Like Descartes, Locke is Metaphysical Dualist

• That is, Locke believes that the world contains two fundamentally different kinds of “stuff” (or substances),
  – **Mind** (Non-spatial, non-material *souls*, subjects of conscious experiences), and
  – **Matter** (Non-conscious spatial, material objects, the stuff that the science of physics describes).
Like Descartes, Locke is a (Metaphysical) Realist

- A **Realist** believes that there is a world (typically the *material* world) that exists independently of whether or not any conscious mind experiences it.
  - A Realist believes that if all the minds (mental beings) stopped existing tomorrow, there would still be a world out there, just one that no one was conscious of.
  - Berkeley *rejects* (metaphysical) realism.
Like Descartes, Locke believes that we perceive the “real” world only *indirectly*.

• We do not *directly* perceive material objects,
  – Just as we do not directly perceive people we see on T.V.;

• Rather, we directly perceive only *ideas* (sensations, things “in” our minds) that are caused by and *represent* material objects,
  – Just as, when watching T.V., we directly see only images on the screen.
How Locke says all of this:

• “Whatsoever the mind perceives in itself, or is the immediate object of perception, thought, or understanding, that I call idea; ...  
  – [Ideas (sensations) exist in our minds, and are what we immediately perceive. Ideas are NOT material objects]

• “... and the power to produce any ideas in our mind, I call quality of the [object] wherein that power is.”  
  – [Material objects exist whether we perceive them or not, and have causal “powers” or qualities which cause the ideas or sensations we immediately perceive.]
Locke’s Causal Theory of Perception: Indirectly aware of Sensation

Matter

External World

Qualities are "in" objects

Object

Causes

Idea

Directly Aware of

Mind’s Eye

Mind

Sensation

Locke’s Casual Theory of Perception

"in" objects

"in" objects

"in" objects

"in" objects

"in" objects
Qualities:

• **Primary**
  – Size
  – Shape
  – Weight
  – Texture
  – Motion

• **Secondary**
  – Color
  – Sound
  – Smell
  – Taste
  – Temperature
  – “Feel”
Ideas vs. Qualities:

- **Ideas:**
  - Exist in the mind
    - “mental entities”
  - What we are immediately aware of
  - *Sensations*
    - e.g., the *sensation* of blue

- **Qualities:**
  - Exist in the external world;
    - in the *objects* that cause our sensations,
  - *Not* what we are immediately aware of
  - The “powers” in objects to cause certain kinds of sensations to exist in our minds.
    - e.g., the *color* blue
      - i.e., whatever it is in the object that *causes* to have a sensation of blue.
Primary vs. Secondary Qualities:

- Both are qualities, i.e., powers in the object to produce ideas in our minds.
- The difference is in their relation to the ideas they cause in us—
  - Primary qualities cause sensations in us that resemble them (i.e., the primary qualities that caused them)
  - Secondary qualities cause sensations in us that do not resemble the (secondary) qualities that caused them in us.
  - Secondary qualities are “reducible” to primary qualities.
Reducibility:

- Secondary qualities are *reducible* to primary qualities
  - That is, secondary qualities are *real* in the sense that objects *really do* have the “powers” to produce sensations of color, sound, etc., in us.
  - But they are *nothing but* collections of primary qualities.
    - That is, it is collections of primary qualities of an object that cause us to have, e.g., sensations of color.
"WHERE'S THE BLUE?"
What is “blue?”

• We use words associated with secondary qualities (i.e., words for colors, sounds, tastes, temperatures, smells, etc.)
  – both to refer to qualities in the object
  – and to refer to sensations in our mind.
    • Sometimes when I say “blue” (or “color”) I mean an enduring quality (which causes me to have a certain kind of sensation) of an object,
    • but sometimes I mean a particular kind of sensation (the kind of sensation typically caused by objects that have this quality).

• This can be confusing!
  – even though the distinction between qualities and ideas is clear.
Confusion:

• This confusion between
  – “blue” as a **quality** in an external object, and
  – “blue” as a kind of **sensation** in our minds

• leads some (e.g., Berkeley) to think that Locke’s claim is that secondary qualities (colors, sounds, etc.) exist only in the mind.

• This is *not* Locke’s view. His view is only that our sensations of secondary qualities do not resemble those qualities.