

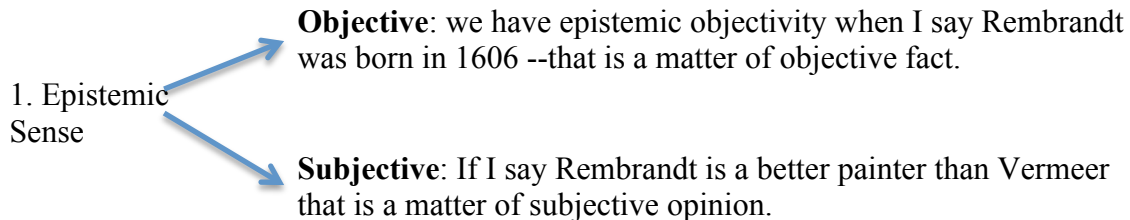
My Searle's Oslo Talk Notes:

Philosophy often starts with a paradox

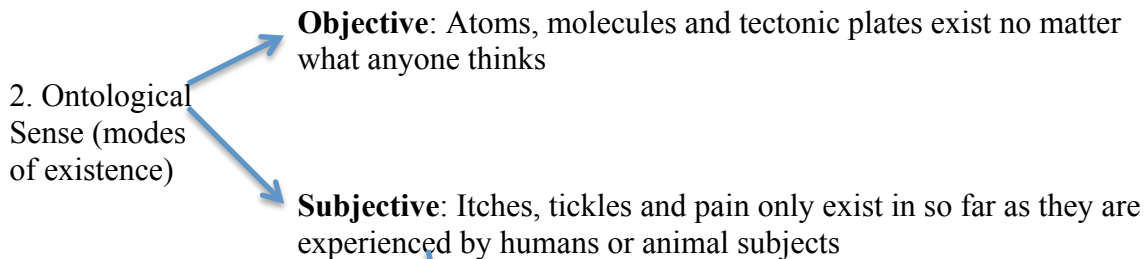
There is a class of facts in the world that are **only what they are because you think that they are—because of human subjective agreement.**

Eg: money

Leads to a crucial distinction: There are two senses to the objective/subjective distinctions



This distinction between epistemic objectivity and subjectivity is based on a more profound distinction between modes of existence.



The epistemic is based on a profound distinction: modes of existence

Note: As a result you can have an epistemic objective claim about a domain that is ontologically subjective.

This bears on the mind/body problem:

It is said by some that consciousness is subjective and that science only deals with the objective. Therefore, it is claimed there can be no science of consciousness

Searle disagrees with that. He says you can have an epistemically objective science about a domain that is ontologically subjective (like consciousness).

Searle asserts it is true we are trying to find objective truths (science) about a domain that is ontologically subjective.

Searle says we tend to forget this, but we study economics but forget it, too, is an epistemically objective study about a domain that is ontologically subjective. The domain they study is created by human ontological subjectivity: money, property, exchanges, and the stock market...and all the rest of it...

Now we can go and ask, what is it about these facts that make them epistemically objective? How does it work?

It is by the application of certain principles. Here is a list:

1. That we are making a distinction between **observer relative** and the observer independent. This is important because of what he just said: **the phenomena we are going to be studying are observer relative**: money, property, government, marriage, etc.

We are discussing a class of observer relative facts.

2. These **facts** require the existence of human cooperation—what he calls **collective intentionality**. It is only because we collectively agree or we “accept” that this is money, that this is Oslo University...and so on. In addition, it is only by the collective intentionality of observers that these facts exist.

Collective intentionality is used for? Now we get into more detail. Human beings and some animals have the capacity to assign functions to certain objects, where the function is always observer relative.

For example, Searle and we carry around in our wallets certain objects that perform function (driver’s license, money, etc.), where we have assigned the function to the object. The functions are always observer relative.

3. We typically **assign the function** in virtue in **virtue of physical structure**.

However, the genius of the human circle:

Human beings as far as he knows are the only animals that have the capacity can assign functions where the function is not performed in virtue of or performed solely in virtue of the function the physical structure; but rather, that there is a **collective assignment** to the object or the person of having a certain status.

4. Status function

In addition, with that status a function that can only be performed in virtue of that collective acceptance. Eg. money → not in virtue of physical structure, but because of status assigned.

- a. Status functions are pervasive
- b. How does the ontology of status function work?

He thought he had a neat answer (but was wrong)—all status functions were a result of the application of a simple principle; it seemed to him there were two kinds of rules:

- 1) Rules that regulate antecedently existing forms of behavior (like driving on the right);
- 2) there are ones that create the very possibility of the behavior, like rules to a game like a game of chess.

## 5. Constitutive rules

These rule always have the same structure:  $x$  counts as a  $y$  in context  $c$ . (like moves in a game)

This seemed beautiful him  $\rightarrow$  you gradually build up human society with repeated applications of this constitutive rule

It has two formal features:

- a. It iterates upward: like the language used to get married  $\rightarrow$  words count as promises in a certain context, which counts as a contract of the form:  $x_1$  counts as  $y_1$  in context  $c$ , which leads to  $x_2$  counts as  $y_2$ ...
- b. It also spreads out laterally  $\rightarrow$  you never have just a single institutional fact; it is imbedded in a complex interlocking structure. A widespread network of status functions...society is amazing has so much power when it is so invisible.
- c.

He liked that theory—a single devise that is repeated over and over.

However, after publishing this he received criticism for the following reasons:

He realized on his own that sometimes you just create an institutional fact. Eg. Sally is going to be the chairman (chairperson, hehe) of the meeting. He calls things like this, “ad hoc” cases.

Another one  $\rightarrow$  sometimes you can create an institutional fact without having an  $x$  term.... There is what Barry Smith calls the ‘freestanding  $y$ ’ term. eg. money.

For instance, the electronic symbol creates the fact I have a certain amount of money. The symbol does not create anything structurally, but it does create the status of having money—**an electronic trace that represents a certain amount of money**. The magnetic trace is not money; it just represents an amount of money.

He thinks this is a “stunning” fact that institutions are based on things like this. It exists only by the fact it is **represented**; but the representation does not represent anything but itself! It creates the fact by representing the fact.

Corporations are an example of this. Searle thinks that the limited liability corporation is one of the most ingenious creations of the human circle. The corporation has no physical existence...it is true that the corporation has offices but legally (in California) all you need to do is perform a speech act (file for it).

Therefore, it ended up there were ad hoc cases and what he called “free standing cases.”

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To explain all that (above) he needs to say a few more things about language. Intuitively we feel you cannot have these institutional facts without language, in a way that you can have language without these other institutional facts. You can imagine a society that had language did not have government, or private property or marriage.

However, you could not imagine the elaborate institutional facts in a society without language. What is about language? To describe how institutional language works, Searle wants to talk about language generally.

From an evolutionary point of view, **language is built on top of pre-linguistic biologically more primitive forms of intentionality.**

**He defines intentionality as the ability of the mind to represent objects in space and affairs in the world and includes things like beliefs, and hopes and desires and perception....**

The term ‘intentionality’ is confusing for English speakers because intending is just one facet of intentionality. (Digresses into mentioning how this ambiguity came about in English, which owes its roots to the German language, where the intentions in intentionality and philosophical intentionality are not ambiguous in their language.)

(Primitive intentions are expressed in speech acts by making noises—apparently, the noises are given meaning when the truth conditions of the speech act are satisfied.)

Intentionality has the property of a state that can be signified like this: S (p)

Goes to chalk board and draws:

Where (p) is the state of affairs where it is raining.

S intentional states are like: I believe it is raining, I fear it is raining, I hope it is raining...

Speech acts have the same structure F (p). Now the ways to get from S (p) intentional states to speech acts like F (p) are that you learn to make noises with our voice; you say things like....

In those cases, you create meaning by imposing the conditions of satisfaction—that is the truth conditions on to your utterance. You represent how things are by intentionally producing a noise that enables you to represent how things are. You can represent how things are by a convention.

(S) P (speech act P)

(F) P (fact satisfying the conditions given in the speech act)

Perceptions, love, hate, lust, disgust, etc. represents states of intentionality when they express things they way the are or the way you would want them to be...all of this is pre-linguistic.

What happens when you get language? **You take this pre-linguistic form of representation and you make it explicit.** These things with this structure, the structure “that it is raining” they have conditions under which they are true or false. **He calls these “conditions of satisfaction.”**

The belief will be satisfied only if it is true. The desire will be satisfied only it is fulfilled. The intention is satisfied only when it is carried out. (Therefore, you need truth conditions.)

The secret of understanding speaker meaning is that we have conventions and we have learned to make noises through our mouth that have conditions of satisfaction. The same conditions of satisfaction as the intentional states, so that if I believe it is raining, my belief is satisfied only if it is raining; but if I make noises, “it is raining” I impose those conditions of satisfaction onto the noises. **That is a major human achievement**, that is, the creation of meaning—speaker meaning.

Okay, then, next step. How many ways do we have of doing that?

Well, there are at least two ways of doing that:

1) If you make a statement or an assertion, or a description, you present me with a noise that is supposed to represent how things are in the world. The conditions of satisfaction go from the “noise” to the world. Searle calls that the “word to world” direction of fit?. Noises are supposed to represent how things are in the world.

Speaker meaning



Word-to-World direction  
These Can be True or False

Now many utterances that we make do not have that “Word-to-World” direction. Things like orders, commands, promises where the aim is not to have the representation of the world, but instead of representing how we would want the world to be or intend the world to be. Searle says of this latter category that they have the upward direction – the “world-to-word” direction of fit



World-to-Word direction.

Notice we do not say of these orders, commands, and promises, etc. that they are true or false, but that they are of the obey or disobey category (or broken).

The first downward direction is characteristic of assertions; the second upward direction is characteristic of commands, promises, pledges and so forth. They are given in order to change the world to match the words.

Then there comes an amazing development! In addition, as far as he knows only humans can do this. **We have a class of utterances that make something the case** and thus they achieve the upward or world to word direction; **but, they do it by representing the thing we are trying to make to be the case as already being the case.** And Searle thinks that is amazing.

Moreover, it turns out that you have both directions of fit?



Once they create a reality—they create a reality and thus achieve a world to word direction—but they do it by representing that reality as existing. Searle says, “I just call this “Declarations.” This is where you create a reality by declaring that reality as existing. He seems to be saying the “direction” is both ways, word to world and world to word.

He uses a different term, “Assertives” where you assert something is the case and it is either true or false. (**Word-to-world** direction.)

By contrast, the **world-to-word** direction is described in two categories:

“Directives,” which are orders or commands,

and the “Commissives,” which are promises, vows, and pledges.

My Summarizing on this so far:

There is a double direction (as pictured by the arrow above pointing up and down) direction that he calls –“Declaration”

There is also the word-to-world direction he calls “Assertives”

In addition, there is a world-to-word category, which can be broken down into two groups, the “Directives” and the “Commissives”.

Now he wishes to advance a very strong thesis: all of human institutional reality (driver’s licenses, money, cocktail parties, summer vacations) is created by repeated representations that have the logical form of “Declarations.” 31:11