

Intro to knowledge

Are there “philosophical facts”?

- An unusual thing about philosophy is that there’s debate about *everything*, from the very beginning.
- You should not read this book expecting to find out the universally accepted elementary groundwork – there isn’t any in philosophy.
- What there is, instead, is a series of questions, each with several different answers proposed by various philosophers.

(Martin, Introduction)

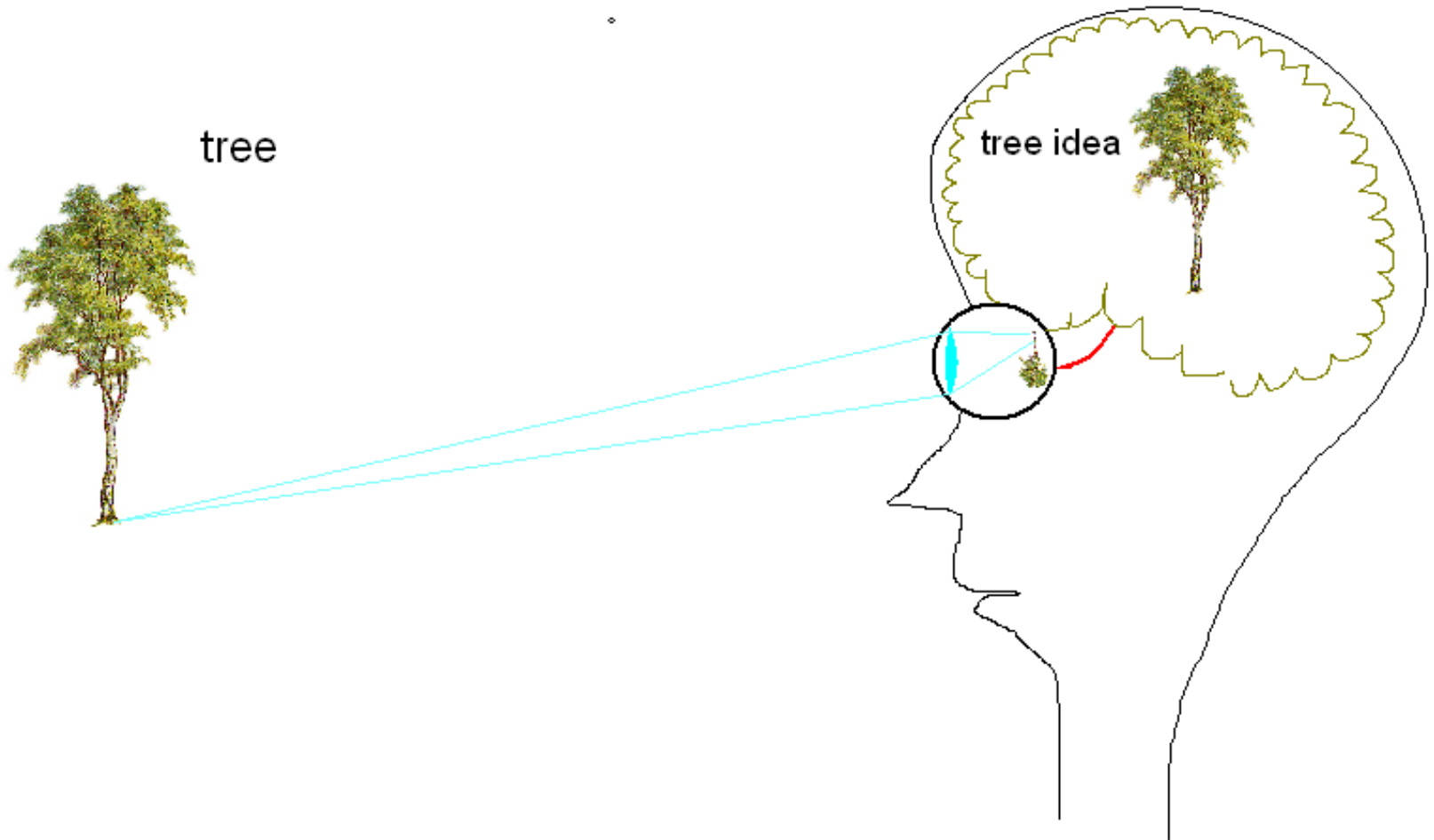
What does the author/instructor think?

- Some readers unfamiliar with this sort of thing would be tempted to look among the various responses to find the one the author really wants the reader to believe in.
 - Or the course instructor?
 - (Who cares what *he* thinks?)
- Or else you might give up on trying to figure out which answers are right and which are wrong.
 - This response will make things boring

Do philosophy

- Here you can start *doing* philosophy –
 - evaluating different positions
 - trying to answer questions
 - thinking critically and creatively

Perception is indirect



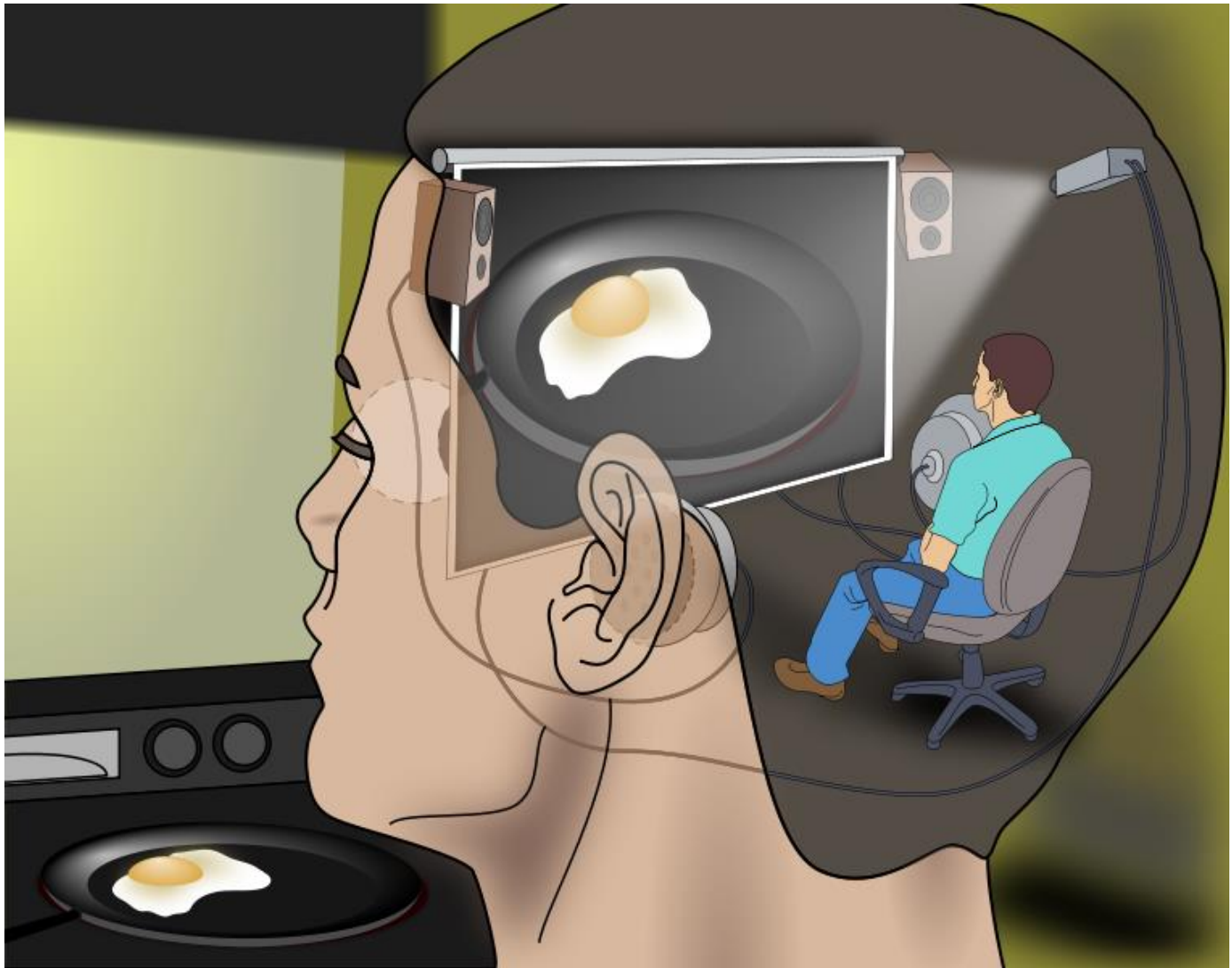
The T-rex doesn't move!



[youtube.com/brusspup](https://www.youtube.com/brusspup)

Hallucinations

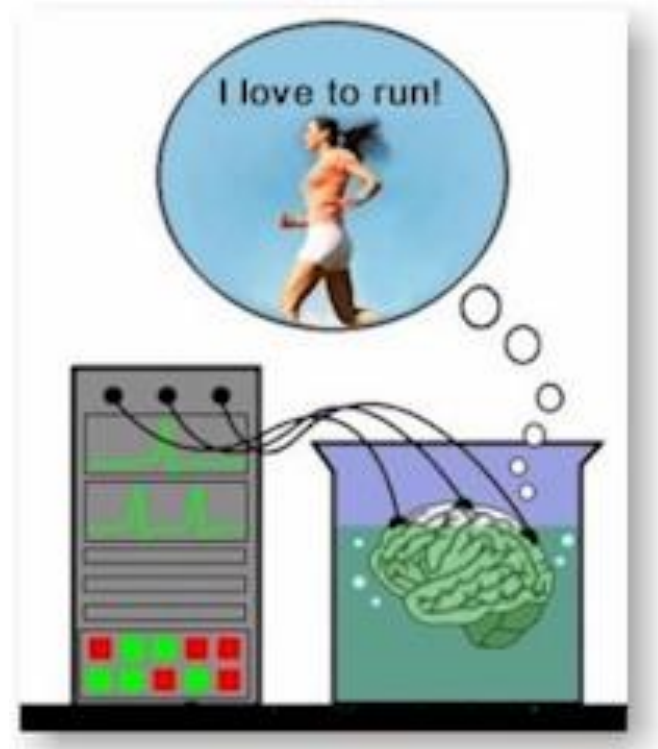




- The 'veil of perception'. (Though there is no homunculus.)

Sceptical Scenarios

- Descartes' demon
- The Matrix
- Putnam's "brain in a vat"
- The world is 5 minutes old
- Solipsism (there are no other people)



Radical Scepticism

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 connexion with objects. The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning. (David Hume)

The Magic Eight Ball

Imagine there were a community in which use of the eight ball was an accepted method of arriving at conclusions. Suppose you meet one of these eight-ball reasoners, and you ask him why he believes that the eight ball is a reliable informant. He swiftly takes out his Magic Eight Ball, says, “Are you reliable?” and turns it over. ...

... suppose a definite “Yes” answer appears, and the eight-ball reasoner triumphantly declares that the reliability of the eight ball has been established.

(Huemer)

Radical scepticism

1. Representative realism
2. Internalism

Radical scepticism

What can we learn from sceptical arguments?

When a person first hears about the brain-in-a-vat scenario, he is apt to have one of three reactions.

1. “That’s stupid. I refuse to talk about that.”
2. “Gosh, maybe I am a brain in a vat. How would I know?”
3. “What is wrong with this argument? And what can I learn from that about the nature of knowledge?”