

MK A 303/8

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CAMERA SCRIPT

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ALEXANDRA PALACE, STUDIO "A"

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PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY
- A Third Level Arts Course
The Open University

"PERCEPTION"

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Professor Rodney J. Hirst, University of
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Hull.
Professor Godfrey Vesey, Open University.

SCHEDULE

Camera Rehearsal 1030-1300
LUNCH..... 1300-1400
Line-Up 1400-1430
RECORDING 1430-1600

Telejector Slides

1. "What is a person really aware of when he looks at an object?"
2. Professor Rodney J. Hirst
3. "What we are directly aware of is a mental representation of the tomato due ultimately to the effects on the eyes of light - reflected from it."
4. "The representations are not just effects - they correspond to the external objects and properties that cause them."
5. "Two types of perceiving:
(1) Perceiving the external objects i.e. discovering their existence and properties by means of the senses.
(2) The direct perceiving or awareness of representations that are caused in us by the external objects."
6. "We perceive an object by being directly aware of mental representations which are caused in us by it."
7. Professor Alan R. White
8. Taking part were
Professor Rodney J. Hirst
Professor Alan R. White
Professor Godfrey Vesey
9. Production
Richard Callanan
10. A production for the Open University
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CLOCK ONS/B Q PRESENTER
S/B RUN VT

(No Opening Credits for Recording - these are to be added as VT Insert at a future date)

Q PRESENTER

1. 4 B / Behind this discussion of
MS Vesey
Perception there are some scientific facts which drew our attention to the problem in the first place.
2. VT INSERT 1 / For instance, in visual perception/
(Dur)
a physical object - a tomato, for example - reflects light from a source into the observer's eyes, this stimulates cells at the back of his eyes, an impulse travels along his optic nerve to his brain, something happens in his brain as a result of this, and his seeing the tomato is conditional on all this happening./
3. 4 B /
MS Vesey
Two things to be noted about this are: First, the brain process appropriate to seeing a tomato may occur in the absence of a tomato. There are hallucinatory drugs, for instance that could bring this about. If he takes such drugs the person concerned may seem to be seeing a Tomato when in fact he isn't.

(TJ.1 Next)

(Shot 3 on 4)

Next, the light from the tomato takes time, though only a very short time, to reach the observer's eyes. But suppose he were looking at a distant star. The light might have taken four or five years to reach him, and the star might no longer exist. This is known as the time-lag in perception.

Now these two scientific observations may be thought to give rise to some questions:

What is the person who seems to be seeing a tomato in the absence of a tomato, aware of? And if we say that what he is aware of is not a tomato, but an 'image', or 'mental picture' of a tomato, should we not say this in the case in which there is a tomato, also? (There need be no difference in the person's experience between the case where there is, and where there is not, a real tomato).

Then with regard to the time-lag, how can a person be said to see a star which no longer exists?

(TJ.1 Next)

(Shot 3 on 4)

If we say that what he is aware of is a 'star-image' should we not say that what a person is aware of when he looks at a tomato is a 'tomato-image'? (The difference, in time of light-travel from the object to the eye, is only one of degree).

So, briefly the problem we're discussing here is what we mean by "seeing" or to put it in question form:

"What is a person really aware of when he looks at an object?"

4. TJ.1.
"What is a person really aware of when he looks at an object?"

5. 4 B / Now one answer to this question is
MS Vesey given by a Philosophical Theory called the Representative Theory of Perception

6. 3 A / And to discuss that/ theory we have
3-shot someone who holds it, or a version of
favouring White it, Professor Rodney Hirst of the University of Glasgow, and someone who doesn't hold it, in any shape or form, Professor Alan White of the University of Hull. I think we'd better begin with Professor Hirst stating the

S/B VT

7. 4 B / theory./
MS HIRST The Representative Theory seeks to

(VT Insert Next)

(Shot 7 on 4)

S/I

RUN VT

TJ.2.

"Professor Rodney J.Hirst'

explain perceiving by adding a further stage to the causal processes Godfrey had just outlined: it would say that what happens in the brain causes the percipient to see a representation (or 'image' or 'idea') of the tomato in his mind/

8. VT INSERT 2
(Dur)

PAUSE

What we call seeing a tomato is thus an indirect thing:/ what we are directly aware of is a mental representation of the tomato due ultimately to the effects on the eyes of light-reflected from it./

9. 4 B
MS Hirst

10. TJ.3.
"What we are directly aware of is a mental representation of the tomato due ultimately to the effects on the eyes of light-reflected from it"

PAUSE

11. 4 B
MS Hirst

/This point has often been put crudely and misleadingly. It is said 'we don't see external objects but only mental ideas of them'. But this is silly since the aim of the Theory is to explain how we perceive external objects. Bertrand Russel said 'The observer who seems to himself to be observing a stone is really observing the effects of the stone on himself'.

(TJ.4 next)

But the point is that the representations are not just effects - they correspond to the external objects and properties that cause them./

12. TJ.4

"The representations are not just effects - they correspond to the external objects and properties that cause them.

(The representations are not just effects - they correspond to the external objects and properties that cause them)

13.

4 B

MS Hirst

They correspond, for instance, in respect of shape - though the correspondence may not be exact. It is because the representations represent or correspond to their causes that perceiving them enables us to perceive the world.

Another crude way of putting the theory is to say that the representations are like maps of the surrounding countryside. But this is misleading for we see maps and the countryside in exactly the same way, with our eyes. But eyes are not involved in the mental seeing of representations any more than in seeing things in dreams.

14. TJ.5. One can put this by distinguishing/
 "Two types of
 Perceiving
 (1) Perceiving two types of perceiving:
 (2) The direct (1) Perceiving the external objects
 i.e. discovering their existence
 and properties by means of the
 senses.
 (2) The direct perceiving or awareness
 of representations that are caused in
 us by the external objects.

The second mode of perceiving is the means to the first. But it is safer to keep 'perceive' for (1) and use another term, such as 'direct awareness' for (2)

15. TJ.6. Thus/
 We perceive an object by being directly aware of mental representations which are caused in us by it We perceive an object by being directly aware of mental representations which are caused in us by it.

16. 4 B / The theory thus stated can deal readily with various problems of perception.
 MS Hirst The time-lag is easy - we see the star now although it may have disintegrated four years ago, because we are directly aware now of a mental representation of it caused by light which has taken five years to reach our eyes.

Again, hallucinatory drugs may give rise to the same representation and mental awareness of things as in normal perception.

So I want to say, with holders of the Representative Theory, that the causal processes in perception, and phenomena like time-lag, hallucinations, and so on, can only be understood by supposing direct mental awareness of representations in perceiving.

17. 3 A /Thank you. Now then, Alan.
3-Shot
White/Hirst/Vesey

ZOOM TO WHITE

S/I

TJ.7.
"Professor Alan R. White"

AS DIRECTED DISCUSSION

(ON AS DIRECETED)

END CREDITS

TJ.8.

Taking part were

Professor Rodney J. Hirst
Professor Alan R. White
Professor Godfrey Vesey

T/O

TJ.9.

Production
Richard Callanan

T/O

TJ.10

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FADE SOUND AND VISION