

**Aspects of Western Philosophy**  
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**Module -19**  
**Lecture – 19**  
**David Hume**  
**The external world and the self**  
**Personal identity**  
**Rejection of metaphysics**  
**Skepticism**  
**Reason and the passions**

Welcome to this course on Aspects on Western Philosophy, Module 19. We will continue with the discussion on David Hume's philosophy, particularly some issues which we are going to take up in this lecture are the following. We will discuss the concepts of the external world and self we have already seen that there are certain assumptions or certain basic features of Humian philosophy, which emphasizes or which rather says that impressions are the starting point of all knowledge and where there are no impressions no knowledge. If you assume this then what would happen to the external world?

Because, the world of objects as we see it in front of us, for instance when I came to this room 2 days back for delivering a lecture, I essentially found the same objects here, which I find today as well, there are several chairs in front of me there is a camera, there are computers, there are several other things they remain the same. Apparently I would in my day to day language I would say that, it is the same room where I delivered my lecture 2 days back.

But philosophically can we say that that is a question. Can we say that it is the same room? Or to say that it is the same room, or the same chair which I saw yesterday or 2 days back or the same laptop computer which I used 2 days back, all these imply or presuppose that objects remain the same or some sort of self identity of objects they remain the there is a kind of continued existence of objects is presupposed. It is OK, as far as day to day conversation is concerned; it is all right to take for granted the continued existence of this world because otherwise it is impossible for us to live. Because I saw the same person yesterday and I meet him today on the way and I greet

him or I know a person for the past ten 15 years, and when I meet him today I greet him and we talked to each other, we had a long conversation again about past memories and all that, all these are possible because we assume that objects exist continuously, there is a continued existence of objects including persons.

But if you follow the epistemological foundations, or the epistemological prescriptions of empiricism, Hume is trying to remind us that this is not possible. So, philosophically speaking it is problematic to believe that objects exist; number one independent of or perceptions of them, number 2 continued existence of objects. So, these are some of the issues which we will mainly figure in this lecture, and here we can see that there is a resemblance with Buddhism in India. Buddhism also does not consider the world as we see it existing.

There again the objects they have a theory called Kshanigavada momentariness, theory of momentariness, nothing exists more than an object. So, what about the continuity of objects then, the continued existence which we apparently experience how do you account for that? So, Buddhism says that it is an attribution of the mind and Hume also to a very large extent subscribes to such a conception. He says that it is a habit of the mind; there are customs conventions which forces to speak in that way. So, again reminds us the kind of distinction which Berkeley maintains between the vulgar and the wise. I speak with the vulgar, but think with the wise this is what Berkeley said. So, Hume also apparently refers to such kind of a distinction, when he talks about a kind of belief he says that believe in a continued existence of external objects is problematic.

The other issue which we are going to discuss in this lecture is the notion of personal identity. When you talk about the continued existence of objects, I am basically referring to the world of objects which essentially lie outside me. But when I talk about personal identity it is about me, it is about myself when I say me or myself or when I say I came to this room 2 days back or I knew him or I studied 20 years back I studied in that university, or I know this person for the past 25 years, when I say use this I, I apparently mean that there is a kind of continued existence, the same I who existed 25 years back existed today as well.

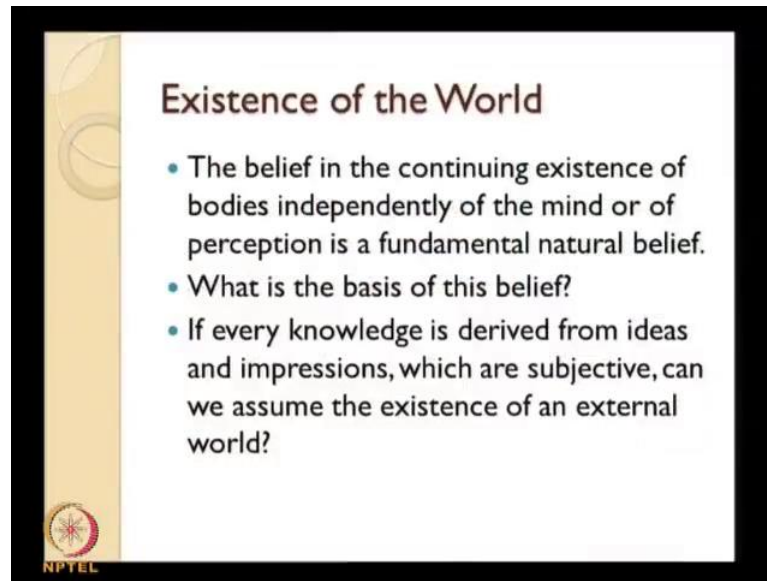
So, here there is an assumption about the identity of the person, individual identity. So, can we really talk about individual identity in this fashion it is, again a day to as far as

day to day conversation is concerned or normal day to day life is concerned this is all right. We practical life is possible because we assume that people are maintained some sort of personal identity. But philosophically can we say that and Berkeley as we have seen would assert that as far as the external world of objects are concerned we cannot say that they exist independent of as per perceiving them.

But as long as the thinking substance or the mind, spiritual substance is concerned Berkeley is sure that it exists independent. Independent of anything else, it has got an existence. So, Berkeley's ontology is constitutive of ideas number 1. Number 2 minds or spiritual substances and number 3 God. Now when you come to David Hume, interestingly as I mentioned in the beginning, Hume actually what Hume does is he takes the empiricist logic to its logical conclusion. So, he asserts that nothing of this sort is possible, you cannot talk about external world of objects as independently existing; number 2 you cannot even talk about a mind, a thinking substance, a spiritual substance independent of the impressions which we hit upon. What is the mind? Apart from the bundle of impressions, it is made up of that is the question which Hume raises, that is why I mention Hume's position is very close to the Buddhist view, which also denies a self Niratmyavada.

Now in connection to these major themes, we would discuss this rejection of metaphysics and his advocacy of a kind of moderate form of skepticism, might give it is skepticism and then the kind of importance he has given to passions or sentiment rather than reason. So, he would say that reason is nothing, but it is subservient to sentiment this is what he ultimately concludes.

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The slide is titled "Existence of the World" and contains three bullet points. The NPTEL logo is visible in the bottom left corner of the slide.

- The belief in the continuing existence of bodies independently of the mind or of perception is a fundamental natural belief.
- What is the basis of this belief?
- If every knowledge is derived from ideas and impressions, which are subjective, can we assume the existence of an external world?

So, these are the topics which we would be covering in this lecture. So, let us begin with the existence of the world and the belief in the continuing existence of bodies independently of the mind or of perception is a fundamental natural belief. As I mentioned it is quite natural for human beings to believe in such a world and again without such a belief, without such a supposition, it is impossible for us to engage in day today conversation. We all say that please bring that book, please bring that book which I have given you 2 days back. So, it assumes that the book remains the same, the same book which I had given you 2 days back.

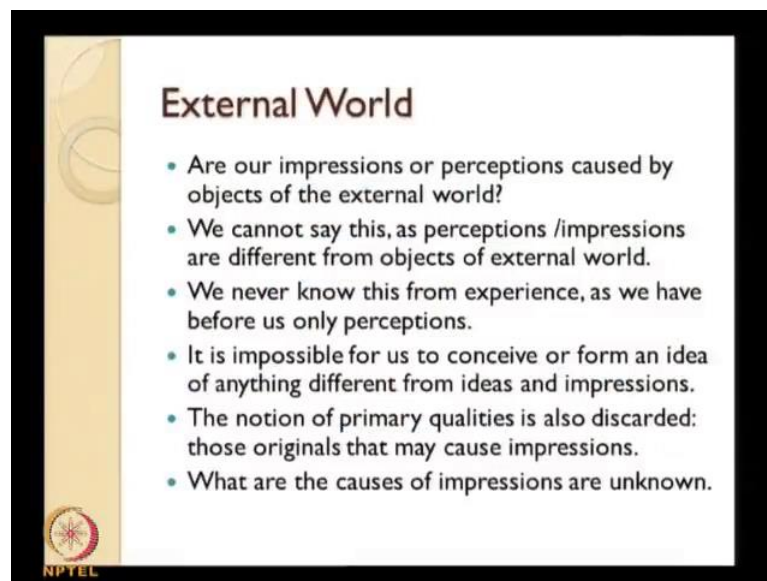
So, how come you I mean philosophically if someone questions challenges this. How can you say that it is the same book? After all there is nothing but impressions. So, the impression of the book I had 2 days back, and impression of the book which I have today, are the one and the same? They are after all impressions, they are and they are discrete they are different you cannot say that they are one and the same. But if you go on arguing like this, then day to day conversation would become impossible, practical life would become impossible, everything would become a meaningless chaos.

So, Hume never proposes such a kind of extreme form of nihilism or skepticism, though his theory amounts to that someone can logically conclude these things from him to some extent, but Hume reminds us that is not my objective, I am only trying to say that or I am only trying to highlight the limitations of human rationality. Human reason is

limited, there are certain limit is you cannot know certain things beyond that limit that is what Hume is trying to remind us. So, in that sense Humian skepticism is a kind of moderate form of skepticism.

Now, what is the basis of the belief in the continued existence of the world of objects? That is the question which we need to primarily address. And here he says that if every knowledge is derived from ideas and impressions, which we have already seen, which are subjective because ideas and impressions are subjective, they are my ideas or my impressions and if everything is derived from ideas and impressions, can we assume the existence of an external world is the question. Fundamentally we have only access to ideas and impressions, impressions are the most lively and vivid kind of things which we did and ideas are copies of that which we have explained in the previous lecture.

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The slide is titled "External World" and contains a list of six bullet points. The slide has a yellow vertical bar on the left side with a circular logo at the bottom. The logo is the NPTEL logo, which consists of a red circle with a white star-like shape inside, and the letters "NPTEL" below it.

### External World

- Are our impressions or perceptions caused by objects of the external world?
- We cannot say this, as perceptions /impressions are different from objects of external world.
- We never know this from experience, as we have before us only perceptions.
- It is impossible for us to conceive or form an idea of anything different from ideas and impressions.
- The notion of primary qualities is also discarded: those originals that may cause impressions.
- What are the causes of impressions are unknown.

And external world so to say, are our impressions or perceptions caused by the objects of the external world. So, the question is can we say that or can we assume that there is a world outside their which causes or the objects in that world, cause these impressions in us? Can we say really say that. As we have seen Locke assumes it, Locke presupposes that there is such a world the material substratum, but for Berkeley and Hume this is not the case. We cannot say this as perceptions or impressions are different from objects of external world.

This object in that sense so to say that, quote unquote object is nothing but a complex idea, something which the mind forms out of these impressions, with the help of imagination and memory. See one thing is that when you discuss the contributions of these philosophers, particularly Locke, Berkley and Hume, you cannot divide I mean you cannot really distance yourself from discussions on psychology, in how these concepts are formed? So, it is a psychological exploration as well and Hume tells us that, memory plays a very important role here; imagination plays a very important role here, because our basic building blocks are impressions and they do not say anything about the interconnectedness between one impression and the next one, so they are atomic.

One is totally separated from the other they are discrete, they are independent of each other, but then our belief of the extended existence or the continued existence of objects presuppose that they are not discrete or rather there is something which underlie these similar, these resembling impressions; one impression resembles the other, another one resembles the other and these resembling impressions will make a chain of events, or a chain of impressions one after another succession, and in that chain with the help of that chain, a chain of atomic individual impressions which resemble each other the mind constructs an object, with the help of imagination and memory this is what happens.

So, this process is something which the mind does. I mean it is natural it is a propensity of the mind to do this, but it is not there in the world or as far as I am concerned I cannot say that it is objectively there in the world. As long as my objectivity is concerned, I can only talk about me having impressions I have impressions that is all and ideas of course, which are copies of these impressions which my mind makes out of them. And we never know this from experience as we have before us only perceptions.

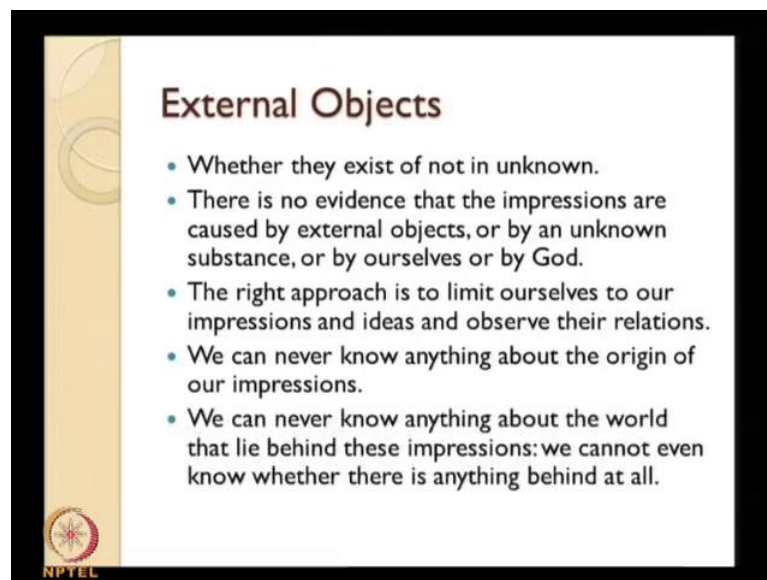
So, perceptions alone exist in front of us and these perceptions which are different from each other, discrete perceptions would not suggest anything which would unite them into one particular object and it is impossible for us to conceive or form an idea of anything different from ideas and impressions. So, except these ideas and impressions, I cannot say anything definite about the existence of anything in this world at all only ideas and impressions.

And the notion of primary qualities is also discarded, those originals that may cause impressions. This is something which Hume follows Berkeley to a great extent; it was

Berkeley who actually abolished the distinction between primary qualities and secondary qualities, where we have examined it in detail when we have discussed Berkeley's philosophy. So, once this distinction is discarded, you are also discarding the notion of originals that may cause impressions. So, along with that we are also discarding the idea of copy, the idea of what you call representationalist epistemology.

What are the causes of impressions are unknown. So, this is what Hume was trying to tell us. Hume was trying to just remind us that the causes of impressions I do not know I know only impressions because I get them.

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### External Objects

- Whether they exist or not is unknown.
- There is no evidence that the impressions are caused by external objects, or by an unknown substance, or by ourselves or by God.
- The right approach is to limit ourselves to our impressions and ideas and observe their relations.
- We can never know anything about the origin of our impressions.
- We can never know anything about the world that lie behind these impressions: we cannot even know whether there is anything behind at all.

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And now again about external objects whether they exist or not is unknown, we cannot say anything about it, so then again there is no evidence that the impressions are caused by external objects, or by unknown substance, or by ourselves, or by God. So, this is again you can see there is a direct attack on Berkeley. Because when Berkeley encountered this problem as we have seen, when Berkeley's philosophy he when he criticizes he adopts some of the fundamental assumptions of Locke's empiricism and then he launches an attack on Locke and criticizes Locke and then he tries to develop his own philosophy at one particular point, he encounters a crisis.

Now to resolve this crisis he introduces the concept of God, we have examined this when we have discussed Berkeley's contributions. Now this notion of God which Berkeley introduces quite interestingly, to say that or to argue that it is God who arouses these

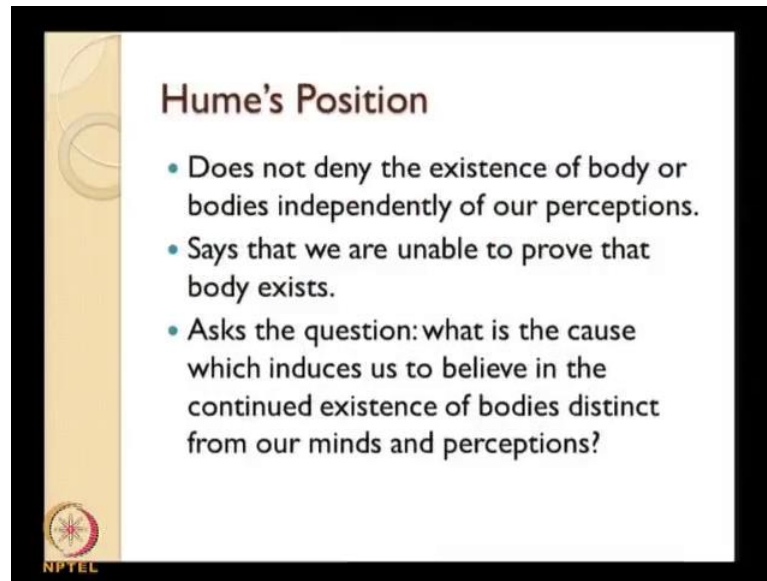
impressions, or these ideas, or these perceptions on us this is what Berkeley says. And here what Hume says is that, we cannot say this. I mean what is our proof or evidence to say that God or someone else is inducing these impressions on us. As well as we are concerned we can only say that we have impressions nothing else.

The right approach is to limit ourselves to our impressions and ideas and observe their relations. So, philosophically this Hume proposes that, this should be the right approach. So, as I have already mentioned in the previous lecture, that Hume was trying to implement or apply the experimental sciences, the method of experimental sciences into philosophy and that is why you know the Humian philosophy and the Humian psychology are not entirely different. Because for Hume the basic substance to be studied, the object to be analyzed is a human mind and the method of analysis is similar to the method of experimental sciences and when you do that, your philosophy becomes psychology or rather the boundary between or rather the border between philosophy or psychology is blurred.

So, here again the right approach according to him is a philosophical psychological approach, lets us limit ourselves to the impressions and ideas and observe their relations and again we can never know anything about the origin of our impressions, we can never know anything about the world that lie behind these impressions, we cannot even know whether there is anything behind it at all. So, this is what I would characterize as Humian skepticism, the nature of Humian skepticism. Hume never says that nothing exists, he only says that we have no resources, we have no faculties to know whether there is anything that exists behind these impressions which we get. These atomic impressions become one after another in rapid (Refer Time: 17:40). So, this is what Hume's position in summary is.



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**Hume's Position**

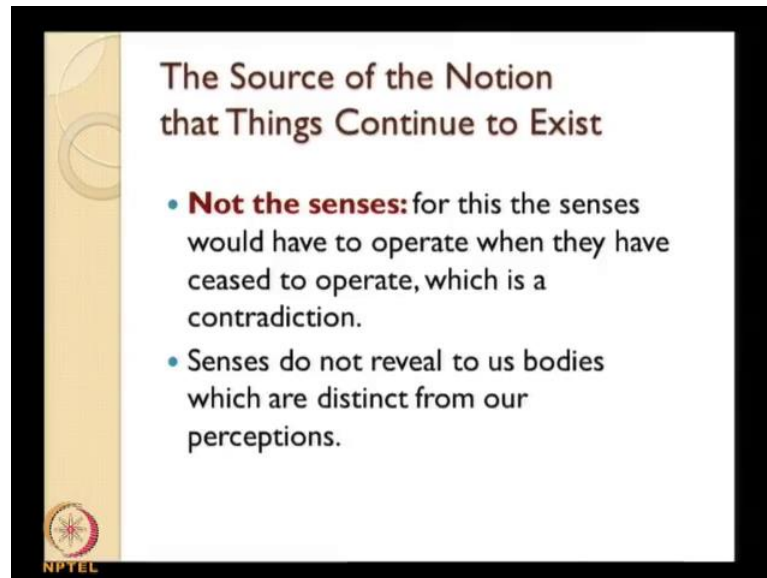
- Does not deny the existence of body or bodies independently of our perceptions.
- Says that we are unable to prove that body exists.
- Asks the question: what is the cause which induces us to believe in the continued existence of bodies distinct from our minds and perceptions?

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Now, let us see Hume as I just mentioned does not deny the existence of body or bodies independently of our perceptions, this is where he is slightly different from his predecessor Berkeley. For Berkeley it is categorical, the denial is categorical for Berkeley only minds exist because Berkeley had as I mentioned had certain other agenda. Here he only says that I have no faculties to know it, says that we are unable to prove that body exist ask the question, what is the cause which induces us to believe in the continued existence of bodies distinct from our minds and perceptions.

So, philosophically Hume is more interested in this question. So, here again he is different from his predecessors, I mean it looks very pragmatic here, he says what is the cause which induces us to believe in the continued existence of bodies, distinct from our minds being perceiving them.

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The Source of the Notion  
that Things Continue to Exist

- **Not the senses:** for this the senses would have to operate when they have ceased to operate, which is a contradiction.
- Senses do not reveal to us bodies which are distinct from our perceptions.

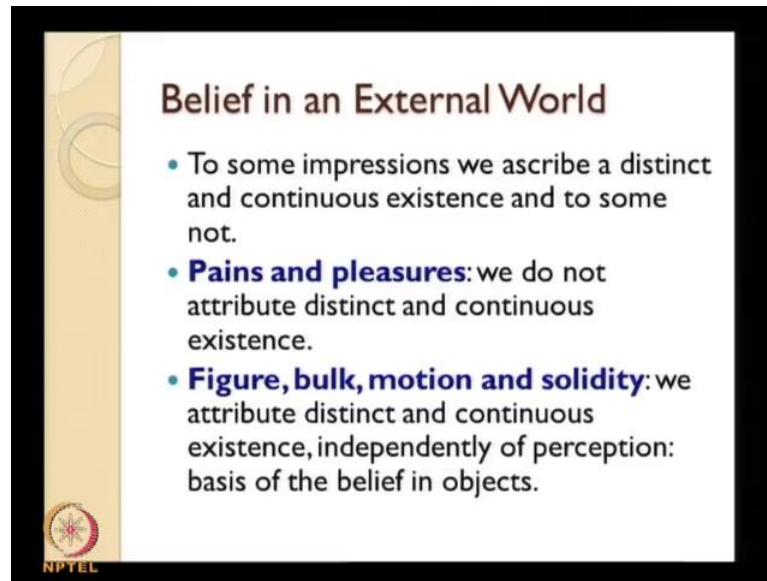
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Now, the source of the notion that things continued to exist; he says not the senses, because we do not get our senses do not convey us this information or knowledge that objects continued to exist. It true that my senses tell me that there are certain chairs in this room and 2 days back when I came to this room, these chairs were there. Almost exactly in the same place they are lying today. So, it is true that I get this information from my senses.

But ultimately what my senses reveal is only this that, 2 days back I had sensations, I had perceptions about the chairs lying in this room, today right at this moment I have sensations I have perceptions about the chairs lying there. The impressions which I get, but I do not have sensations or perceptions or impressions about the sameness of these chairs. I cannot say that exactly it is the same chair which was lying here 2 days back or I cannot even say that it is the same room.

Because, I have only impressions and impression as long as impressions are concerned, one impression is different from another each impression is unique they are different, they are separated, they cannot be united. So, not the senses for this the senses would have to operate when they have ceased to operate which is a contradiction, and senses do not reveal to us bodies which are distinct from our perceptions. So, that continued existence is not something which senses are capable or revealing or senses are capable of telling us.

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### Belief in an External World

- To some impressions we ascribe a distinct and continuous existence and to some not.
- **Pains and pleasures:** we do not attribute distinct and continuous existence.
- **Figure, bulk, motion and solidity:** we attribute distinct and continuous existence, independently of perception: basis of the belief in objects.

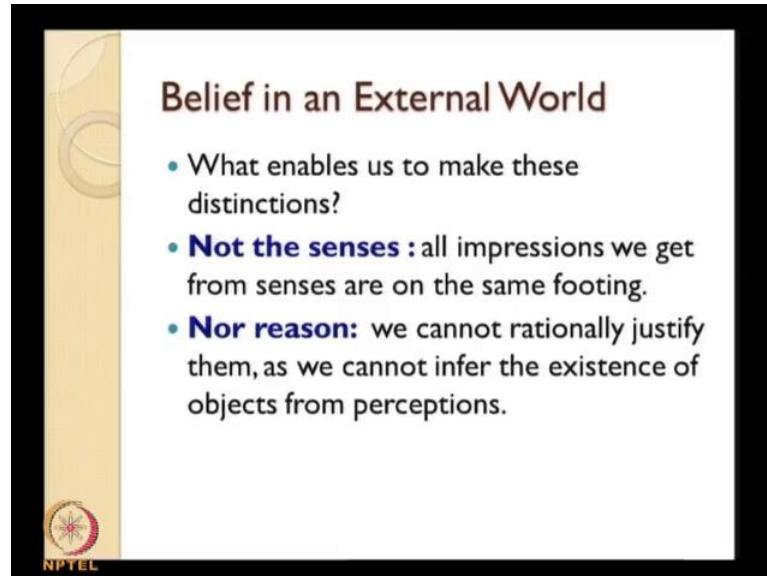
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Now, belief in an external world again, to some impressions we ascribe a distinct, and continuous existence, and to some not; this is another very interesting thing. To some impressions we ascribe distinct and continuous existence for example, pains and pleasures we do not attribute distinct and continuous for pains and pleasure, they come and go they are passing, we actually recognize it; we acknowledge it that they are passing nature. But when it comes to figure, bulk, motion and solidity, something which is very similar to the kind of primary qualities about which John Locke was talking about; there we attribute distinct and continuous existence independently of perception and which is nothing, but the basis of our belief in objects or the world of objects in the world.

So, these distinctions we have to keep in mind when you talk about our belief in the external world, there are certain impressions which we attribute this continued existence. While we do not attribute this continued existence to certain other impressions. And again Hume tells us that this distinction itself is baseless, if one set of impressions we cannot attribute continuous existence then to know impressions, know set of impressions we can attribute it. Because impressions are impressions, whether they are about pain or pleasure, or about figure or motion, they are impressions and they are at the same level, you cannot hierarchies them saying that one set of impressions are more important than other, one set of impressions have durability or they continue to existence more than a


moment. If impressions are momentary, if impressions are atomic, then all impressions are momentary and all impressions are atomic one has to consistent there.

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**Belief in an External World**

- What enables us to make these distinctions?
- **Not the senses** : all impressions we get from senses are on the same footing.
- **Nor reason**: we cannot rationally justify them, as we cannot infer the existence of objects from perceptions.

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So, this is where he tackles or he rather attacks this idea of external world. What enables us to make these distinctions? Hume asks the question. Not the senses all impressions we get from senses are on the same footing, you cannot distinguish, you can say that one set is important or higher or different in degree than the other and not reason. Again because we cannot rationally justify them as we cannot infer the existence of objects from perceptions. So, reason also fails us there, because from reason you cannot say that there must be something underlying the perceptions and there are objects we cannot do that.

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**Belief in an External World**

- Due to **imagination**.
- The peculiar features of certain impressions, which work upon the imagination and induce us to believe in the continued and distinct existence of bodies.

Constancy                      Coherence

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Now, it is here Hume tells us, if this is the case if this is the situation, from where do we get these ideas? From where do we derive these ideas which constitute the belief in an external world? The world of objects which we come across which we find outside of us and here he says that imagination plays a very important role. In the previous lecture when we discuss the problem of causation the causal relationship a causes b, heat causes warmth for example, or any sensation for that matter there is a cause effect relationship we have seen in the previous lecture, and we have ascribed this basis of this relationship we have seen that according to Hume, the basis of this relationship is nothing but custom habit of the mind. So, the mind is tempted or mind has the tendency a propensity to attribute some sort of necessary connection between 2 events, because the mind has perceived these 2 events appearing one after another.

There is temporal succession one after another. So, always whenever there is fire, there is warmth, there is heat. So, this experience of what you call proximity, or succession, of one impression with another one had tempted or had prompted the mind to imagine that there is a connection between them. Similarly the external world also owes its existence to this propensity of the mind; the propensity of the mind to imagine that objects exists continuously. The peculiar feature of a certain impression which works upon the imagination and induce us to believe in the continued and distinct existence of body is constancy number 1, number 2 coherence. I repeat constancy and coherence. So, these 2

are something which prompts the mind to believe in a world of objects which exist continuously.

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**Constancy and Coherence**

- Explains our supposition of the distinct existence of bodies.
- Things have always appeared to me in the same order.
- We have constantly recurring similar impressions.

- Gives rise to the supposition of the continuous existence of objects.
- Bodies exhibit coherence even when they change their positions and qualities.

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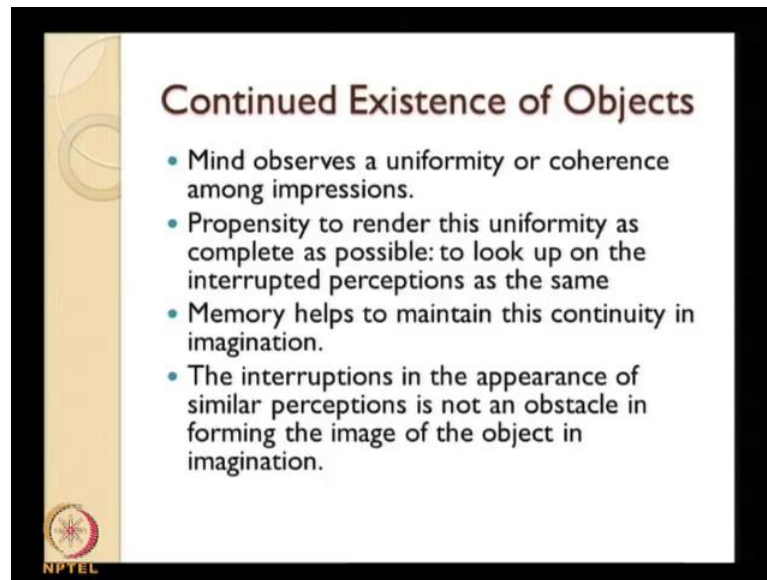
So, what is constancy and coherence? The constancy explains our supposition of the distinct existence of bodies, things have always appeared to me in the same order; we have constantly recurring similar impressions. On the other hand coherence gives rise to the supposition of the continuous existence of objects. Constancy where you know there is a distinction, but here there is a continuous existence of objects. Bodies exhibit coherence even when they change their positions, and qualities.

So, when I see this chair situated in front of me here in this particular room and tomorrow when I go to another room and I find the same chair there with all the features exactly the same, I would recognize this as that chair which I had seen in that room. So, what is it that enables me to do that? So, there is coherence, bodies exhibit coherence even when they change the position and qualities. So, this is something which enables me to believe in the continued existence of the objects.

See if you watch closely, we can see that our observation would reveal to us that there are some changes, the bodies definitely undergo some changes. The object which I am using today my pen for example, or for that matter anything any object which I used today after several years 4 or 5 years, computer which I am using today would have changed a lot, but I would still recognize it as that computer which I had used 5 years

back. In spite of the changes it has undergone it might have changed its color a little bit or some of its features have changed, its appearance is different, still I recognize it as the same computer which I bought 5 years back, that is because of this quality of coherence and constancy.

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### Continued Existence of Objects

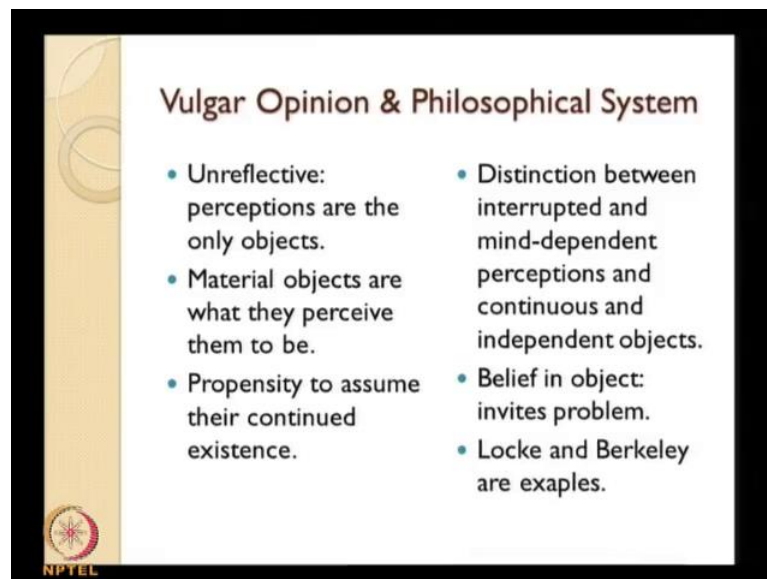
- Mind observes a uniformity or coherence among impressions.
- Propensity to render this uniformity as complete as possible: to look up on the interrupted perceptions as the same
- Memory helps to maintain this continuity in imagination.
- The interruptions in the appearance of similar perceptions is not an obstacle in forming the image of the object in imagination.

So, continued existence of objects might observe a uniformity or coherence among impressions. Propensity to render this uniformity as complete as possible, there is this tendency for a human mind to render this uniformity as complete as possible. So, it is the same object I would say in spite of some minute differences between the impressions which I had earlier, and which I have today. I assert that there is similarity, to look up and interrupted perceptions as the same.

So, again memory plays important role this is what I said in the beginning imagination along with memory. Memory plays a very important role here it helps to maintain this continuity in imagination because my memory tells me that oh it is this object, I have already stored an image of that object, the object exist as an image in the memory and then there is a resemblance today at right now, the impression I have right now. So, this similarity this resemblance between this impression which I have right now and the image I have preserved in my memory enables me to conclude that it is one and the same object. The interruptions in the appearance of similar perceptions are not an obstacle in forming the image of the object in imagination.

So, the interruptions in the appearance of similar perceptions, I have already mentioned there could be some interruptions in the perceptions; they are not obstacles in forming the image of the object in imagination. So, my imagination has the peculiar ability to deduct, discount all those minor differences and unite the similarities, the commonalities and put it under one heading and call it an object.

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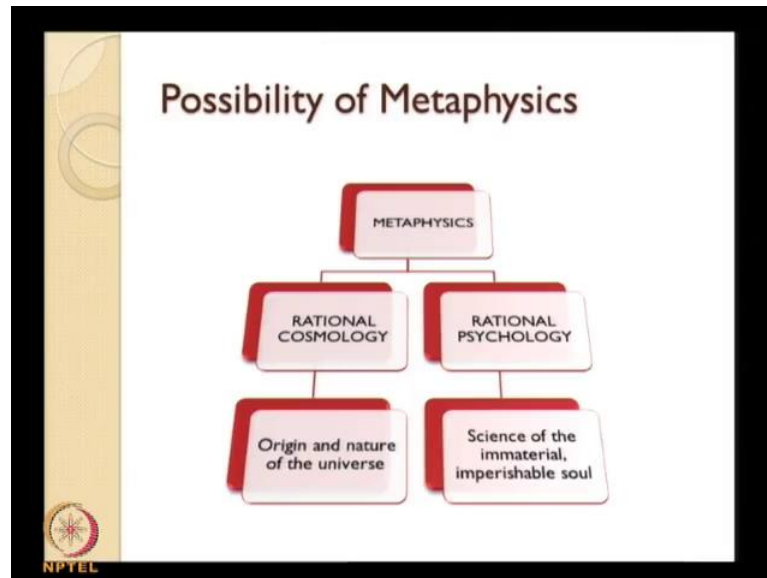
The slide is titled "Vulgar Opinion & Philosophical System" and is presented in a white box with a black border. On the left side of the box, there is a vertical yellow bar with a circular logo at the bottom that says "NPTEL". The main content of the slide consists of two columns of bullet points. The left column lists three points: "Unreflective: perceptions are the only objects.", "Material objects are what they perceive them to be.", and "Propensity to assume their continued existence.". The right column lists three points: "Distinction between interrupted and mind-dependent perceptions and continuous and independent objects.", "Belief in object: invites problem.", and "Locke and Berkeley are examples.".

So, here again you can see that Hume also refers to the distinction between vulgar opinion and philosophical opinions or philosophical systems. So, what like his predecessor Berkeley who famously stated that I will speak with the vulgar, but I think with the wise. So, here he also talks about something very similar to that, the vulgar opinions are unreflective perceptions are only objects. So, there is no thinking about whether the perceptions which I receive are different from objects are one and the same I just take it for granted.

Then again material objects are what they perceive them to be. So, these are quite unreflective, propensity to assume their continued existence and philosophical system what happens is, there is a distinction between interrupted and mind dependent perceptions and continuous and independent objects. So, philosophy makes that distinction. Belief in objects invites the problems this is something which philosophy recognizes and Locke and Berkeley are examples.



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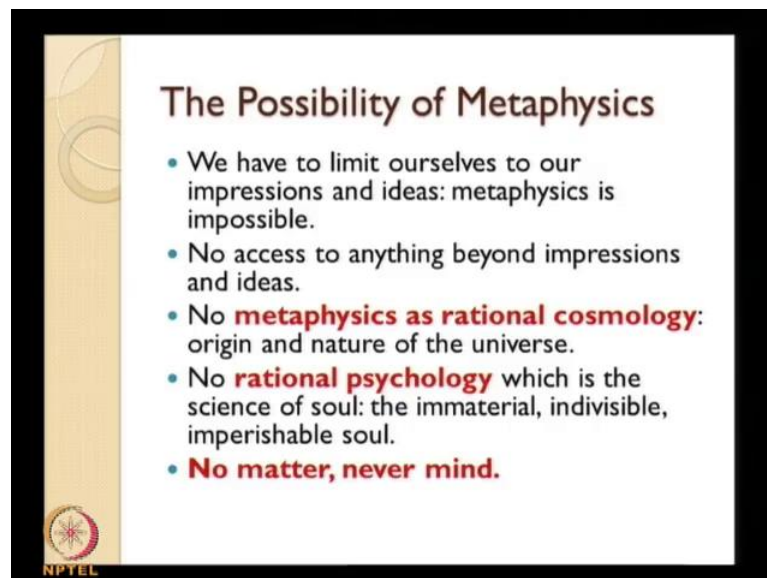
Now, with this information in the background, let us try to see the possibility of metaphysics in Kant. This is the problem which is going to be important hereafter in philosophy; particularly we will see that the next philosopher whom we are going to discuss the philosophy of manual cant, the possibility of metaphysics is an important issue.

And this is again something which Hume had invested a lot of time and energy upon to discuss this matters involved in such a conception. So, you have metaphysics, and metaphysics can be roughly divided into or at least for the purpose of Hume's philosophical analysis, the he talks basically talks about 2 aspects of metaphysics rational cosmology and rational psychology. Rational cosmology talks about cosmos about the world, world of objects. It talks about the origin and nature of the universe whether the inverse is constituted of objects, independent of our mind or not and Hume tells us that Hume's conclusion is that you cannot talk about the existence of an external world of objects. Of course, in our day to day conversation we take for granted it is existence, but we can never take for granted it is existence in the philosophical sense of the term.

So, rational cosmology is impossible, according to Hume. Now when you come to rational psychology, rational psychology is the science of the immaterial imperishable soul, it assume that there is a soul which is immaterial, which is indivisible, which is simple and which is imperishable, something which survives time. And there are several

other issues related to the concept of soul like personal identity and the same person whom I was 25 years back or 30 back and I will be same person, there is some sort of moral accountability when I say that I did it. 20 back I did it or 20 years back I went to that place. I all these assume that there is some identity, and there is a concept of imperishable soul because it says that even after I die, my physical death from I my disappearance from this world I continue to exist in as a soul, as an eternal soul imperishable soul and soul the conception of soul is something which is essentially indivisible simple entity. So, these are some of the issues which Hume's finds problematic and he also says that rational psychology is impossible.

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The slide is titled "The Possibility of Metaphysics" and contains a list of five bullet points. The first point states that metaphysics is impossible because we must limit ourselves to impressions and ideas. The second point states there is no access to anything beyond impressions and ideas. The third point states there is no metaphysics as rational cosmology, which would deal with the origin and nature of the universe. The fourth point states there is no rational psychology, which would be the science of the immaterial, indivisible, imperishable soul. The fifth point states "No matter, never mind." The slide also features a logo for NPTEL in the bottom left corner.

### The Possibility of Metaphysics

- We have to limit ourselves to our impressions and ideas: metaphysics is impossible.
- No access to anything beyond impressions and ideas.
- No **metaphysics as rational cosmology**: origin and nature of the universe.
- No **rational psychology** which is the science of soul: the immaterial, indivisible, imperishable soul.
- **No matter, never mind.**

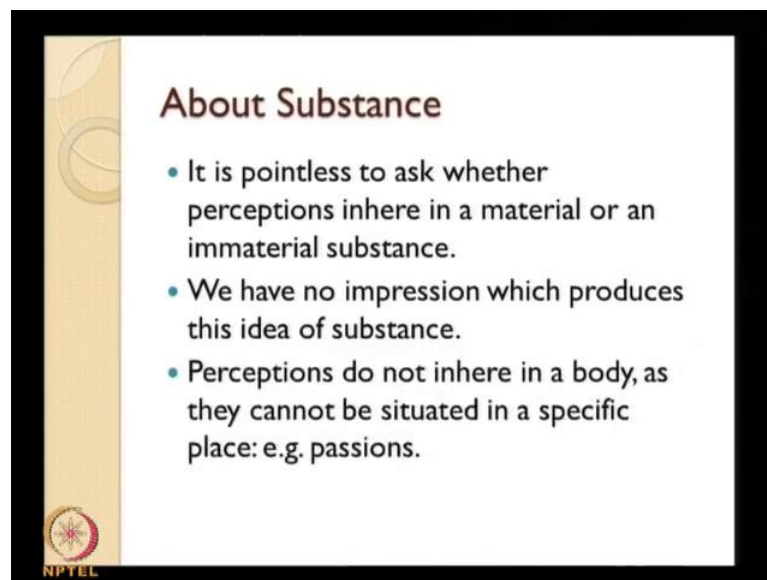
So, metaphysics as rational cosmology and as rational psychology are impossible. We have to limit ourselves to our impressions and ideas: metaphysics is impossible. So, he reminds us come on metaphysicians come on let us go back to the building blocks of our knowledge and the building blocks of our knowledge are impressions and ideas nothing else our percepts. So, you have to look into your perceptions when you talk about anything, whether you talk about a soul or a God or a heaven or an afterlife anything you talk, you have to basically refer back to these impressions and ideas, the original percepts you have.

Do these percepts, do these impressions convey anything or give any information about such metaphysical entities like soul or God or anything and since they do not say we

cannot construe, we cannot theories; we cannot have a rational understanding about that. No access to anything beyond impressions and ideas. So, all our rational understanding should be confined to seeing this, understanding these impressions, and ideas and their inter relationships. No metaphysics as rational cosmology is possible; no rational psychology is possible which is a science of soul: no matter never mind. The famous Humean proposition, there is no matter never mind. Mind also is not cannot be the established it is existence cannot be established the spiritual substance.

Now, before we go to the details of that a very brief look at this concept of substance, which we have intensively covered in our previous lectures.

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The slide is titled "About Substance" and contains three bullet points. The slide has a white background with a black border. On the left side, there is a vertical yellow bar with a circular graphic element. At the bottom left of the slide, there is a small red and white logo with the text "NPTEL" below it.

### About Substance

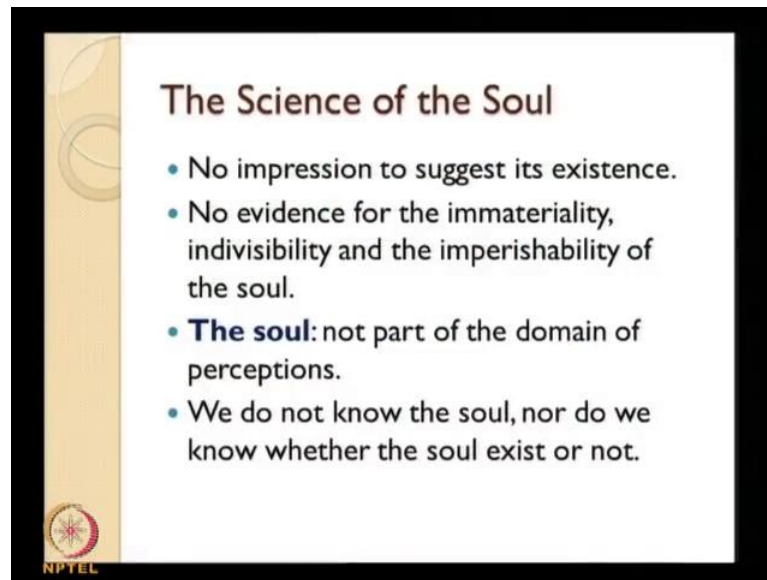
- It is pointless to ask whether perceptions inhere in a material or an immaterial substance.
- We have no impression which produces this idea of substance.
- Perceptions do not inhere in a body, as they cannot be situated in a specific place: e.g. passions.

What Hume says is that it is pointless to ask whether perceptions inhere in a material or an immaterial substance. The very notion of substance has to be overthrown according to Hume. We have no impressions which produces this idea of substance in us or rather the impressions and ideas do not say anything about such substances in which perceptions in here, there is a contradiction saying that to have an impression about something which impressions inhere that itself is a contradiction because if substance is something that impressions or perceptions in here, then to have a perception or impression about that substance is again a contradiction.

Perceptions do not in here in a body, as they cannot be situated in a specific place for example, can I say that my passions, my feelings, my happiness has a place say for

example, the seeing an ice cream creates a kind of pleasure in me, that I am going to have it. So, my impression of ice cream and my impression of pleasure, can I say that the impression is situated in a particular place right hand side or left hand side of that impression. So, you cannot localize it.

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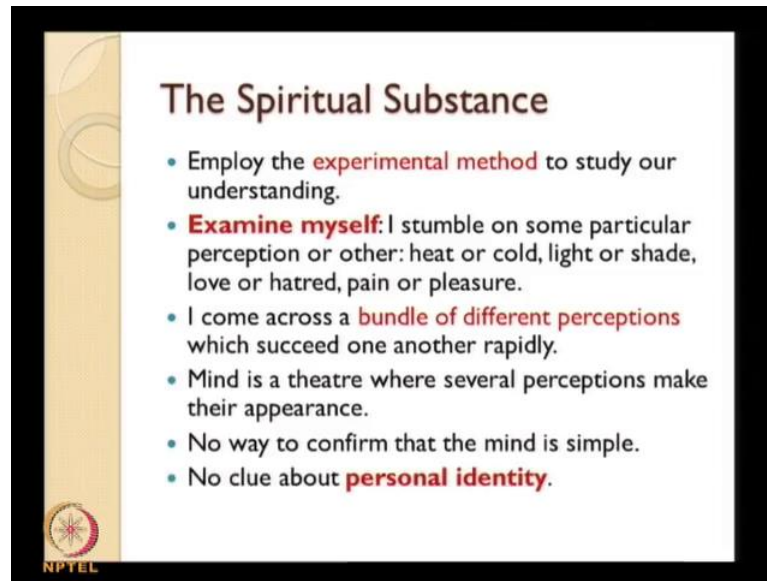
The Science of the Soul

- No impression to suggest its existence.
- No evidence for the immateriality, indivisibility and the imperishability of the soul.
- **The soul:** not part of the domain of perceptions.
- We do not know the soul, nor do we know whether the soul exist or not.

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So, the science of soul again is no impression to suggest it is existence. No evidence for the immateriality, indivisibility, and imperishability of the soul. So, as the soul substance is universally, the soul substance is traditionally conceived as immaterial imperishable and indivisible, but Hume tells us that where is the evidence? Where are those ideas and impressions which would suggest that the soul exist as an imperishable indivisible and immaterial substance, we do not have such impressions at all. The soul is not part of the domain of perceptions, we do not know the soul, nor do we know whether the soul exists or not, similar to the material substance which we have already seen, we cannot say anything about their existence or knowledge existence. The same thing is applicable in the case of material spiritual thinking substances as well.

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The slide is titled "The Spiritual Substance" and contains a list of six bullet points. The text is presented in a clean, sans-serif font. The first bullet point discusses the experimental method. The second bullet point, "Examine myself", is followed by a list of perceptions. The third bullet point describes a "bundle of different perceptions". The fourth bullet point uses the metaphor of a theatre. The fifth and sixth bullet points state that there is no way to confirm the mind is simple and no clue about personal identity. The slide also features a decorative vertical bar on the left with a circular graphic and the NPTEL logo at the bottom left.

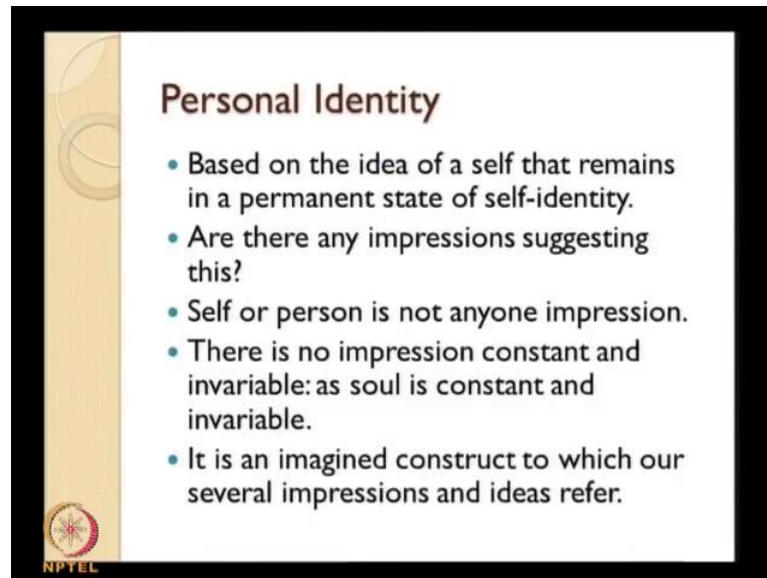
### The Spiritual Substance

- Employ the **experimental method** to study our understanding.
- **Examine myself:** I stumble on some particular perception or other: heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure.
- I come across a **bundle of different perceptions** which succeed one another rapidly.
- Mind is a theatre where several perceptions make their appearance.
- No way to confirm that the mind is simple.
- No clue about **personal identity**.

And the spiritual substances it employ the experimental method to study our understanding. So, Hume attempts to analyze the notion of spiritual substance. He employs the experimental method and he says that one has to examine one self, and Hume says famously I examine myself, and I stumble on some perceptions or other, heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure, nothing else, but only this heap of or this bundle of perceptions which I encountered. So, when I examine myself I see only these perceptions one after another. I come across a bundle of different perceptions which succeed one another rapidly. One after other they come and go, they appear and reappear. Mind is a theatre where several perceptions make their appearance. So, the metaphor of a theatre, mind is compared with a theatre where in a theatre what happens is, actors from different parts would appear and disappear and reappear they make their entry at their wish.

Similarly, the mind is also like a theatre where impressions make their entry from nowhere. And no way to confirm that the mind is simple; I have only one assurance about my mind when I look myself I see myself as a bundle of impressions. So, there is no way nothing would suggest me, nothing would tell me that there is a simple imperishable, indivisible entity called mind. There is no clue about personal identity which the traditional philosophers they are all talking about this notion of personal identity, which is such a central concept in moral philosophy, that unfortunately if you follow the empirics methods there is no clue to talk about it.

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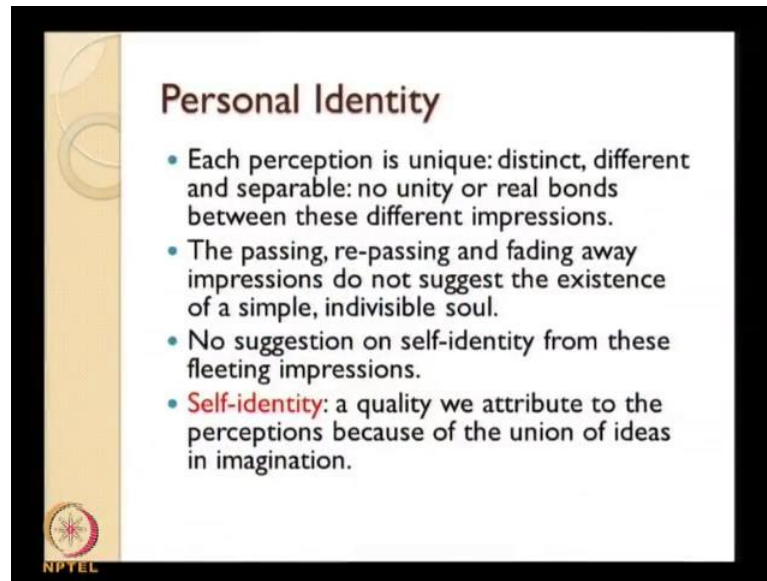
### Personal Identity

- Based on the idea of a self that remains in a permanent state of self-identity.
- Are there any impressions suggesting this?
- Self or person is not anyone impression.
- There is no impression constant and invariable: as soul is constant and invariable.
- It is an imagined construct to which our several impressions and ideas refer.

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The very notion of personal identity is based on the idea of a self that remains in a permanent state of self identity. So, as I mentioned I am the same me, who were here 10 years back or 20 years back, are there any impressions suggesting this? But I am the same person self or person is not any one impression, the very notion of self presupposes that there is a continued existence of something, but apart from these impressions where are I where do I situate myself? Where do I locate myself? Apart from these various impressions I experience. There is no impression constant and invariable as a soul is constant and invariable; it is an imagined construct to which our several impressions and ideas refer to.

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**Personal Identity**

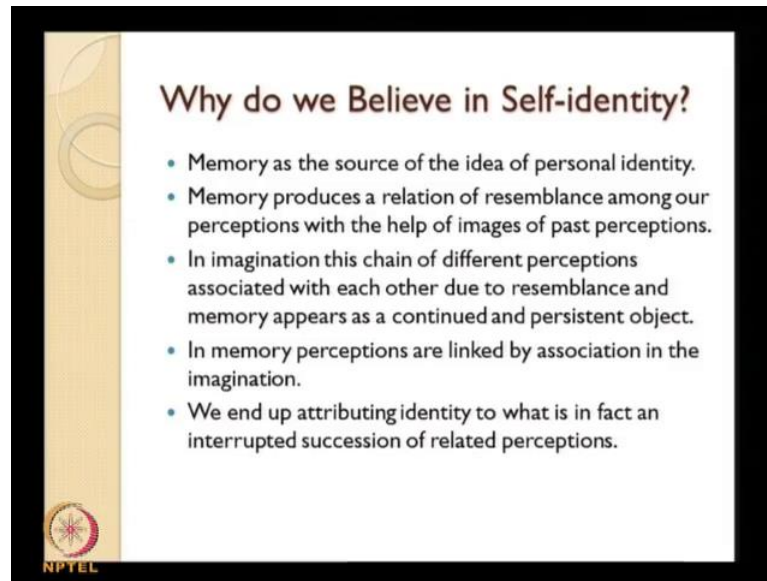
- Each perception is unique: distinct, different and separable: no unity or real bonds between these different impressions.
- The passing, re-passing and fading away impressions do not suggest the existence of a simple, indivisible soul.
- No suggestion on self-identity from these fleeting impressions.
- **Self-identity:** a quality we attribute to the perceptions because of the union of ideas in imagination.

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So, it is again something which imagination, mind is created out of imagination. Each perception is unique as I mentioned distinct different and separable. No unity or real bonds between these different impressions. So, whatever unity, whatever link or bond you establish you think that these impressions have a something which have your attribution, attributed by your imagination. The passing re-passing and fading away impressions do not suggest the existence of a simple, indivisible, soul, immaterial substance.

There is no suggestion on self identity from these fleeting impressions. There are just come and go appear, disappear, reappear where is that permanent something. No I do not stumble upon it. Self identity is a quality we attribute to the perceptions, because of the union of ideas in imagination; these ideas are united by the mind in imagination with the help of memory and other things.

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**Why do we Believe in Self-identity?**

- Memory as the source of the idea of personal identity.
- Memory produces a relation of resemblance among our perceptions with the help of images of past perceptions.
- In imagination this chain of different perceptions associated with each other due to resemblance and memory appears as a continued and persistent object.
- In memory perceptions are linked by association in the imagination.
- We end up attributing identity to what is in fact an interrupted succession of related perceptions.

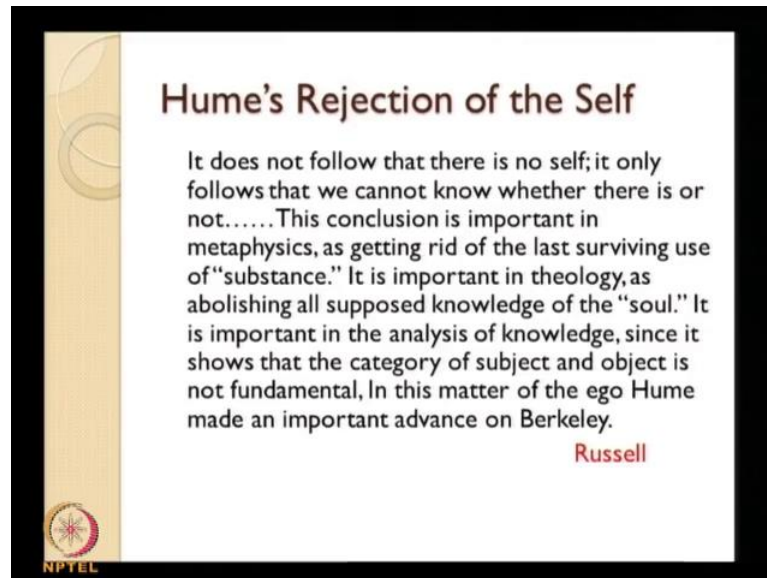
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And why do we believe in self identity? Memory as a source of the idea of personal identity, memory produces a relation of resemblance among our perceptions with the help of images of past perceptions. I have already mentioned this on here. So, I am not elaborating it. It is memory which produces a relation of resemblance among our perceptions with the help of images of past perceptions.

In imagination this chain of different perceptions, associated with each other due to resemblance and memory appears as a continued and persistent object. While in actuality we do not know whether such a continued existence is there or not. In memory perceptions are linked by association in imagination, and again we end up attributing identity to what is in fact, an interrupted succession of related perceptions. So, it is our mind which attributes it, the identity is our attribution.



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**Hume's Rejection of the Self**

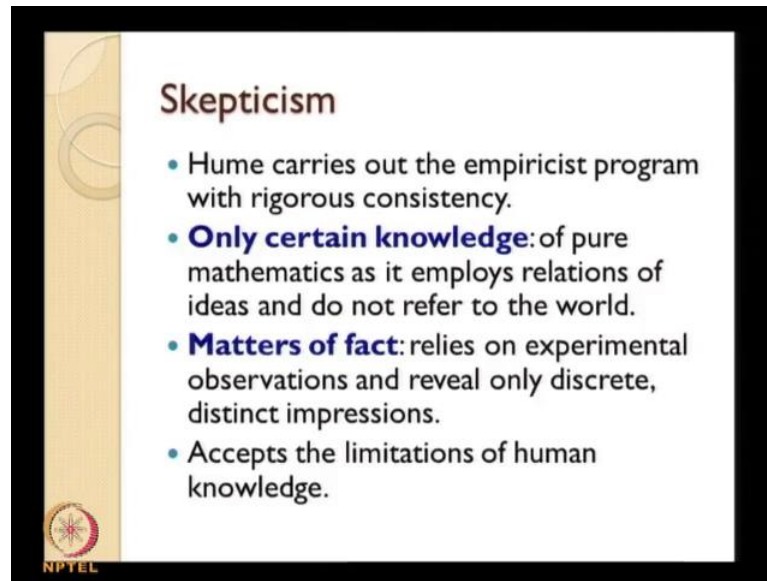
It does not follow that there is no self; it only follows that we cannot know whether there is or not..... This conclusion is important in metaphysics, as getting rid of the last surviving use of "substance." It is important in theology, as abolishing all supposed knowledge of the "soul." It is important in the analysis of knowledge, since it shows that the category of subject and object is not fundamental, In this matter of the ego Hume made an important advance on Berkeley.

Russell

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Here there is a quote from Russell Hume's, rejection of the self. I quote it does not follow that there is no self; it only follows that we cannot know whether there is or not. This conclusion is important in metaphysics, as getting rid of the last surviving use of "substance". It is important in theology, as abolishing all supposed knowledge of the "soul". It is important in the analysis of knowledge, since it shows the category of subject and object is not fundamental, in this matter of the ego Hume made an important advance on Berkeley it is a very important observation actually summarizes Hume's rejection of metaphysics because whether it is rational cosmology or rational psychology it is say that Russell's says that it has very serious and very interesting implications on these three disciplines on metaphysics on theology and on ethics.

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### Skepticism

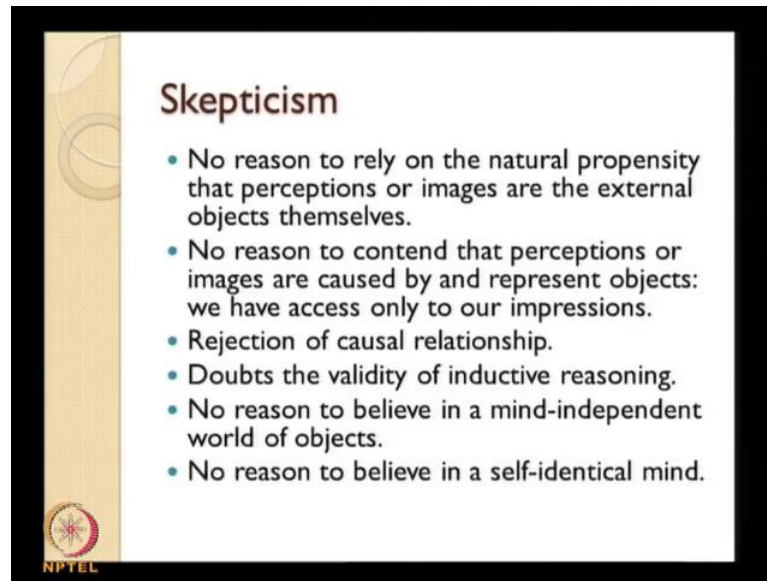
- Hume carries out the empiricist program with rigorous consistency.
- **Only certain knowledge:** of pure mathematics as it employs relations of ideas and do not refer to the world.
- **Matters of fact:** relies on experimental observations and reveal only discrete, distinct impressions.
- Accepts the limitations of human knowledge.

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So, this is the background in which we can talk about Hume's skepticism. What he actually does is he claims carrying out the empiricist program with rigorous consistency that is all. And when you look for certain knowledge, we have only pure mathematics as it employs relations of ideas and do not refer to the world at all, something which you have examined in the previous lectures. So, I am not elaborating it here and as far as the matters of the fact are concerned, there the relations rely on experimental observations and reveal only discrete distinct impressions.


So, we have only discrete distinct impressions nothing else, not that inter connections are necessary unions or anything accepts the limitation of human knowledge, this is our limitation.

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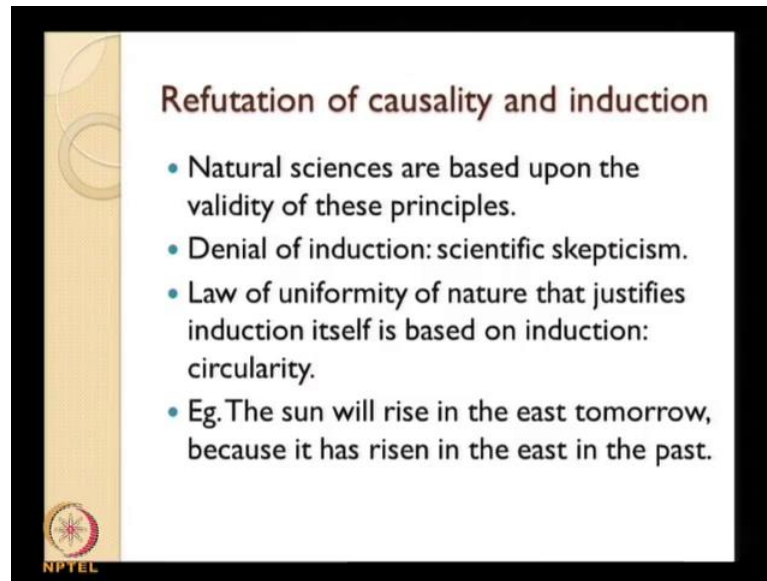
**Skepticism**

- No reason to rely on the natural propensity that perceptions or images are the external objects themselves.
- No reason to contend that perceptions or images are caused by and represent objects: we have access only to our impressions.
- Rejection of causal relationship.
- Doubts the validity of inductive reasoning.
- No reason to believe in a mind-independent world of objects.
- No reason to believe in a self-identical mind.

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So, there is no reason to rely on the natural propensity that perceptions or images are external objects themselves on the one that, no reason to contend that perceptions or images are caused by and represent objects we have access only to our impressions this is rejecting the philosophical view advocated by Locke and many others representationalism, there is no way we can no reason to contend that perceptions or images or copies of something which lie outside. Again rejection of causal relationship which we have examined in the previous lecture, causation the causality, a causing b this is, it is again Hume demonstrates that this relationship is not a necessary that kind of relationship. Doubts, the validity of inductive reasoning, which again we have seen in the previous lecture, induction as a relationship is rejected; and no reason to believe in a mind independent world of objects.

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The slide features a title 'Refutation of causality and induction' in a dark red font. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points. The first point states that natural sciences are based on the validity of these principles. The second point is 'Denial of induction: scientific skepticism.' The third point discusses the 'Law of uniformity of nature' and notes that induction itself is based on induction, leading to circularity. The fourth point provides an example: 'Eg. The sun will rise in the east tomorrow, because it has risen in the east in the past.' The slide also includes a decorative vertical bar on the left with a circular pattern and an NPTEL logo at the bottom left.

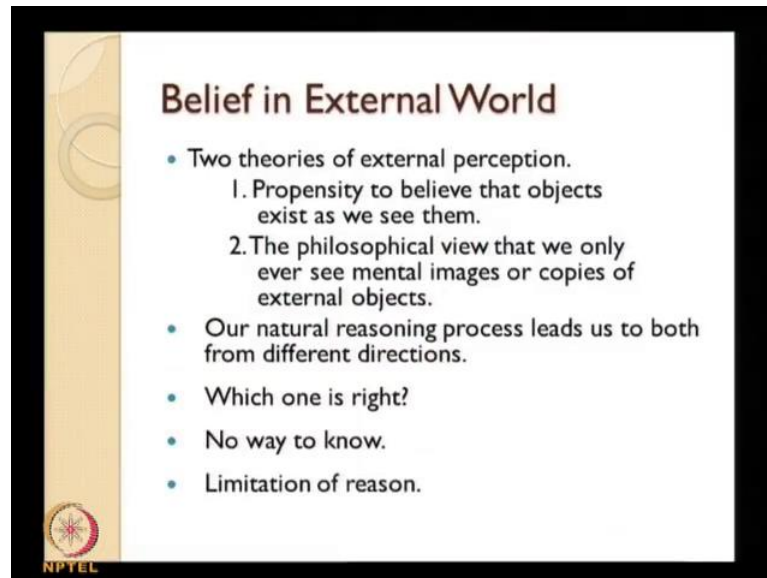
### Refutation of causality and induction

- Natural sciences are based upon the validity of these principles.
- Denial of induction: scientific skepticism.
- Law of uniformity of nature that justifies induction itself is based on induction: circularity.
- Eg. The sun will rise in the east tomorrow, because it has risen in the east in the past.

No reason to believe in a self identical mind. So, this is what the summary of the 2 lectures which on Hume which I have delivered and this jointly conclude to a kind of Humian skepticism, where the refutation of causality and induction plays a very crucial role rather that is at the centre of it, natural when you refute causality and induction identifying the problem of induction natural sciences are based upon the validity of these principles.

So, once you question and challenge their validity, it actually challenges the very validity of natural scientific enterprises, the validity of scientific knowledge. Denial of induction leads to scientific skepticism and they because you know induction basically says that it is based on the uniformity of nature, that nature works uniformly law of uniformity of nature, but law of uniformity of nature is itself based on induction. So, there is circularity involved in it is propagation. The sun will rise in the east tomorrow is a belief based on what we have observed in the past that sun had risen in the east in the past. So, we believe that sun will rise in the east in future as well.

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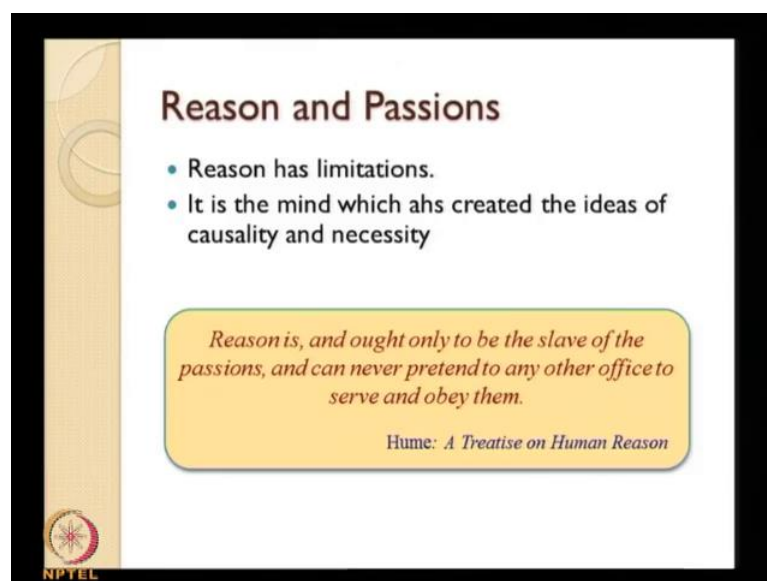
## Belief in External World

- Two theories of external perception.
  1. Propensity to believe that objects exist as we see them.
  2. The philosophical view that we only ever see mental images or copies of external objects.
- Our natural reasoning process leads us to both from different directions.
- Which one is right?
- No way to know.
- Limitation of reason.

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The belief in external world is fundamentally problematic there are 2 theories about it, propensity to believe that objects exist as we see them and the philosophical view that we only ever see images or copies of external objects. I have already discussed this in this lecture. So, our natural reasoning process leads us to both of these propose I mean anything can be true, either of them can be true. So, there is no way that reason tells us that only one proposition is true, so which one is right? No way to know; limitation of human reason.

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## Reason and Passions

- Reason has limitations.
- It is the mind which has created the ideas of causality and necessity

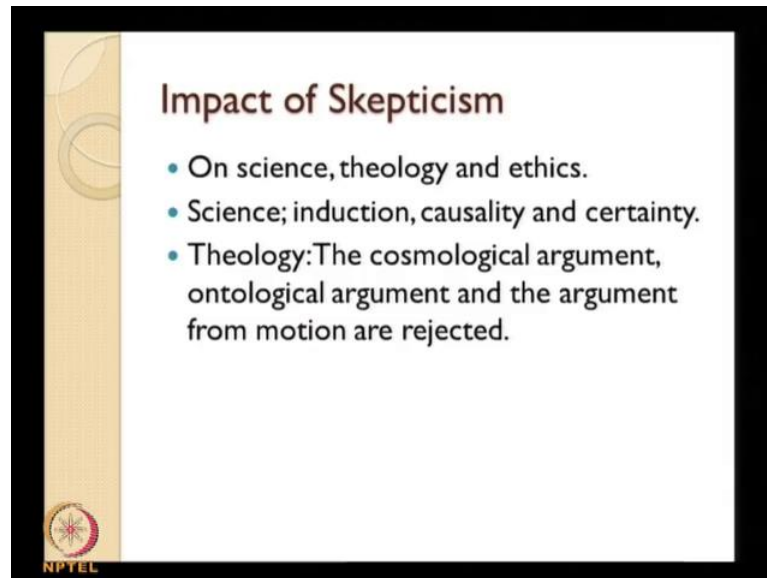
*Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office to serve and obey them.*

Hume: *A Treatise on Human Reason*

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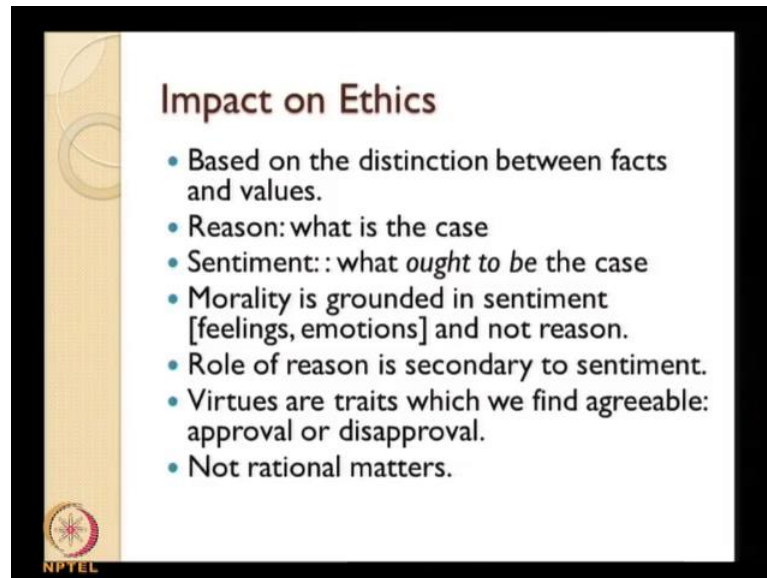
And there we will conclude with this issue here that according to David Hume, reason has got certain limitations and it is the mind which has created the ideas of causality and necessity and the basis of which reason operates and I quote from Hume, reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions and can never pretend to any other office to serve and obey them, this is from a treatise on human reason.

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As I mentioned the impact of this Humian skepticism is actually severe on science, theology and ethics as Russell pointed out. In science induction causality and certainty are questioned which are the basis of scientific knowledge and scientific method. And in theology the cosmological argument, ontological argument and the argument from motion are also rejected because there are no impressions, which would suggest that these things exist and God exist.

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The slide is titled "Impact on Ethics" and features a list of seven bullet points. The text is presented in a clean, sans-serif font. In the bottom left corner, there is a circular logo with a red and white design, and the word "NPTEL" is written below it. The slide has a white background with a black border.

### Impact on Ethics

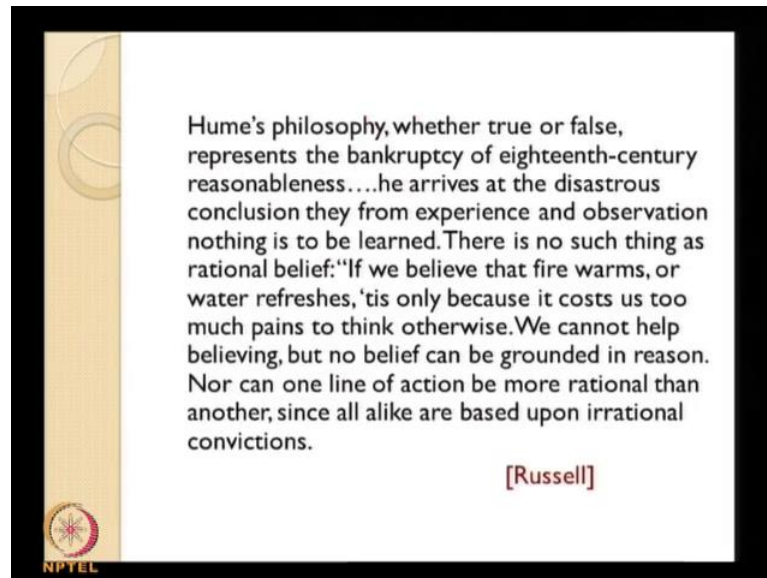
- Based on the distinction between facts and values.
- Reason: what is the case
- Sentiment: : what *ought to be* the case
- Morality is grounded in sentiment [feelings, emotions] and not reason.
- Role of reason is secondary to sentiment.
- Virtues are traits which we find agreeable: approval or disapproval.
- Not rational matters.

But the severest kind of an impact of this skepticism can be found in ethics. Because ethics you know the idea because of personal accountability are very important and the distinction between virtue and wise is very important. So, there should be very clear cut distinction between what is good and what is evil.

So, all these distinctions should be based on something else. What is the basis? What are the impressions? So, Hume's question is that you cannot rationally justify, you cannot rationalize ethics in that way. It is based on the distinction between facts and values, reason what says as what is the case and sentiment says as what ought to be the case. So, you cannot say that this sentiment which says as what ought to be the case has any rational basis, because reason has more roles to play there.

Morality is grounded in sentiment like our feeling emotions and not reason role of reason is secondary to sentiment. Virtues are trait is which we find agreeable. So, there is a kind of agreeable and disagreeable, approval and disapproval, all these are feelings emotions etcetera and they are not rational matters.

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So, these would definitely have some very serious implications, I am not delving into those details right now here, because we will have to discuss these issues again when we discuss Immanuel Kant's analysis of morals. We will discuss it, we will once again go back to Hume's contributions, we will revisit these threats which Hume actually raises against these foundations of morality which we discussed Immanuel Kant.

Now, let us conclude this lecture with one quote from again from Bertrand Russell from his history of philosophy. I quote Hume's philosophy, whether true or false, represents the bankruptcy of eighteenth-century reasonableness, because it basically highlights as I have been emphasizing, the limitations of human reason. Hume is a skeptic to the extent to which he had highlighted or underlined the limitations of human reason. He is not a nihilist in the classical sense of the term he never rejected either mind or body. He only says that we have no faculties to know that.

So, he was trying to highlight the limitations, I read it - Hume's philosophy whether true or false, represent the bankruptcy of eighteenth-century reasonableness. He arrives at the disastrous conclusion they from experience and observation nothing is to be learned. There is no such thing as rational belief. If we believe that fire warms or water refreshes it only because it costs up too much pains to think otherwise. So, there is a kind of reference to some sort of pragmatic consideration. We cannot help believing, but not



belief can be grounded in reason nor can one line of action be more rational than another, since all alike are based upon irrational convictions.

So, at the end we could see that Hume is a person who would by highlighting the limitations of human reason, he has ruled out the possibility of finding rational right objectively true criteria to decide what is right and what is wrong. So, there is no way you have to depend completely on conventions and customs. So, does it imply or take us to a kind of if everything is if reason itself is subservient to feeling or emotions and passions, then does it take us to a kind of relativism or subjectivism. These are some questions which we need to raise, keep it in our mind when we try to understand the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant, which we will discuss in the next lecture. For this lecture we will wind up here.

Thank you.