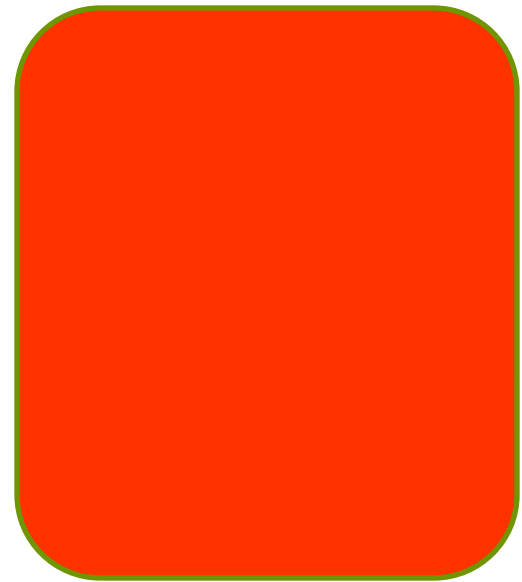
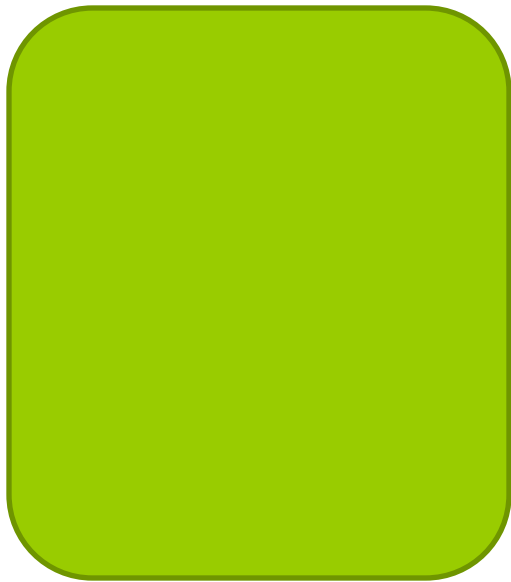
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- **Analytic motivation** (Berkeley 1710 §§8-10). Suppose you are convinced of the existence of sense-data. Then you think that material objects cannot be seen (directly) whereas sense-data can.
- But it makes no sense to compare objects that cannot be seen with those that can (the invisible with visible). So material objects cannot resemble sense-data.
- So what are material objects like? Since we are only ever directly aware of our own sense-data, we can form no concept of material objects (cf. Locke's analytic empiricism: all concepts are about the objects of experience).
- Therefore the concept of material object must be no more than the concept of sense-data. This is Phenomenalism.
- **NB.** Both arguments for Phenomenalism begin with accepting the existence of sense-data. (Berkeley interpreted Locke as adhering to indirect realism and felt that Phenomenalism was the logical conclusion of the arguments for indirect realism).

Clear?

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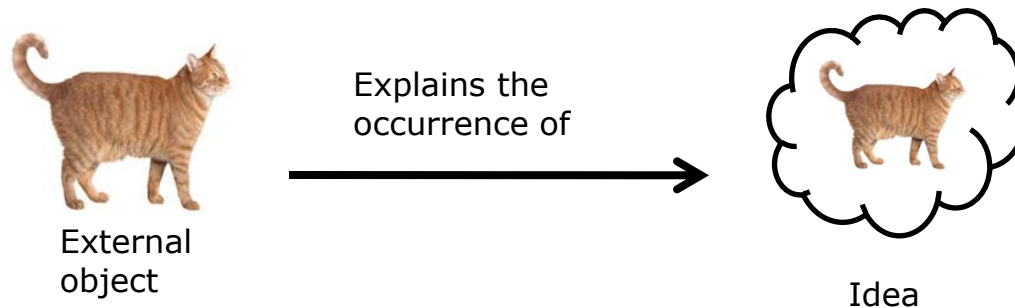




# 5. Problem for Phenomenalism

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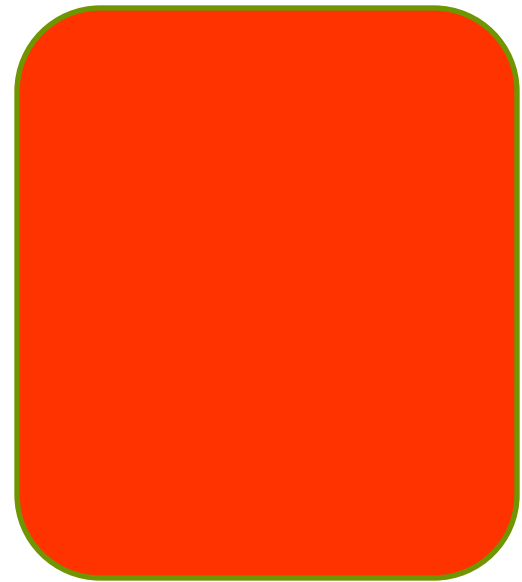
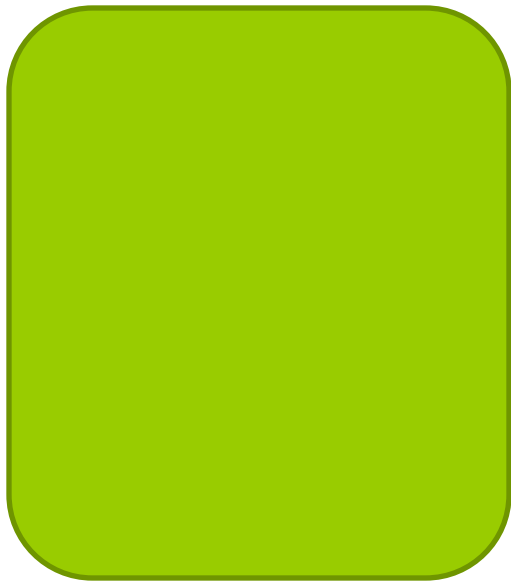
- **The Explanation Problem (see Dancy chapter 11.1).**



- Material objects are typically taken to *explain* our perceptions of them. But according to Phenomenalism, material objects just *are* collections of perceptual experiences, so they cannot explain those experiences.
- E.g. According to Phenomenalism 'There is a table in the lecture hall' *means the same as* 'If lecture-hall ideas were to occur, then table-ideas would occur'.
- But what makes the conditional true? Phenomenalism has no answer.

Clear?

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## 6. Interpreting Locke on Perception

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- Lowe (pp.42-57 & 59-65) claims that Locke is 'set up' as an indirect realist by most commentators so they can gleefully knock down a deliberately weak position (a 'straw man' argument).
- Lowe suggests an alternative interpretation of Locke: Adverbialism (a version of Direct Realism).

# 6. Interpreting Locke on Perception, ctd.

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- **Key points of Lowe's new interpretation of Locke:**
- There is still a causal connection between material objects and our perceptions of them.
- Ideas are not distinct objects, rather they are *ways of being aware* of the world.
  - E.g. to have an idea of a table is not to bear a relation to a distinct mental sense-datum, rather it is to be aware of the world *in a table-like-way*.
  - So rather than 'Eric saw an idea of a table' we have 'Eric sensed in-a-table-like-way'.
  - Compare 'Eric wore a broad grin' with 'Eric grinned broadly'.
  - In each case the former construction suggests two things, the latter only one.
- What is it to 'sense in a table-like-way'? It is to have a mental state that *represents* the world as containing a table.

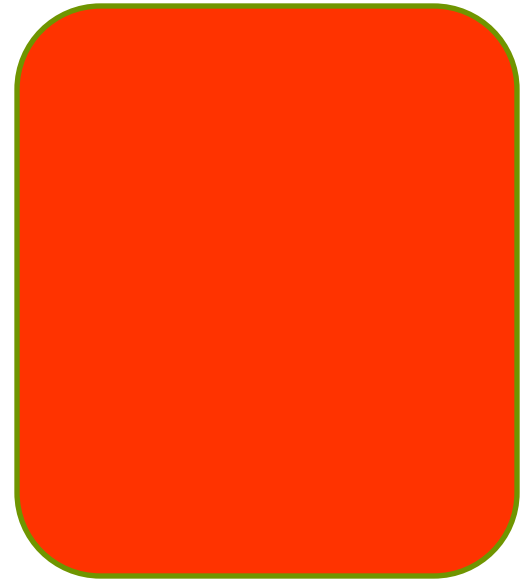
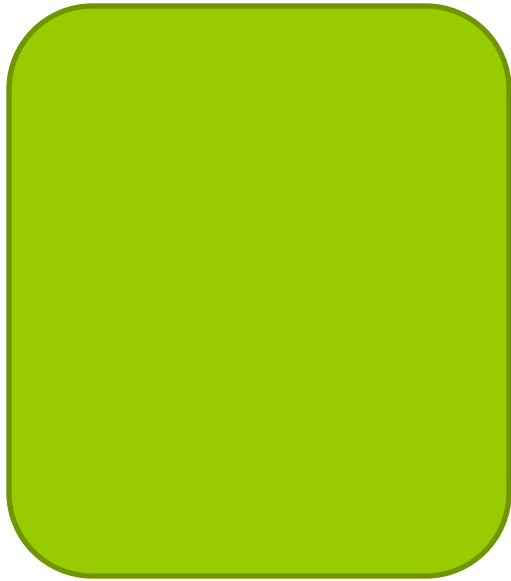
## 6. Interpreting Locke on Perception, ctd.

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- So on this view we need an account of how mental states *represent* the world as being a certain way (if not by resemblance).
- Lowe suggests *structural isomorphism*: if a mental state co-varies with some feature of the world, then it represents that feature of the world.
- E.g. Suppose a mental state has an electric charge level. Suppose the charge of the mental state co-varies with the colour of perceived objects (so yellow creates a state with charge  $x$ , and red a state with charge  $y$ ). Then a mental state with a given charge can be said to represent the world as having the correlated colour.
- NB. Such a view deals with the problem of hallucination, and avoids the ontological difficulties with sense-data (which were introduced to do the same work).

Clear?

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# Key points for this lecture

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- Problems with the argument from illusion.
- Time-lag argument for indirect realism
- Problems with Indirect Realism
- Berkeley's arguments from indirect realism to phenomenalism.

# Reading and References

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## **Compulsory reading for your second seminar**

- E.J. Lowe *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Locke on Human Understanding* Chapter 3, first three sections (pp.35-47) & final section.
- Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Book II, chapters 1, 2 & 9.

## **References for this lecture**

- Berkeley, *The Principles of Human Knowledge*, sections 1-25
- Huemer, M. "Sense-data" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Dancy, J. *An Introduction to Contemporart Epistemology* (Blackwell 1985), chapters 10-11.
- For full reading list for this topic, see module guide.



# Questions?

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