# Transcendental Idealism

For people to come up with a composite “reality” in which they can all interact productively together, it is important to understand how people create and perceive reality and not just expect others to interpret of what’s being communicated based on how one would interpret such communication. Such “centric” approach in coming up a reality and dealing with other people is prone to miscommunication that often leads to conflict. Rather than being “centric” in our approach to communication, it would be better to understand and accept that *people interpret the communications relayed to them differently and correspondingly, create their own realities differently*. There are various philosophers that supports this argument ranging from Plato to Berkeley who argued that people perceive and interpret their realities differently.

Immanuel Kant with his “transcendental idealism” best explains how people know what is communicated to them. According to Kant, people know what is communicated to them when it can be observed (Smith and Smith Chapter 6). But this explanation of Kant of how people know is limited that even he acknowledges the insufficiency of his explanation by excusing that we cannot know everything. Locke helped to fill in the gap of Kant’s “transcendental idealism” with his empirical approach that helps to complete the idea that people know things differently and consequently, interpret and create their realities differently. Kant further explained his position by stating substances has certain properties that can be known (Abela 5). He broke down the properties of a substance between primary and secondary properties where the second properties has substances that can be known by human senses and mental comprehension. The way we perceive these properties however, differ and correspondingly, the way we would create our realities or understanding would differ as we perceive the same properties differently. The issue in differing perception and interpretation of the same properties that compose our observable world is compounded by the fact that information and knowledge “evolves” where “old facts” are defunct by “new facts”. For example, the “old fact” that the world is flat was held as truth for a very long time until science is known to man and learned that the world is actually round. Thus, the “old fact” that the world is flat is replaced by the “new fact’ that the world is round as facilitated by learning.

The “old fact” which are wrong truth that were held due to lack of knowledge is further explained by Plato with his allegory of the cave stating that people could get used to the figurative darkness of the cave and could hold it to be true (Plato). Unless of course they would see the light and the beauty of the outside world and then change their mind to realize that what they believe to be true is in fact false. This is similar to communication where people hold different beliefs that serves as their lense in interpreting what is communicated to them where each believes that their own interpretation of what is communicated to them is valid.

The relativity of interpreting what is communicated or how one perceives the world is further illustrated by Descartes in “Solitary Self” by saying that there is in fact no “index” or absolute standard that would tell that our experience is real or just a dream. It is because the experiences we have in dreams are also as vivid as our experience when we are awake that it would be difficult to tell if our experience are real or not because we have the same sensory impression in our dreams (faculty.frostburg.edu). The point here is that perception differ and there is no one universal index to tell what is absolutely real or not. Berkeley followed the same line of argument by stating his falling tree argument. According to Berkeley, a falling tree is only real when we can observe it such as seeing it to actually fall and hearing the thud of its fall (open.edu, 2015). Such, the tree that falls in the forest is not real or does not even exist if we could not observe it because it is not real to our mind as we could not observe it.

Having these various ideas and philosophies on how people perceive communication differently and their various interpretation to it, it would be prudent to adapt a “composite” attitude to anticipate that people may understand and interpret what is communicated to them differently. Anticipating that the intention of our communication may be perceived and interpreted differently facilitates better interaction as it opens people’s mind to dialogue and further explanation being cognizant that we are all different and interpret things differently.

## Works Cited

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