

Projectivism Abstract

The idea of Projectivism is that we experience objects in the world as having certain properties which they do not have, – properties which are qualities internal to our own experience. The idea goes back at least as far as David Hume. It plays a central role in his theory of morality and causality, which he explained by analogy with what he takes to be the case with respect to experiences of colour. My interest with the theory is in relation to perceptual experience in general.

Projectivism, in the form that I shall defend, is primarily concerned with a fundamental type of representational content, one that is sometimes called “non-conceptual content”, but which I shall argue, is better thought of as “practical content”, content which is related to one’s abilities to act. This form of content stands in contrast to a more sophisticated conceptual content, which the experiences also carry. I shall argue for two claims: (i) that the more sophisticated conceptual content is ‘mixed’, containing theoretical and practical components; (ii) that projectivism provides an account that makes good sense of both forms of content that perceptual experiences carry, and is not subject to the “obvious” criticisms standardly levelled at the theory.