



Tyler Burge

Tyler Burge a obtenu son B.A. à l'Université Wesleyan en 1967 et son doctorat à l'Université de Princeton en 1971. Il est professeur de philosophie à l'Université de Californie, Los Angeles où il enseigne depuis 1971. Il a également été professeur invité au Massachusetts Institute of Technology, à l'Université de Harvard et de Stanford ainsi qu'en Europe dans les Universités de Munich, Bayreuth et Bologne. Il est membre de l'American Academy of Arts and Sciences, de la British Academy, de l'Institut International de Philosophie et de l'American Philosophical Society. Tyler Burge est connu pour ses travaux en philosophie de l'esprit, qui montrent que la nature de nombreux états psychologiques dépend de relations à un environnement plus large. Il a défendu le caractère primitif de la référence au monde physique dans la perception, et la distinction spécifique entre l'enregistrement sensoriel et la perception. Il est l'auteur de contributions influentes sur la nature de la connaissance de soi, la compréhension conceptuelle, le témoignage et les niveaux non-intellectuels de garantie empirique.

Sélection bibliographique

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Conférences Jean-Nicod 2010

Thresholds of Reason

Conférence du 14 juin
Origins of Perception

The lecture uses perceptual psychology to delineate sense perception as a basic psychological kind, distinct from other sensory capacities. Perception is the most primitive form of representational mind. Here *representation* is understood in a non-deflated way – a way that is *distinctive* of *psychological* explanation. *Representational* psychological states are those that have veridicality conditions *as an aspect of their natures* – *as an aspect of the explanatorily relevant kinds that they instantiate*. What gives traction to scientific postulation of states with veridicality conditions is, I think, certain capacities for *objectification*. Objectification is carried out in perceptual systems' overcoming the *underdetermination* problem – the problem of forming a perception as of a specific environmental condition, on the basis of proximal stimulation that is physically compatible with more than one (typically, numerous) environmental conditions. Objectification is paradigmatically illustrated in exercises of *perceptual constancies*. Perceptual constancies are capacities to form a state specific to a specific environmental attribute, or environmental particular, under a wide variety of proximal stimulus conditions. Perceptual representation is contrasted with several other types of complex sensory processing which do not involve objectification or perceptual constancies. In particular, the navigational systems of several animals are discussed as either constituting or failing to constitute representational systems. The basic structure of perceptual content is argued to involve singular, context-bound, occurrent applications of demonstrative/indexical-like elements and of general attributive elements.

Conférence du 15 juin
Steps Toward Origins of Propositional Attitudes

The key difference between the structure of perceptual content and the structure of propositional content is that the latter contains a dominant predicate (the analog of the main verb phrase) that does *not* function to guide singular reference. In perception, attributives *always* function to guide singular applications and to be applied by them. I call the role of a dominant predicate in a propositional structure '*pure attribution*'. An attributive is conceptual, as opposed to perceptual, if and only if it can take on the role of pure attribution. I believe that pure attribution is a basic mark of propositional structure. In this lecture, I explore conditions under which propositional states can be identified empirically. I am especially interested in whether propositional states can be identified in pre-linguistic, non-human animals. I discuss three points that make the prospect of finding propositional states in the psychologies of non-linguistic animals less forbidding than many philosophers and scientists have assumed that it is. First, a state's having propositional structure is not to be a priori *identified* with its being a linguistic state. Second, traditional philosophical arguments that reference requires mastery of linguistic devices (such as quantification and pronouns) or cognitive capacities (such as belief in a general criterion of identity) that non-human animals are not likely to have are unsound. Third, philosophical arguments that propositional thought – in particular, propositional inference – requires meta-cognitive capacities that non-human animals cannot be expected to have are unsound.

Conférence du 18 juin
Propositional Capacities and Logical Inference

I argue that a constitutive necessary- and-sufficient condition for having a capacity for pure attribution – hence for being in psychological states with propositional structure – is having a capacity to engage in deductive propositional inference. This capacity requires a capacity to think representational contents that contain logical constants. So the argument attempts to show that to have any propositional capacities at all, an individual must have capacities to engage in propositional inference that hinges on propositional contents that contain logical constants. A psychological state's having a propositional structure with a purely attributive element depends on individuals' having a capacity to make attributions that are not attributions to contextually identified particulars. I call this premise the *abstraction requirement*. I argue that to meet the requirement in a *fundamental* way, the key competencies are those with negation, conditionalization, disjunction, and quantification, most primitively existential quantification. I discuss relations between the propositional connectives and the quantifiers in meeting the abstraction requirement and the sense in which the competencies must be logical competencies. Finally, I develop the connection between having psychological states marked by propositional structures containing logical constants and having capacities for propositional inference.

Conférence du 21 juin
Propositional Attitudes and Reason

I start with the classical conception of reasons shared by Leibniz and Kant. I see its strength as regarding reason as propositional and explanatory as well as justificatory. I see its weakness as hyper-intellectualization. In this lecture I develop the points of agreements with the classical conception. In particular, I elaborate on reason's propositional nature and how, in its empirical use, it constitutively depends on non-rational elements. I argue that the starting points for empirical reasoning, and certain other types of reasoning, do not get their support from reasons but from entitlements, where what makes an individual entitled to an attitude is that the individual has epistemically relevant psychological competencies that meet natural norms for warrant. Reasons are steps in potential warranted argument – argument whose starting points are epistemically and practically good, but that themselves may not be supported by reason. Though a small part of the world, even a small part of our psychologies, reason is significant in that it underlies our most distinctive pursuits as human beings: such as science and non-manipulative persuasion.

Les résumés complets sont disponibles à l'adresse :
<http://www.institutnicod.org/conf.htm>

SEUILS DE LA RAISON
(THRESHOLDS OF REASON)
TYLER BURGE

Lundi 14 juin de 16h à 18h

ORIGINS OF PERCEPTION

École normale supérieure, salle Dussane
45, rue d'Ulm, 75005 Paris

Remise du Prix Jean-Nicod et cocktail après la conférence.

Mardi 15 juin de 15h à 17h

STEPS TOWARD ORIGINS OF PROPOSITIONAL ATTITUDES

École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Amphithéâtre
105, boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris

Vendredi 18 juin de 15h à 17h

PROPOSITIONAL CAPACITIES AND LOGICAL INFERENCE

École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Amphithéâtre
105, boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris

Lundi 21 juin de 15h à 17h

PROPOSITIONAL ATTITUDES AND REASON

École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Amphithéâtre
105, boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris

RENSEIGNEMENTS

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philosophie cognitive

Conférences Jean-Nicod de

L'esprit humain, son organisation, sa nature, ses relations avec le corps et avec le monde sont depuis toujours parmi les thèmes centraux de la philosophie. La psychologie contemporaine elle-même a pris naissance au sein de la philosophie. Elle s'est émancipée, mais l'émergence des sciences cognitives consacre d'une certaine façon le retour de la philosophie dans ce champ de recherche. Les développements de l'informatique et des neurosciences, en jetant une nouvelle lumière sur les phénomènes mentaux, ont eu pour effet de relancer le débat philosophique. La « philosophie de l'esprit » est ainsi plus florissante que jamais. Ce retour n'a rien d'une régression, car la philosophie dont il est question est en phase avec la recherche scientifique, informée par elle et en constante interaction avec elle.

Les Conférences Jean-Nicod visent à promouvoir les recherches philosophiques se rapportant à la cognition et à faire connaître en France les travaux réalisés à l'étranger dans ce domaine. Le conférencier, sélectionné par le comité Jean-Nicod, présente ses recherches au cours d'un cycle de conférences qu'il rassemble ensuite en un livre.

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(MIT Press et CNRS Editions)

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TYLER BURGE

THRESHOLDS OF REASON

