

Veridical Perception and Observation

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Philosophical debates have numerous departure points. I am interested in a rather rich departure point that takes not only the world of mental states for granted but also the existence of a mind-independent world populated with distinct things, some of which are embodied humans with brains and sensory organs. This departure point still leaves open the question whether our mental states about the mind-independent world are truthful. Let us call 'veridicalism' the view that perceptual beliefs and observational reports are largely truthful. In this talk, I argue for veridicalism by, among other things, examining in detail and ultimately deflating in import what many consider to be the view's greatest threat, the so-called 'theory-ladenness' of perception and/or observation. More specifically, I argue that to the extent that theoretical factors influence the formation of perceptual beliefs and observational reports, as theory-ladenness demands, that influence is typically not detrimental to their veridicality or at least not irreversibly so.