

ABSTRACT

The status of material object in British analytic philosophy of the 20th century

The dissertation presents the issue of the status of material objects based on the writings of the following British philosophers of the 20th century: George Edward Moore, Bertrand Russell, Alfred Jules Ayer and John Langshaw Austin. The mutual interaction between these philosophers is the reason why the paper is devoted to the thought of all of them. The issue focuses on the problem of knowledge of the external world, which leads to the epistemological matter of the philosophy of perception. However, it is worth underlining that while in British philosophy it is customary to stress the question of cognition, especially sensuous cognition, the dissertation emphasises an ontological side of the issues troubling Moore, Russell, Ayer and Austin.

The author stresses that, in accordance with the classic British philosophers, Moore, Russell and Ayer seem to ignore an exceptionally important aspect of a perceptual situation which is a widely understood cognitive context in which we experience material objects through our senses. The author defends a thesis that context modifies a cognitive situation and that it is a crucial element of any sensuous experience. Against the philosophers' claim that the direct objects of perception are sense-data or their terminological equivalents, the author rejects representationalism and argues that material objects are directly experienced through senses and that, depending on the cognitive context, they present specific characteristics.

In this dissertation the author proposes that by use of our senses we do not experience attributes of material objects but the material objects themselves. The author considers the characteristics of material objects or, to use the nomenclature of British philosophers, ideas, sensations and sense-data to be identical to sensuous experience of material objects by a subject and claims that sensuous attributes of material objects are irreducible epistemo-ontological relations whose terms are: subject (S), existing in the space between the subject and object cognitive medium, including used tools and physical conditions accompanying perception (M) and a sensuously experienced material object (O).

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