



Psychological Reality: Why We See the World the Way We Do

Video Transcript

Reality – the perceivable

What is a representation? Let's take another look at the elements that are part of our perception.

So far, we've made the distinction between the objective and the phenomenal reality. Any object in the external world is part of the objective reality. On the other hand, any object within our subjective phenomenal reality is a mental representation of such a physical object. So a physical apple is not the same thing as a mental representation of an apple.

But we can make another helpful distinction between two kinds of mental representations. There are some mental representations that we recognize as such: for example, memories from our childhood, imagined objects such as dragons, or simply our next lunch. We recognize that these are images in our mind. That we can modify them at will. And that they can be entirely fantastical.

But mental representations that are caused or formed through perception are different. If we see a physical object, we don't usually recognize the mental representation of it as such. Instead, the representation is experientially identified with the external world, inseparable from it, and imbued with the quality of being real.

This gives us a third sense of reality. One that lies at the overlap of the external and the phenomenal: the perceivable.

So, what we encounter through perception is considered real.