

Do you even know
what's up?

By David Barnett

Topic: Skepticism

What is a Skeptical Hypothesis?

Skeptical Hypothesis

p is a skeptical hypothesis with respect to your belief in q iff

- i. p is consistent with your current state of evidence
- ii. p is inconsistent with your knowing q

What is a Skeptical Argument?

Skeptical Argument

1. I do not know that skeptical hypothesis p is false.
2. If p , then I do not know q .
3. Therefore, I do not know q .

Skepticism about the future

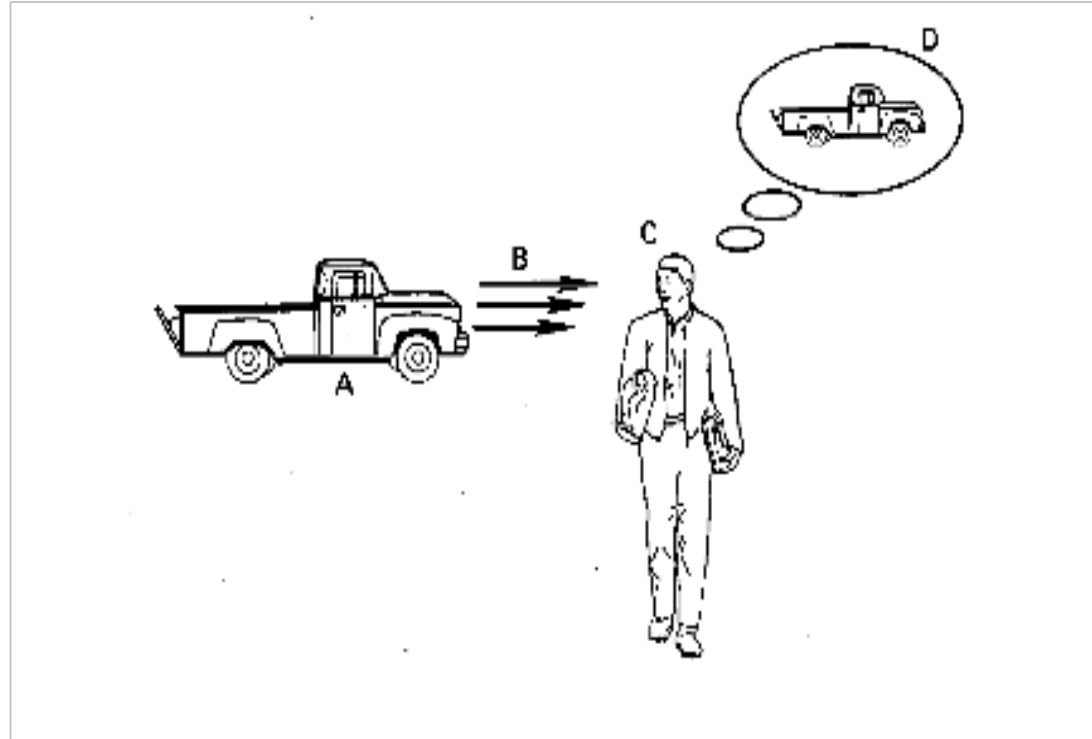
1. I do not know that no giant meteorite will hit the White House tonight.
2. If a giant meteorite will hit the White House tonight, then I do not know that the White House will be standing tomorrow.
3. Therefore, I do not know that the White House will be standing tomorrow.

Skepticism about the past

1. I do not know that the world did not pop into existence 5 minutes ago.
2. If the world popped into existence 5 minutes ago, then I do not know that I went to grade school.
3. Therefore, I do not know that I went to grade school.

Skepticism about the present

The Causal-Representative Theory of Perception



The Causal-Representative Theory of Perception

- ⦿ We perceive things in the external world by virtue of their causing us to have sensations that represent those things.

Locke's Hypothesis

- In standard cases of perception, our sensations are caused by mind-independent objects that resemble our sensations.

Skepticism about the present

1. I do not know that Locke's hypothesis is true.
2. If Locke's hypothesis is false, then I do not know anything about the present state of the external world.
3. Therefore, I do not know anything about the present state of the external world.

Cartesian Skepticism

☉ The Dream Argument

- ◆ What's the skeptical hypothesis?
- ◆ What's the skeptical argument?

☉ The Evil Demon Argument

- ◆ What's the skeptical hypothesis?
- ◆ What's the skeptical argument?

The Dream Argument

1. I do not know that I am not dreaming.
2. If I am dreaming, then I do not know anything about the external world.
3. Therefore, I do not know anything about the external world.

What's left after the
Dream Argument?

The Evil Demon Argument

1. I do not know that an evil demon is not deceiving me into having false beliefs about empirical, mathematical, logical, and conceptual matters.
2. If an evil demon is so deceiving me, then I do not know anything about these matters.
3. Therefore, I do not know anything about these matters.

**What's left after the Evil
Demon Argument?**