A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF A REPRESENTATIVE THEORY OF PERCEPTION

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PREFACE

In criticizing any approach to a problem, such as the problem of perception, it is necessary to single out some advocate of that approach. I have selected a contemporary psychologist, John Beloff, who seems to hold a theory of perception which has some popularity among psychologists and which I shall argue throughout this paper is untenable. The theory is known as a Representative Theory or Causal Theory of Perception. In presenting any position and criticizing it there is always the danger of misrepresentation. There have been times in trying to give an accurate account of Beloff's theory that I have been perplexed at just what to say. In these cases I have taken the liberty of filling in details not explicitly stated by Beloff himself. If in doing so there is any misrepresentation of his theory it has not been intentional, but rather due to my lack of understanding.

In writing a thesis, as anyone who has can verify, a great deal of advice is needed; especially in the early stages. For it seems that the novice writer, such as I am, lacks farsightedness into the extent of the subject upon which he embarks. In regard to this I wish to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Thomas C. Mayberry, my thesis adviser, for his help in my selecting a topic which could be handled in a master's thesis of reasonable length. Likewise, I owe a debt of thanks to him for his assistance throughout the writing of this paper, for generously giving of his time and immediate attention to the various problems I have encountered.

I would also like to acknowledge a debt to the entire faculty of the Philosophy Department here at Oklahoma State University, for during my studies they have impressed me as a rather outstanding group of teachers. Each of them has had an influence on my philosophical outlook, and in this I stand in their debt.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to my mother and sister who have given their time to type the various drafts which must precede a finished paper.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Perception, to most people in their ordinary daily lives, is no problem. We all are familiar with experiences of seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling and tasting and have no difficulty in reporting what we see, hear, feel, smell and taste. Although most people are, for the most part, unaware of the physiological processes involved in perceiving, they feel that there cannot be any question that we perceive things and events in the external world and that our senses can be trusted to reveal the external world to us in the way that it is. But some philosophers have not found these commonsense views so obvious, some even hold such views to be mistaken. They hold that to perceive something is not to be aware of the kinds of things we normally think of ourselves as perceiving - books, typewriters, mountains and hillsides - but is rather to be in some sense aware of mental entities which have been given a variety of names; ideas, sensations, sense-impressions, sense-data, percepts, etc., which do not exist in the world around us as we suppose them to, but instead "exist" in our minds.[1] One such person is John Beloff whose attack on these commonsense views and whose approach and solution to the concept of perception is the subject of this paper.

It may occur to one to ask why philosophers should be interested in perception. Well, philosophy is concerned with the examination of

and clarification of concepts, and "perception" being a concept, we can, as philosophers, investigate it. There seem to be two routes by which a philosopher can be led to discuss perception. One is the route from the Philosophy of Mind and the other is from Epistemology or the Theory of Knowledge.[2] Warnock thinks it unfortunate that most philosophers who discuss perception do so from one of the two above approaches because it has interest in its own right.[3] It appears unfortunate only to the extent that treatment of perception as a subtopic to some other broader philosophical concern may obscure the importance of the topic of perception. My main concern in this thesis is with perception itself and not so much its implications for other areas of philosophy; although, as we shall see in what follows, Beloff does approach the problem from the direction of the Philosophy of Mind.

To begin with, we must come to some understanding of what we are talking about when we use some technical terms. One such term is "perception." I shall accept Don Locke's definition of "perceive." He defines "perceive" as the genus of which "see," "hear," "taste," "smell," and "feel" are the species.[4] Thus, to ask what it is to perceive something is to ask what it is to see, hear, taste, smell, or feel something; and similarly, to ask what is perceived when we perceive something is to ask what it is we see, hear, taste, smell, or feel when we perform these acts. Terms like "percept" and "physical object" will arise in the course of this work and these will be defined as they arise according to the theory in which they occur.

I now wish to discuss in more detail the subject of the present work. The position under scrutiny will be that held by John Beloff in The Existence of Mind, which is a form of a Representative or Causal

Theory of Perception. His purpose in this book for discussing perception is that of elaborating his philosophy of mind, which is dualistic. He states the thesis of the book in this manner: ". . . Mind exists, or, to be more explicit, that minds, mental entities and mental phenomena exist as ultimate constituents of the world in which we live."[5] Perception is commonly held to be a source of knowledge; and according to Beloff all perceptual knowledge is knowledge of mental entities, thus his overall thesis that mental entities are ultimate constituents of the world is supported.

Beloff, of course, does not simply decide in favor of perceptual dualism because it supports his mind body dualism, he advances arguments to demonstrate that a Representative Theory must be accepted. His approach is as follows. There are three possible solutions to a question concerning the nature of what we perceive. One is Phenomenalism. Beloff identifies this view with Berkeley's Idealism, the doctrine that what we perceive has no existence apart from someone's perceiving it, that there are no things in the world capable of existence independent of being perceived. A second theory is a Representative or Causal Theory, usually associated with John Locke, and a form of which Beloff espouses. This theory is based on the distinction between primary and secondary qualities of an object, the primary ones typically being identified with size, shape, solidity, number, etc., and causing in the human observer the secondary qualities, colors, odors, tastes, etc. The primary qualities are held to be in reality as they appear to be, while the secondary qualities are merely the effects of powers resident in objects by virtue of their primary qualities and have no resembling qualities corresponding to them in the physical object. And finally,

the third theory of perception considered by Beloff is what is known as Direct Realism, or sometimes Naive Realism. This being the view that material things are just as they appear to be in size, shape, color, and so forth. It further holds that physical things continue to exist while not being observed and are exactly as they are when observed. Beloff identifies this view chiefly with the Linguistic Analysts'; especially Gilbert Ryle. He also refers to this view as the commonsense view. Beloff's approach is to eliminate Idealism on the basis that it has no active supporters today and hence there is nothing to gain in discussing it. In other words, it is not really considered a "live option" for contemporary philosophers. He then limits his discussion to a debate between Direct Realism and a Representative Theory. His arguments take a negative approach in that he attempts to show that Direct Realism fails to conform to certain perceptual facts and this leaves us with no choice but to make the best of the Causal approach to perception. He advances his own form of a Representative Theory, which he modestly claims is among the "least unsatisfactory." (p. 59) His arguments against Direct Realism are not new, but he does apply his own twist to them. They are the argument from the distinction between primary and secondary qualities of an object, from the finite velocity of light, from science, from illusion, and from the relativity of perception.

My thesis is threefold: (1) None of the above arguments constitute valid objections to Direct Realism or good grounds for necessitating acceptance of a Representative Theory of perception; (2) Beloff's theory of perception suffers from inherent difficulties which preclude it from being among the least unsatisfactory; (3) Beloff's approach to

perception is misdirected in that he takes an object analysis approach to perceptual statements in his arguments against Direct Realism and in his opening question about perception when we in fact do not ordinarily perceive objects.

I suppose that it could be said that I am defending Direct Realism in this paper. Many opponents of this idea have criticized those of us who support it for not spelling out clearly and with some elaboration just what the basic beliefs of this theory are. It seems to me that the explanation for this is simple; Direct Realism is best understood, not as a positive construction of what perception involves, but as a denial that any other view of perception than the common sense view that we see material objects as they really are is plausible. It is a denial that perception requires mediating entities, mental or otherwise. It surely is the consensus that perception is a direct, non-mediated, process and this strikes me as a prima facie case for this being so. Therefore, the burden of proof that perception is some other kind of thing lies with those who claim that it is. Hence, Direct Realism is a defense and not an offense. Normally theories are not created unless there is a need. Some otherwise unexplainable phenomena are observed and a theory is created. This is the position of those who hold Representative theories, they observe certain phenomena, such as illusions, and argue that these are incompatible with the commonsense view and proceed to create a theory to explain such phenomena. I, in defending Direct Realism, simply deny that such phenomena are incompatible with the commonsense view and simultaneously deny the need of any theory of explaining them.

Perhaps part of what I am attempting in this work can be explained

by this passage from the Philosophical Investigations. "Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. - Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us."[6] What I am trying to show in this paper is that if we get clear on the concept of perception we will find everything lying open to us, no hidden mysteries which need be accounted for in terms of mediating entities and no reason to advance a theory on the matter. Beloff himself is not completely satisfied with his conclusion for a Representative Theory as he says: "In electing to defend a Representative Theory I am not oblivious to its serious defects; other things being equal I would always prefer a theory more consonant with commonsense beliefs . . ." (p. 61). Perhaps then it could be said that I am trying to relieve him of his unhappy conclusion by demonstrating that no such "concession to logic," as he calls it, is necessary.

This paper assumes the following format. Chapters II and III deal mainly with Beloff's five previously mentioned arguments against Direct Realism with some criticisms offered on his theory in Chapter II. Chapter IV is devoted entirely to criticism of the particular form of the Representative Theory Beloff defends with an eye to showing that if it were true we could not escape Solipsism, and it therefore cannot be among the least unsatisfactory theories. In Chapter V, I attempt to lay some of the facts of the concept of perception open to view in order to avoid the conceptual problems, which I shall point out along the way, of postulating mental entities. I also attempt to show that Beloff's general approach to perception is misdirected and therefore misleads him to suppose the need for mental entities to play the role of objects where no objects are necessary.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Robert J. Swartz, Perceiving, Sensing and Knowing, (New York, 1965), p. xi.

[2]Don Locke, Perception and our Knowledge of the External World, (New York, 1967), p. 13.

[3]G. J. Warnock, "Seeing," Perceiving, Sensing and Knowing, ed. R. J. Swartz, (New York, 1965), p. 49.

[4]Don Locke, Perception and our Knowledge of the External World, (New York, 1967), p. 15.

[5]John Beloff, The Existence of Mind, (New York, 1964), p. 11. All subsequent quotations from Beloff are taken from this work and will therefore simply be followed by their page numbers.

[6]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, (New York, 1958), p. 50.

CHAPTER II

A REPRESENTATIVE THEORY AND THE EXIGENCIES OF SCIENCE

John Beloff's Theory of Perception

Professor Beloff opens his exposition on perception with this question: "When we look around or listen to what is going on, what actually is it that we perceive?" (p. 56) His answer embodies a Representative Theory of perception which precludes physical objects as a correct answer to this question. My aim in this chapter is to explain his theory as I understand it and then to consider in a critical light three of the basic reasons he uses to show why physical objects cannot be the immediate objects of our perceptions. These reasons are the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, the finite velocity of light and modern physiological discoveries. But first a presentation of his theory is needed.

Beloff states his theory like this:

> Perception is a process comprising at least two constituents: a public physical object and private mental entity or percept. This percept comes into being at the end of a long and very devious causal chain having its origin in the physical object. The two stand in a unique relationship which, for want of any more accurate expression, might be described by saying that the former represents the latter. (p. 59)

Realizing these terms need further refinement and clarification Beloff offers further explanation and in addition adds one more concept, the phenomenal object. He explains that one thing the Representative Theory

teaches is that to understand perception we need to distinguish between the following three elements:

> The physical object, the percept and the phenomenal object. This last is a psychological reality but it has no ontological status. It gives coherence to what would otherwise be a series of disjointed percepts and, for commonsense, it might be regarded as a necessity of belief. Neither the percept nor the physical object, on the other hand, play any part in commonsense experience but neither are they 'mythical entities;' they are, one might say, theoretical entities whose existence the philosopher, reflecting on the nature of perception from above, as it were, postulates as a necessity of thought. (p. 71)

I take this necessity of belief involving a psychological reality to mean this. The objects we normally perceive seem to us to be real existents in the external world, physical or material objects, with what philosophers might call ontological status. We cannot help believing that what we perceive exists in the world before us just as it appears, without such a belief our experience would seem incoherent. But upon investigation, such as the one Beloff conducts in his book, which shall be reviewed in the latter part of this chapter, we realize that our normal perceptions cannot have the ontological status we supposed them to have. We are thus forced by the necessity of thought, our reasonings, to postulate the percept which represents the physical object, and the physical object. That which we are directly aware of in sense experience is a phenomenal object, while the physical object is known only by description. The percept is a mental representation of the physical object and mediates our acquaintance with phenomena. This is essentially the Russellian distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description.[1]

Beloff provides an illustration which shows how the distinction between phenomenal and physical objects is to be made.

> A simple illustration should suffice to make this distinction clear. A familiar way of ascertaining the weight of an object is to place it on a spring-balance and take a reading from a calibrated dial. In this operation the critical item of sense-experience is the pointer-reading but, since the resulting measurement would have been the same if instead of a spring-balance we had used a pair of scales, the sense-experience is clearly a subordinate element in the operation. If we compare this with a judgment of heaviness we see at once the difference, for now it is the immediate impression which the object produces on the observer that counts, not its effect on some other object such as a weighing machine. It is the sense-experience as such that is now the prime element of the operation. (pp. 71-72)

So the distinction between phenomenal and physical object or property is this: if the property can be known directly it is phenomenal, if it can only be known indirectly or inferentially, then it must be a physical property. Returning to the illustration, we observe the scale reading to find an object's weight, and this weight, however many pounds and ounces, is a physical property of the object. But if we pick the thing up to make a judgment of its heaviness, this heaviness is the phenomenal property. Beloff must be thinking something like this. If we weigh an object no matter what the device used, so long as all devices are based on identical standards and so long as we have the same conditions of gravitational pull, etc., the weight will always be the same no matter who does the weighing. Say we have an object which weighs three pounds, this can be detected by many different kinds of weighing machines. But when a person picks this object up he does not immediately perceive the object's weight, the three pounds, he perceives its heaviness. Thus a three pound thing may feel heavy to a child and light to an adult, but it still is a three pound object. The weight is only perceivable via some device, while the heaviness is immediately perceivable to anyone. This precise weight then is the physical

property and is known by description, three pounds, which is the cause of the phenomenal property, heaviness, which can be known by acquaintance.

The reader will notice a switch in the discussion from physical and phenomenal objects to physical and phenomenal qualities or properties. However, on Beloff's view this does not actually constitute a switch in referents. When we observe properties of various objects, such as their redness, roundness, sweetness, etc., we think of these as qualities and not as objects. According to Beloff they do represent qualities of objects, but they are also phenomenal objects, that is, objects of our sense experience and not literally qualities of objects. Their existence is mental in status while real qualities are physical. The phenomenal properties, or objects, are then properties in the sense that they represent what we call qualities of physical objects. They are objects in the sense that they are the objects of our sense experience; and they are a "necessity of belief" in that we believe them to be physical objects before we give the matter thought.

Beloff further distinguishes between two kinds of phenomenal properties, as he says:

> We begin by stating as a postulate of the theory that our percepts represent for us the external world. We then distinguished between two types of representation: a primary one where there was a map-like correspondence between the phenomenal property of the percept and the physical property of the external object (properties of size and shape, etc., fell into this category) and a secondary one where there was no logical resemblance but merely a code-like correspondence between the two (the sensory qualities of colour, odour, sound, etc., fell into this category). Both of these categories however could be lumped together as dealing with the descriptive attributes of the phenomenal object. (p. 81)

This distinction is essentially the Galilean distinction between primary and secondary qualities which was given its classic exposition by

John Locke. Locke distinguished between three sorts of qualities. First, there are in objects those qualities which are in them whether we perceive them or not, bulk, figure, number, motion and so forth. We have via these an idea of the thing as it is in itself. An idea of these on Locke's view is an idea of primary qualities; and what we might call on Beloff's view primary phenomenal properties of a percept. Secondly, there is the power that is in any body, on account of its insensible primary qualities, to cause in a person different ideas of colors, sounds, tastes, etc. These are called sensible qualities or secondary qualities. On Beloff's view we might call them secondary phenomenal properties of a percept. Thirdly, there is in any body, due to the particular constitution of its primary qualities, the power to make a change in bulk, figure, texture, motion, etc., of another body so as to cause us to see it differently than previously. This sort of power is the power the sun has to make wax white or that fire has to make lead liquid. I understand by Beloff's term "physical object" these powers plus the insensible primary qualities.

Thus Beloff has explained two kinds of representation. Real and insensible primary qualities of an object produce in us percepts with phenomenal properties which bear a logical resemblance to the physical object itself. He calls this an "iconic or map-like" representation and considers visual space an example of such a representation. Then there is another kind of representation of a physical object, this is the kind revealed to us by our sense-modalities and bears no resemblance to the physical object. Beloff names this representation "non-iconic or code-like." The relation which exists between a smell and an odorific substance is an example of this representation. That is, there is

no resemblance between a smell and the molecules of the substance producing the smell in us, the molecules constituting the physical correlate to the phenomenal object, the smell.

I think it would now be fair for us to conclude that Beloff is using "percept" as a genus word to include two species of representation which are produced by primary qualities. Hence, there is a primary representation and a secondary representation. He does hold that the percept, a private mental entity, is an extended thing, an event in time with ontological status, while the phenomenal object lacks such ontological status as a psychological reality. I simply assume this to mean that the two phenomenal representations are not physical properties as we normally suppose what we sense to be, they are rather aspects of a percept which has mental status and is like a physical object with respect to primary qualities, but unlike a physical object with respect to secondary qualities. The phenomenal object and the percept are like two sides of the same thing. Looked at one way, phenomenally it has no existence; looked at another, mentally, it has existence. One may think we can conclude from this that the percept is the object of our perception and that the answer to Beloff's original question, "When we look around what do we actually perceive?" , is that we perceive percepts. But this would be incorrect according to Beloff. He explains (p. 60) that to talk of perceiving one's percepts is strictly improper as is remembering one's memories. He further wishes to restrict the term "perception" to mean "veridical perception." Thus to speak of perceiving a tree will imply that there is a tree to be perceived. Then whether we shall need to introduce some technical terms like "sensing" or "intuiting" one's percepts will

depend on other epistemological considerations. Actually though, Beloff never clarifies this point any further and this must become one point of criticism in what follows.

The reader will recall two sorts of necessities spoken of, one psychological, which has already been defined, the other logical, a necessity of thought. This latter necessity imposes upon us the Representative Theory of perception and is identical with the "exigencies of science." These exigencies are, as briefly mentioned earlier, Galileo's distinction between primary and secondary properties of an object, which leads to his phenomenal-physical distinction, the discovery that light travels with finite velocity, and recent discoveries in scientific neuro-physiology. These three factors are used by Beloff to show that immediate awareness of objects is not possible and that a Representative Theory of perception is required to be consistent with all our knowledge. It is my contention that the first two of these involve misunderstandings as to their relationship with perception which releases us from Beloff's necessity of thought (the Representative Theory) and that the third factor is irrelevant to any such theory of perception. So it is these three factors in turn which I propose to treat in the following sections.

The Argument from Primary and Secondary Properties

Our first concern then is with the clarity and usefulness of the distinction between primary and secondary properties of objects, in the language of Beloff the distinction between two kinds of representation of the physical object. I must confess difficulty in trying to explain the basis upon which this distinction is founded and in defending

its usefulness, for I do not find Beloff consistent in all phases of its employment. He grants, as we have seen, the validity of the Berkeleian criticism of Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities; hence, that Locke's ideas of primary qualities upon examination come to be every bit as mind dependent as his ideas of secondary qualities. That is, that our knowledge of primary qualities is knowledge of ideas which represent the qualities of the object and not direct knowledge of the objects. Berkeley used this as grounds for the conclusion that there are only ideas and no physical objects, but Beloff does not. He claims that the important distinction is between powers of a body which it possesses due to "its insensible primary qualities" and the ideas of these powers which arise in the mind, whether primary or secondary. This he says is the Galilean distinction and the critical one for any Representative Theory. (p. 73) But surely it makes no difference if one holds that what we are aware of represents a power, or corresponds to an object in an iconic fashion. As long as one admits that we are only aware of the representation and never of the thing represented how are we to verify that our representation is or is not an accurate one? Beloff holds that we are aware of the primary qualities of a physical object by description, a description based on the primary qualities of the percept. But what basis have we for asserting this description is more accurate than one based on secondary qualities of a percept, which Beloff holds with Locke and others, is not accurate? That is, secondary qualities only correspond to some real power and do not resemble it. Perhaps an illustration will help to make this point clear.

As the reader may recall, Beloff explains that the importance

this distinction between primary and secondary qualities has for his Representative Theory is that there must be two kinds of representation in the world. A primary one existing between physical properties of an object and the percept, an iconic or map-like representation, while the other, a secondary one, existing between physical properties of an object and the percept, a non-iconic or code-like representation. An example of the former relationship is that which exists between physical space and visual space, this relation being one of isomorphism; and it is on account of an iconic like correspondence between the two that we are able to know approximately how objects are situated in the external world. Hence, this particular relation exists between the physical world and the private mental entity each of us have, a percept. But how on such a view as the present one can we distinguish between visual space and physical space, between what the percept, the physical worlds representative, and the physical object reveal to us, since the physical world is never revealed to us? On this view would not asking if the percept resembles the physical object be analogous to asking of someone who has recently seen a movie based on a novel, but not read the novel, if the movie resembled the novel?

Now concerning the second kind of representation that exists in the world, the non-iconic or code like representation. This exists between physical properties of an object and secondary phenomenal properties of a percept, the former being the cause of the latter. Examples of these are smell and color perception. Here Beloff points out there is no logical resemblance between an odor and the molecules or molecular structure of the odorific substance. By logical resemblance he must mean that there is no necessary resemblance in that a

smell does not have to resemble the thing of which it is the odor. He further points out in the case of color perception that the hue, the phenomenal aspect of light, has no resemblance to its physical correlate, light wave-length. By resemblance he means that there is nothing in a physical object which, if we could directly sense a physical object, would look like what we "see" when we see a color or smell like what we smell when we smell an odor. There resides in physical objects only physical properties or powers which cause us to see colors and smell odors, these colors and odors are nothing in the object themselves. In the case of smell I am somewhat baffled as to what to make of his point. I am tempted to say something like this; "I did not realize a smell was supposed to resemble the object." A smell does not resemble a look granted, but what is this supposed to prove?

It is obvious that Beloff is referring to molecular structure as the physical cause of an odor and light waves as the physical cause of a hue. Here then I should like to point out that we have previously been provided with a criterion for the distinction between physical and phenomenal objects, viz., that physical objects are discovered inferentially and phenomenal objects directly. But the discovery of the physical objects in question, light waves and molecular structure, was not a discovery from an inference based on phenomenal representation. Light waves were discovered by an analysis of light itself not by an inference from the hue to its light wave-length. If we conduct the experiment of letting a beam of sunlight pass through a prism we will observe a dispersion of the beam into its composite colors.[2] But we are not here so much inferring that light waves do this as we are seeing that they do. And neither was molecular

structure discovered from an inference from the phenomenal representation of smell. So it is the case that the present physical objects Beloff refers to will not even pass his own criterion of a physical object.

A further objection to construing the physical object corresponding to hue as light waves is this. It has been discovered that each specific wave-length corresponds to a specific hue, for example, a wave-length of 575 millimicrons is a yellow wave-length. But the converse of this is not always the case, that is, a yellow hue is not always the production of a wave-length of 575 millimicrons. There are an indefinite member of wave-lengths which will produce a yellow hue. (p. 75) Now the wave-lengths are thought of as physical objects and the hue as phenomenal, and Beloff holds that physical objects have ontological status while the phenomenal objects possess merely psychological status, so here we are faced with the peculiar consequence of having psychological objects, hues, being more stable than their corresponding physical objects, wave-lengths.

A final objection to this account of phenomenal objects as hues and physical objects as wave-lengths is this. The proposition associating wave-lengths causally with colors is purely a contingent proposition not a necessary one. Hence, we could very well imagine one without the other, in fact, there are wave-lengths, such as infrared, which have no associative hue to the unaided human eye. And a man born blind could understand what a wave-length is, but he could hardly understand what the color yellow is. This means he would not have the concept of color ordinary people have. That is, he could explain to someone the theory of light-waves yet he could never identify the color yellow.[3]

Then if this is true there need not be an inference from the phenomenal object, hue, to the physical object wave-length. And further, Beloff has not yet made clear the distinction between these two kinds of objects in concrete understandable terms and hence this distinction cannot be grounds for necessitating a Representative Theory of perception.

It may be objected by some that I am depending too much on an illustration of a theory and not really criticizing the substance of the theory itself. This might be a valid objection in cases where theories are clearly explained apart from examples and illustrations of them, but Beloff's theory is not such a case. And remember too, that in this section I am criticizing the usefulness and clarity of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities for a Representative Theory of perception, and this distinction, being one between qualities, could hardly be made apart from illustrations. This distinction is alleged to describe our world of perception and if one who advances this distinction in support of a theory cannot provide clear and consistent examples of how such a distinction fits into that theory, then this is surely grounds for rejecting the usefulness of such a distinction for that theory. This is my position in regard to the primary-secondary quality distinction for Beloff's theory.

One final point in this section. If we recall the question Beloff is attempting to answer, viz., "what is it that we see when we look around?", what must his answer now be? The answer has got to be that we do not see anything. We cannot see physical objects, as they are identified with insensible qualities. We cannot see percepts since he has ruled out perceiving a percept. A phenomenal object is some sort of an immediate awareness which he has not described; hence we cannot on

this view see anything. No room has been left for any legitimate use of the term "see."

The Argument from the Finite Velocity of Light

The second demand of science that Beloff claims necessitates our rejection of the idea that we can immediately perceive objects and requires that we accept a Representative Theory of perception is the discovery that the velocity of light is finite. He explains the force of such a discovery by an example. Suppose, he says, it is a starry night and we look up at the sky; "one fact at least is certain: there are a very large number of bright specks contemporaneously present in our field of view." He explains that we accept from astronomers that these "bright specks" represent stars which are different degrees of remoteness form Earth. But on account of the finite velocity of light we shall either have to deny that these "bright specks" are contemporaneously present, in which case we would be denying the evidence of our senses, or admit that these specks are visual representations of physical objects, stars. (p. 68)

I should first like to call attention to the question begging phrases Beloff employs in describing our observing these stars; phrases such as "bright specks" and "represent stars." The question at hand is whether or not there are grounds for saying that what we see in the night sky are stars or some form of a starlike thing, a representative, so we ought not begin by assuming there exist grounds for the latter.

In the preceding section it was shown that on Beloff's theory we do not see anything, hence it must follow that we do not see stars either. And one of the reasons is that the velocity of light is finite.

What Beloff thinks this implies is that the star and what we see are not contemporaneous, that is, they are not simultaneous events. It works something like this. For convenience sake consider a case of a person's seeing the sun, a medium size proximate star. Science has uncovered a time lapse between the time light is emitted from the sun and the time the light strikes an observer's eye on Earth, a time lapse of approximately eight minutes. Now the argument is that since there is this eight minute time gap between the light's leaving the sun and its striking an observer's eye there is no possibility of seeing the real sun because how can you see now an event which took place eight minutes ago? Thus we must see something else, some kind of a representative, as it were.

There are three comments I should like to make concerning this matter. First, might I remind the reader of Beloff's criterion for an object's being phenomenal. It is that we are directly aware of such an object, that it makes an immediate impression upon the observer. He even provides us with an example, a judgment that a thing is heavy, or a judgment of heaviness by feeling, holding, etc. But is it not obvious that if the finite velocity of light is valid grounds for rejecting immediate awareness of visual objects that the finite velocity of nerve impulses will on the same grounds preclude the possible of any such judgment of a phenomenal object. He must either give up his criterion of phenomenal objects or his time gap argument for non-immediate perception of visual objects. Secondly, as long as Beloff continues to hold to the perceptual model of physical object causing percept or phenomenal object there has got to be a time gap. There is bound up in the concept of cause and effect the idea that the cause

must precede its effect, therefore there will always be a time gap between the occurrence of the physical object and the phenomenal object; what follows from this is that no matter how close we get to the sun we will never see it. It here means "real sun" or "physical object sun." Thirdly, what is this difference between the physical occurrence of the sun and the phenomenal occurrence? If we were standing by the sun, or on it, if that were possible, we would see the light eight minutes prior to an observer on the Earth. Yet this still would not constitute our seeing the physical sun. There is no way to differentiate between the physical sun and phenomenal sun except as has been done, viz., to say the physical sun causes the phenomenal sun. But this cause is of an unusual sort when compared to other causes. When we usually speak of causes we can talk about the cause separately from its effect, as in the case of the cause of diseases, weather, and so forth. But this physical cause of a phenomenal effect remains entirely unknown apart from its effect. We merely are to suppose what we see is an effect of a hidden cause due to scientific discoveries, in the present case the finite velocity of light. If sunrise is scheduled for six o'clock on any given morning should we say the real sunrise occurred at eight minutes before six? Then if a game ranger catches us duck hunting five minutes before six ought we explain to him that the real sunrise occurred three minutes ago only we cannot see it as yet. To speak of the sunrise is to speak of the time the sun's light first strikes earth or the time the sun is first visible from Earth. The discovery that the velocity of light is finite is a useful scientific discovery, yielding a standard of measure for extremely large distances (light years) and so forth, but I fail to see how it entails the denial of our

seeing objects as they are. How does this fact alter our concept of sun, star and all perception mediated by light so as to require the assumption of a hidden insensible cause of our sensations?

D. M. Armstrong objects to this time gap argument with the following analysis.

> In the case of the star it may be questioned whether our immediate perception really involves any temporal illusion. It may be suggested that what we immediately perceive is not the star, but a present happening, causally connected with the extinction of the star many years ago. The star sends a message to us, as it were, and we immediately perceive the message, not the star.

To this view, which seems a fair statement of Beloff's, Armstrong asks: "What can the immediate objects of sight be?" They cannot be sense impressions, percepts or phenomenal objects because we do not perceive these. They cannot be light-waves because we do not see light-waves either. So the only object we can possibly see in this case is the star.[4]

Armstrong concludes that when we learn of the contingent facts involved in perception, the velocity of light, our reaction time, and so forth our conceptual system is shocked; shocked because our ordinary concept supposes that we perceive bodies contemporaneously present, but this new knowledge seems to suggest that this is not possible. Thus conceptual revision is necessary. Since we cannot perceive now what took place sometime ago, what existed in the past, we must perceive something else which is contemporaneously present; hence, a percept. Notwithstanding Beloff denies we perceive percepts, on his view we just have them. But when we look at the stars with this new knowledge they look the same, that is they look as though we are immediately perceiving them and we fail consciously to notice any mediating mechanism.[5]

The problem seems to be a conceptual one. The scientist does not use the word "star" differently from the ordinary person, he simply has more information about them. The discoveries of science may alter our concept of star in one way. Science may reveal that what we have in the past been referring to as a star is really a planet, or something of this nature. But this only reveals a mistake, not a new entity. We can discover stars, peer at them through telescopes, gain information about them and their influence on Earth, name them and so forth. But these activities do not change our referent from a physical one to a mental one. The fact that the velocity of light is finite and that light mediates visual perception does not entail that perception is also mediated by a mental entity.

The percept and phenomenal object were invented to explain how we could see a star such as an extinct star, not contemporaneously present. But we have seen that this leads to confusion as to what we do perceive. Beloff argues that since the velocity of light is finite we must perceive or be aware of something other than what emits the light. However, this involves another confusion, it treats one event as two. To speak in this manner supposed the happening of the physical object, star of whatever, as one undetectable, unperceivable, and unknowable cause of another event, the percept. While it is true we cannot see without light, it is not true that all we see is light. Since we do not see light in most cases, the argument from the finite velocity of light for the existence of percepts is irrelevant.

The Argument from Science

The third demand of science which Beloff considers to embody

logical proof that we cannot see physical objects and which sheds light on what we must see when we look around is the discoveries of scientific neuro-physiology. He refers to what is called the theory of "cortical projection" as a landmark discovery in this area. I should like to begin this section first by quoting his explanation of this theory and what he calls its philosophical implications. He says:

> The crux of the theory is that there is a definite correspondence between the pattern of excitation at the receptors and the pattern of excitation in the corresponding sensory areas of the cortex. The latter is then said to be the cortical projection of the former. This, if we imagine someone staring fixedly at a triangle, we would have to suppose that a roughly triangular configuration of nerve-cells in the occipital region of that person's brain was concurrently in a state of arousal. (p. 58)

And then he says of this phenomenon and its implications.

> The cortical projection is important, however, inasmuch as it represents the last stage at which the original physical stimulus is still formally identifiable. Perhaps the philosophical implications of the theory might best be expressed with the help of a picturesque, but not I think misleading, illustration if one said that a demon ensconced in the skull of a blind man could, by the appropriate manipulations of cortical fibers, enable its owner to enjoy the same visual experiences as those of a sighted companion! (p. 59)

The first quote then briefly explains a scientific discovery that before an individual can see something a chain of physiological processes must take place involving many anatomical structures, namely visual receptors, nerves, occipital lobes, cortical projections and the like. The second quote embodies the use Mr. Beloff makes of the first one in furthering his cause for the Representative Theory of perception. I shall have more to say about both of these in what follows.

Now recall again the original question which Beloff has asked; when we look around what do we actually perceive? or what do we actually see? In the case of vision, we realize that this is a question

about the objects of our perception and not about physiological processes. To be relevant to the original question there must be some information contained in the above quoted theory which implies something about the properties of objects we see. But is there? Beloff argues that the cortical projection is important in as much as it is the last stage at which the original stimulus is identifiable, yet no connection is made between this projection and what we see, other than a causal connection. He does not contend that this projection is what we see nor does he identify it with either a percept or phenomenal object, so all it can embody is a necessary, possibly even a sufficient, condition for perception to take place. Thus, this scientific explanation of vision makes no assertions about any of the elements Beloff spells out in his theory and therefore cannot make any assertions about what we perceive. Nor can such a theory force changes in our concept of perception if it makes no assertions about the contents of that concept. The cortical projection theory is a scientific or physiological explanation of perception and not a theory about perceptual concepts. This point will be further developed later in the Chapter, but for now let it suffice to say this. Since this theory is not relevant to an explanation of the elements of Beloff's theory nor what we see when we look around it cannot be of use to him in explicating his Representative Theory, and the only use he might be able to make of it would be as the foundation of another attempt to show immediate perception is not possible. Thus the argument reduces to one form of what Armstrong labels as the argument from causation against our perceiving physical objects, which seems to me to be guilty of irreparable weaknesses.

Armstrong explains the argument this way. First, the most the

argument from causation could prove is that the immediate objects of perception are states of our brain. (On Beloff's view we are directly aware of the phenomenal object. He has ruled out perceiving our percepts and does not make it clear what we perceive). But we normally have no perceptual acquaintance with the events which take place inside our skull, so the conclusion that these events are the objects of our perceptions is unacceptable. And further, if these brain states could be perceptual objects we could only speak of having them, since we do not see them, and this would create a kind of mystery about what sort of perception takes place. (A kind of perception where we do not perceive anything, we only have things). Where the argument has gone amiss is in confounding two distinct phenomena, viz., perceiving an X with the causal conditions which bring about this perception. It no doubt is the case that human perception cannot occur in the absence of the brain processes explained in the Theory of Cortical Projection, but this can only require that we admit them as necessary conditions for perception to occur. What grounds are there for identifying this process with perceiving, let alone its objects as the objects of perception. "The stick that beats me makes me jump, but my jumping is quite distinct from the sticks hitting me. The beating of light-waves on my eyes and brain makes me see, but seeing is not identical with the beating of the light-waves."[6]

Returning now to consider what Beloff calls the philosophical implications of this scientific theory. His illustration was that of a blind man who, by virtue of a demon manipulating the appropriate cortical fibers, enjoys the "same" visual experiences as a sighted person. I suppose this illustration is meant to show that a physical

object, while implied by the verb "to perceive", is not strictly necessary for a person to see; that one person can "see" the same object as another only without the physical object. And since he is "seeing" something without a physical object he must be "seeing" a mental one, only not a percept since perceiving percepts has previously been ruled out. In order for the above argument to have impetus it must continue; now in the case of the sighted man the physical object acts as a stimulus for him to see. It stimulated the physiological processes which cause him to see. The only difference in the case of the blind man is that a demon initiated his physiological processes, but since both men see the same thing and the blind man does not see the physical object then neither does the sighted man see the physical object; and hence they must both see some sort of representative. Here we might notice that one facet of Beloff's theory, and an important one, comes back to haunt him, so to speak. He has in trying to avoid one conceptual trap stepped into another. In saying we cannot perceive a percept he leaves us in doubt as to what, on his view, we perceive. What he says of the blind man and the sighted man is that they enjoy the same visual experiences. But sighted men see things. He must admit we see something and perceive something. And he has already told us that to perceive is to perceive veridically, that to perceive a tree implies there is a tree there to perceive. So it becomes plain to us that the sighted man can correctly be said to perceive something while the blind man cannot because there is no object for the blind man to perceive. Perhaps Beloff is suggesting that we reserve the term "perceive" to imply that there is a physical object corresponding to what we are presently sensing, and what we are presently sensing is a phenomenal object; only

we do not see, hear, smell, taste, or feel these phenomenal objects because all of these activities are species of perception. So the nature of this "sensing" of what we are directly aware of is left unexplained. It seems that this problem with Beloff's theory remains a thorn in his side, even in his illustrations. But in reality would not the example of the demon and the blind man as opposed to the sighted man provide us with a paradigm case for distinguishing between a person seeing objects, the sighted man, and a person seeing representations of objects, the blind man? Actually it would be misleading to say here even that the blind man sees representations of objects, for it is not at all clear just what he would see or if he sees anything. The blind man cannot see percepts, nor phenomenal objects, nor can he see the cortical projection. There is a serious doubt here that the blind man provides an example of seeing or perceiving anything at all. What can be the criterion of his seeing the same thing as the sighted man and what is the nature of what he sees? These questions remain unanswered and as long as they do this example remains unclear and cannot provide grounds for rejecting our seeing objects.

In order to scrutinize this scientific approach to perception a bit further, consider the objections to it from H. H. Price. His aim in the work from which these objections are stated is to examine our experiences of seeing and touching which yield support to our beliefs concerning material things and see in what way and to what extent they justify our beliefs. This is not precisely the same question Beloff is considering, but both questions involve an analysis and explanation of the nature of what we see. Hence, what Price says of the scientific

approach to his question will likewise apply to Beloff's. He says of this approach:

> It may appear to some people that science, particularly physiology, can answer these questions for us. But it should already be clear that this is a mistake. This if it be said that when a man sees something, e.g. a tomato, light rays emanating from the object impinge upon his retina and this stimulates the optic nerve, which in turn causes a change in the optic centres in his brain, which causes a change in his mind: there are two comments to be made.[7]

The first is that this description of the perceptual process is no doubt true, but not so important as it may seem for purposes of justifying our observations as a source of knowledge; in Beloff's case for describing the nature of the objects we see. The physiologist has not explained how observation justifies beliefs about a tomato, that it is spherical, red, etc. All he has done is advance other beliefs about retinas, brains, and the physiological mechanism of perception. The second comment is that science only professes to describe causes of seeing and touching, but the epistemological question--that is, the philosophical question about the nature of what we see--and Beloff's question, is about the nature of seeing and perceiving. It would be the same as to ask what the words "seeing" and "perceiving" mean. Beloff is asking if there is something involved in their meaning and in what we see that are grounds for supposing we cannot see a physical object. The answer to this question must embody a description of the things we see, their nature, whereas the answer to the question about perception which a physiologist asks embodies only a causal description of bodily processes involved in perception. So scientific physiology is irrelevant to Beloff's question. An illustration may clarify this point. Scientific theories do not usually change our concepts. The

discovery that solid objects are composed of atoms which are mostly space has not altered our concept of solid object, we still talk of such objects as being hard and do not treat them differently. Then there are scientific discoveries that do alter our concepts, such as the discovery that the Earth is not the center of the universe, that is, we no longer speak of the Earth as being the center of the universe or of the sun's revolving around the Earth. But this physiological explanation of vision is more like the former case than the latter. For it in no way alters what we perceive, it merely gives an explanation of how vision is possible. No one wishes to say we perceive any of the anatomical structures involved in this explanation nor the nerve impulses that make vision possible. This physiological theory is not suggested as a new definition of "perception" nor a new concept, so what bearing can it have on Beloff's problem?

So the importance of what Price has said, besides the fact that scientific explanations are irrelevant to Beloff's question, is that if Beloff doubts he sees objects and questions the authenticity of what he sees, then this doubt cannot be removed by further observation; observation being the source of scientific findings. This is so for the obvious reason that if the authenticity of our ordinary perceptions is questioned then those made in the sphere of science must also be suspect. Armstrong states it this way:

> . . . if we accepted the Representative Theory on basis of the argument from causation, we should have to become sceptical about the very evidence which was adduced to prove the Representative Theory.[8]

This means that if we allow the causal explanation of perception given in science to constitute the solution to the question about the nature

of what we see, touch, etc., to force our acceptance of the Representative Theory of perception, the theory itself then would require us to be sceptical about the very grounds for accepting this Representative Theory. This would follow from the fact that the Representative Theory would cast doubt concerning the very objects we observed in our scientific investigation. To accept the Representative Theory on the basis of the argument from causation is then self refuting.

Here then I should like to say more of the Representation-Theory in general, that is, some objections which would seem to strike at any such theory. W. H. F. Barnes finds several objections to postulating such existents as percepts or sense data. First, it seems these entities do not always obey the Law of Excluded Middle. For example, if we contemplate some object at a distance it may appear blurred and we are unable to tell if it is circular or polygonal. A closer inspection is necessary to determine the shape of the object. But the percept which appeared to us, on the Representational Model, was neither circular nor non-circular. So these entities are of the sort which do not obey the laws of logic. Another oddity concerning these existents is the fact that a percept is just what it appears to be, meaning that there is no possibility of further discoveries about its nature. This is to be contrasted with our ordinary objects such as an apple or a squirrel of which we are capable of makjng new discoveries on further investigation. We increase our knowledge in most cases either by experiment or observation, but in the case of these entities no further observations nor experiment is possible. When we have an appearance, or representative, of a phone say, we can not make one observation of the percept now and another later and expect to learn something about

it for the simple reason that there is no criterion for the later observation being the same percept. Hence, the conclusion that to know one of these things is to know it completely is forced upon us. Barnes finds this a strange situation indeed. This idea of criterion leads to a third difficulty on the Representative Theory of perception, that while observing some object an eye blink occurs, are we to say two percepts are involved or one continuous percept. The life span of these peculiar objects seems somewhat indefinite.[9]

Mr. Beloff began by proposing the Representative Theory of perception as the least unsatisfactory among all possible choices and by attempting to use scientific discoveries to prove impossible the perception of a physical object. Surely it is clear by now that this theory cannot be among the least unsatisfactory and that there is nothing entailed by the distinction between primary and secondary qualities of an object or in the discoveries of science that makes it impossible for us to perceive physical objects.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Bertrand Russell, The Problems of Philosophy (New York, 1959), pp. 46-47.

[2]W. W. Tuttle and B. A. Schottelius, Textbook of Physiology (St. Louis, 1961), p. 409.

[3]D. M. Armstrong, Perception and the Physical World, (New York, 1961), p. 176.

[4]Ibid., pp. 144-148.

[5]Ibid., pp. 151-152.

[6]Ibid., p. 143.

[7]Henry Habberley Price, "The Concept of Sense Data," Meaning and Knowledge, ed. Nagel and Brandt (New York, 1965), pp. 399-400.

[8]D. M. Armstrong, Perception and the Physical World, (New York, 1961), p. 142.

[9]Winston H. F. Barnes, "The Myth of Sense Data," Meaning and Knowledge, ed. Nagel and Brandt (New York, 1965), pp. 585-586.

CHAPTER III

ILLUSION AND RELATIVITY

Chapter II was concerned with three arguments, collectively referred to as the "exigencies of science," which were intended to show the impossibility of immediate perception of physical objects and the need for a Representative Theory of perception. In this chapter I will consider two other arguments which are supposed to support the allegation that Direct Realism is not possible. These arguments are traditionally known as the argument from illusion and the argument from the relativity of perception. I shall consider the argument from illusion first.

The Argument from Illusion

Beloff's version of the argument from illusion is presented this way.

> Let us suppose that we are looking fixedly at a tree. We then press gently with a finger on one eyeball. It goes without saying that we are not in consequence suddenly confronted with two trees but how are we to describe what it is we now see? Are we to say, to placate Armstrong, that on our right we perceive a physical existent while on our left there is literally nothing at all, it is merely that we are possessed with a strong inclination to believe that we perceive there a tree? But, as anyone who cares to perform this simple demonstration can verify for himself, the two halves of the visual field may be phenomenologically indistinguishable! (p. 66)

Beloff further describes the objects involved in this experiment. He tells us that the duplicate image has a definite position relative to

the rest of the visual field and that it has temporal attributes in that it exists just so long as we maintain pressure on the eyeball. Also, it can be compared with its fellow image, hence, we cannot deny that this image exists. He here asks the question why the positioning of the eyeball in its socket should make such a difference as it does to the ontology of the situation?

Now this argument, in order to show what Beloff desires, that Direct Realism is not possible, must show two things. First, it must demonstrate that in certain exceptional cases, illusory ones like double vision, what we are directly aware of are not physical objects but some other object, a sense-datum, percept or phenomenal object. And secondly, that the illusory object and the non-illusory object are sufficiently alike so that if we are aware of (perceive, sense or whatever Beloff may decide) some mental thing in the one case we must also be aware of some mental thing in the other. Hence, the conclusion would follow that objects of perception, what we see when we look around, are mental in status, not physical. Don Locke sets up the following four statements as a general formulation of what the argument from illusion attempts to show. This seems like a fair statement of what Beloff is trying to demonstrate with his double vision experiment. (1) All the things we perceive via a particular sense-modality, vision, audition, etc. . . are qualitatively alike. (2) "So it seems natural and preferable to say that all things we perceive are of the same ontological type." (3) But some of the things we perceive, for example, hallucinations, after-images, duplicate images in double vision, are mind-dependent percepts. (4) So it seems natural and preferable to say that all the things we perceive are mind-dependent percepts, mental

entities.[1] I shall proceed in what follows to deny statements one and three which constitutes a denial likewise of two and a refutation of the conclusion, statement four.

Now consider the first of these four statements; in Beloff's explanation of the illusion of double vision it is the assertion that the two halves of the visual field are phenomenologically indistinguishable. If we note the context in which this argument occurs we wee that Beloff is denying Armstrong's assertion that we are never directly aware of anything in perception except physical objects. So this experiment is submitted as evidence that we are aware of something else. We can, without, unfairness, suppose Beloff wishes to call this something else a phenomenal object since in his view this is the only thing of which we are directly aware. And we must further suppose that Beloff would accept Locke's formulation of the argument from illusion, especially that all our perceptions of a particular sense modality are qualitatively alike and we are therefore always aware of phenomenal and not physical objects. For if all Beloff means by saying the two halves of the visual field in the double vision experiment are "phenomenologically indistinguishable" is that the subject in such an experiment cannot always tell which "object" is the "real" one, then the Direct Realist can readily admit this and not simultaneously admit anything damaging to his view. So now we may ask upon what basis the assertion that all perceptions via a single sense modality are qualitatively alike rests?

We shall begin by making some distinctions which ought to clarify what we are dealing with when we have an experiment such as Beloff's. There are different kinds of "illusory" perceptions or ways in which a perception can "go wrong." First, I can sense something that does

not really exist at all, such as what is perceived while under the influence of LSD or what psychotics sometimes suffer from, hallucinations. Then I can sense something that does really exist, but I mistake it for something else which does not exist. This would happen if I mistook a vine for a snake, a kind of illusion. Thirdly, I may sense something which does really exist, but it is objectively different from what I take it to be, such as seeing a red tomato as green due to color-blindness. And finally, I may sense something that does really exist, and I sense it as it is objectively, but I take it to be something it is not. An example is the Muller-Lyer illusion in which I see two lines which are in fact equal, yet I take one to be the longer. These distinctions may be somewhat arbitrary and may not be the only kinds of divisions that can be made on this subject.[2] But this is no real matter, the importance of them is that distinctions between one kind of "illusory perceptions" and another do exist. Especially important is that illusions are distinguishable from hallucinations, in that a hallucination is typically peculiar to one individual and no other can experience his hallucination; while an illusion is typically public in that it can be experienced by anyone who is willing to place himself in the proper circumstances. So illusions and hallucinations are two kinds of non-veridical perceptions which are not really alike. Also, these illusions are usually explainable in terms of some observable cause, such as the physical laws of optics, as mirages etc. . . .[3] Beloff's double vision fits best into the second category here and the important questions to answer are: first, is the "duplicate image" qualitatively indistinguishable from the real tree, for if it is not then the argument loses its force; and secondly, are percepts or mental

entities of some sort necessary to explain the presence of the "duplicate image."

Concerning the first question, what can it mean to say this "duplicate tree" in Beloff's experiment is qualitatively the same as the real or original tree. This is not a method for producing new trees, I mean no one supposes we can cut up both of the trees for firewood. No one would attempt to climb the duplicate nor pick an apple off of it if it was an apple tree. These are the sorts of things we do with real trees, so if the real tree and the duplicate are qualitatively identical why is it no one supposes we can work with the duplicate as we can the real object. In addition, even if it can be shown that in the one case, the double vision experiment, the duplicate and real object are in fact essentially the same, this could not then be generalized to all cases of perception, even where non-veridical perceptions are possible, because as was shown earlier not even all non-veridical perceptual experiences are identical.

Austin in considering this same kind of argument for the existence of percepts, agrees that for this argument to have force it must show that veridical and non-veridical perceptions are qualitatively indistinguishable. But he too questions this premise as he points to dissimilarities between other cases of perceptual delusion than the one Beloff discusses. He argues that if this premise were true then to dream of being presented to the Pope must be qualitatively indistinguishable from actually being presented to the Pope. But we have a phrase in our language, "dream like quality," which is used to characterize some of our waking experiences. If this premise concerning the nature of our veridical and non-veridical perceptions were true

then this phrase must be meaningless. And consider the case of a man who is hit on the head and reports "seeing stars," are we to say the stars we see when hit on the head are qualitatively identical with stars we see in the sky? Similiarly, to see a green after-image is not like seeing a green patch; and looking at a white wall through blue spectacles is not like looking at a blue wall, nor is seeing doubly one tree like seeing two trees.[4] All these cases cited involve veridical and non-veridical perceptions in which the difference is clearly establishable, and hence, the premise in the argument from illusion concerning the qualitative similarity between veridical and non-veridical perceptions is very dubious.

Now let us turn our attention to the premise of the argument from illusion that says some of the things we see, like the duplicate in double vision, are sense dependent and therefore mental entities. What is it that happens in this experiment of pressing on the eye which leads one to the conclusion that there are percepts, or something of this nature, involved? When pressure is applied to an eyeball one sees double. Where there is one tree there now appear two. There are not two trees so what is it there is two of? Beloff's answer is not entirely clear, he speaks of a duplicate image. (p. 67) This could be taken to imply that both of the things one is aware of are images, then when we say we see one tree this would mean we are aware of one image. But this would certainly be inaccurate for we do not normally see images nor are we normally aware of images. I will not take Beloff to mean this however, but rather simply to mean by "duplicate image" that the duplicate or illusory tree before us in the double vision experiment is an image of the real tree and phenomenal in its nature. This

image exists as long as pressure is maintained and therefore it has temporal attributes, which must mean it exists in some sense. But what sense? Now to ask "What are there two of?" demands the answer, on Beloff's view one tree and one image of a tree. But Beloff is not himself satisfied with this answer, and needs to make both the image and the tree identical qualitatively. But is not this question itself, "What are there two of?" a trick question committing the Fallacy of Many Questions. It assumes that one sees two of something when he in fact sees one thing looking double.[5] Whether seeing one thing doubly is the same as seeing two things is a question which Beloff treats as already answered in the affirmative without considering it. It is true that under certain circumstances we do in fact see things doubly, but this is not like seeing two things, and some of the differences have already been explained. Beloff says the duplicate tree has temporal attributes and must exist in some form, obviously not physical though. But saying this thing has temporal attributes is only to say that the illusion exists as long as pressure is maintained on the eye; as long as the illusion producing factors are maintained. The force of calling this example an illusion means that the illusory tree does not really exist. Beloff seems to be caught in a logical necessity, he thinks that there must be something where the duplicate tree is or we could not experience the illusion. But when we look to see what is there we find only the real tree and nothing else. So the percept is invented as a necessity of thought. But all we really know is that we experienced an illusion (the illusion exists) and the force of this being an illusion is that the duplicate tree does not exist. It is an illusory object.

There seems to be some kind of mystery connected with seeing double which compels some authors to invent percepts to explain it. Perhaps if we remove some of the mystery we can also remove the compulsion to have percepts as the object of our perception. This question can be answered in one sense, a causal sense, by a scientific physiological explanation. Normal vision in human beings is binocular, this means that each eye receives light waves which are focused through the lens of the eye and project an image on the retina of the eye. There are identical or corresponding points on the retina of the left and right eye, call these points a and b respectively.

> If the image of an object falls in the left eye upon point a and in the right eye upon b, the object is seen as a single object, but if one image falls upon c (a point other than a) and the other upon b, the object is seen double; b and c are said to be unidentical or noncorresponding points.[6]

So the explanation of why double vision is caused by pressure on the eyeball is simple, the pressure distorts the shape of the eye causing the image focused on the retina of one eye to fall on a noncorresponding point of the other eye. Double vision is caused then by disturbing the natural physiological visual process. Now that there is no mystery as to how or why double vision occurs, why would one suppose two objects to be involved?

Perhaps a distinction between two different senses of "see" will help. There are two senses of "see" to correspond to two "objects" of seeing. One sense, the ordinary sense, concerns typical objects of conversation, like tables, clocks, trees and so forth. About these objects we can ask existence questions. When was it made, born, formed or whatever? In the case of the tree we can ask when it was planted, last pruned and the like. This is the existence use of "see." A

second use or sense of "see" is an appearance use, not an existence use. The appearance, in this case, lasts only so long as pressure is maintained on the eye. To ask the same sorts of questions about the appearance is to confuse the second use with the first. No objects are implied by using "see" in the appearance sense.[7]

Some have disputed the legitimacy of this distinction. Austin argues that there are not two different senses of "see" or "perceive" corresponding to the two circumstances. He holds that rather than there being two different senses of "see," we simply stretch ordinary usage to accommodate such an exceptional case as double vision by saying, "Now I see two trees." He argues against there being two senses with this analogy. "I might say, while visiting the zoo,

> 'that is a lion,' pointing to one of the animals. I might also say, pointing to a photograph in my album, 'that is a lion:' Does this show that the word 'lion' has two senses- one meaning an animal, the other a picture of an animal? Plainly not.[8]

But I should like to point out that this analogy is not quite appropriate for the situation. First of all, the argument is not that there are two senses of "tree" as the lion analogy would suggest. Secondly, and more importantly, when I tell someone "that is a lion," pointing to a picture, this is not likely to be misunderstood; that is, no one expects the pictured lion to roar as real lions do. But when I press against my eye and exclaim "Now I see two trees!?" this could be and has been misunderstood. Beloff and others who use this experiment to support their arguments against Direct Realism have taken this statement to imply the existence of two objects, realizing there exists only one tree, physical object, they suppose the existence of a mental object to be the other tree. And if they have not reasoned in such a

manner then what else could lead them to percepts. If they understand that to say there are "two trees" in the double vision experiment does not mean there are two of anything then what reason can there be for percepts in this case. They have confounded the existence use of "see" with the appearance use.

Now to return to Austin's objection to two uses of "see" I have already shown how his analogy with the lion does not fit the case of seeing. We might further notice that distinctions are not created without reasons, and there is no reason to distinguish between two senses of "lion" for no one confuses a pictured lion with a real lion. Even in a case of motion pictures no one confuses the pictured lion with a real one, that is, no one shoots at them or runs from them, and so forth. The concept "picture" is understood in most cases and there is no reason for distinguishing between different senses of lion, as in Austin's analogy. But the concept "illusion" is apparently not always understood, for some, Beloff included, have postulated objects, percepts, to occupy a place of an illusory object, the duplicate tree, when there is no object there.

So now having removed the mystery of why we see double, the physiological explanation, and having shown that we do not need an object of any sort in cases of illusion to occupy the place of the illusory object, since merely by being an illusion objects are precluded; we ought also be free from needing percepts. Even if the causalist could show that percepts were needed in some illusions he would still need, in order to advance his theory, to show that percepts are needed in every case of perception, both veridical and non-veridical. But this is just what he cannot show and illusions provide no grounds for a Representative Theory.

The Argument from Relativity of Perception

Now to turn our attention to what Beloff argues is the most serious weakness of the Direct Realist's view, relativity of perceptions. He says:

> Take a simple example: many objects appear to us to have a single uniform overall colour. But we know that if we had been born with eyes whose lenses had a sufficient power of magnification these same surfaces would have appeared as highly variegated patchworks.
>
> Why should we assume that the world is as it looks to homo sapiens when it must almost certainly look quite different to the insects, birds and octopuses, let alone any hypothetical Martians? (p. 67)

There are two forms any argument from relativity may assume. One is an argument from the relativity of color perceptions and the other is an argument from the relativity of how things may look to different beings. I shall begin with an explanation and analysis of the latter.

Beloff does not provide details to this argument so we are left to our own wits to fill them in. Now we may ask, how might the world look different to beings other than ourselves, insects, Martians, etc.? I think a fair assumption of what Beloff has in mind, and an argument which has been advanced by others,[9] is that things which look large to one sort of being, a mite, will look small to another, an elephant; and further, this can be true of soft and hard, swift and slow and so on. But a thing cannot be both fast and slow simultaneously, hard and soft, large and small, although it may appear in these ways to different individuals. Hence, these different individuals, while perceiving these different properties of an object, cannot be perceiving the same objects or properties, so these properties cannot be real, physical, properties, but rather must be some kind of a mental entity. The

problem may be posed something like this: things look different to different people in terms of hardness and softness, swiftness and slowness, largeness and smallness, and would look even more so to different species of animals and persons from different planets, so what is this object really? Soft or hard, etc.? Beloff must believe we need mental entities to be the properties of objects which can look large to one individual and small to another.

But what are such qualities as largenes and hardness, slowness and swiftness, etc., except relational qualities of objects. This means that to talk of an object being large or small is to talk elliptically. Presupposed by such a judgment or incorporated in it is some standard of largeness or smallness which is left unmentioned, but which must exist if our attribution of these qualities is to have meaning. In a large number of cases the standard is our own body, for instance, a judgment that a man is a fast runner or that an object is too large for one man to move.[10] But this does not imply that a fast man could outrun a deer or that an elephant could not move what one man could not move. Likewise lead is a soft metal, but would make a very hard bed. The point is that these are relational judgments, each judgment of hardness, swiftness, largeness, etc., has a criterion for its attribution implied by what it is an attribute of and who is making the judgment. Beloff has not realized this and is apparently looking at these relational qualities on the same model as other properties, such as the primary qualities. To ascribe some number to a thing, such as saying that a person has two arms, is not like saying the person has large arms. The number of arms is something the person has and would have even without a numbering system or on a different numbering

system. That is, we say a person has two arms on a numbering system of base ten, if we changed to base one we would merely change the name and not the number of arms. The two arms are something the man has. But to ascribe a quality such as largeness is not to ascribe something the man has, it is to say how the man compares to other men. To say a thing is large, small, soft, hard and so forth, is not to give a report on something we perceive but rather it is to say how a thing compares to some standard or to other things of its same kind. A relational property is not like other properties of an object, color, weight, shape, number, etc., it is more like seeing an aspect of something. That is, seeing a way a thing may be regarded or viewed, and we have standards for ascription of these different relations. So it seems sufficient to say in the case of relational properties that the reason one thing can look both large and small is not because two different objects are being represented via different percepts, but because there are various standards for ascribing a relational property.

Here then we need to consider the first argument contained in the passage quoted from Beloff, the argument against Direct Realism on the grounds that a person, a Martian say, with eyes whose lenses have a sufficient power of magnification to make what appears to us to be a solid blue surface appear to him as a variegated patchwork of blue. The argument being, I take it, that since colors appear differently to beings with different visual apparatuses, all the different appearances cannot be properties of the physical object. That is, the surface cannot be both solid blue and a variegated patchwork of blues, so these different appearances must be properties of mental objects, percepts, or be phenomenal properties themselves.

It may cast light on such an argument as this if we find out what the force of the "appears" is in the appearance of this blue surface. There are two senses of appears which could be used. There is the sense, which might most aptly be described as the "resemblance sense," that we use to say that a thing x looks like or resembles a thing y, but is not that thing. "The imitation apple appeared to be a real one from a distance." Here the speaker knows the apple is not real, he is complimenting the imitation, saying it looks real and is therefore a good imitation. This resemblance sense could also take the form of the speaker not knowing that the x is not a y, but saying it does appear that the x is a y. "From that distance it appeared as though there had been a traffic accident, but I was not sure." Then there is the "judgment sense" of appears, to say in this sense that x looks like or appears y means that the speaker is inclined to think that x is y, but it may not be. The common characteristic of these two is that there is essentially a non-commitment on the part of the speaker to what a thing really is. That is, a thing may appear a certain way, but the speaker doubts that it is, or a thing may appear a certain way, and the speaker thinks it is that way. But there is a bit of a doubt in either case.[11]

Now we might ask when we would say of a blue surface that it appears to be a variegated patchwork. Well, it would be possible for us to look at a surface and judge it to be solid blue, then take a magnifying lens that would make the surface look to us as it does to our hypothetical Martian, here one would be apt to say "now it appears to be a variegated patchwork." But in this case it would be the resemblance sense of "appears" and not the judgment sense that is meant due

to the fact that this individual has just surveyed the surface with the unaided eye and found that it was solid blue. The person would understand that it is the magnifying lens that makes the surface look or appear to be variegated, though it actually is blue. The presence of the magnifying lens would no more change our concept of blue here than the knowledge that a solid surface consists of tiny atoms spaced apart from each other changes our concept of a solid surface. Consider now what the Martian would say when he surveyed this surface, he would not say it appears to be a variegated patchwork of blues, but rather that it is a variegated patchwork of blues. He would say that it "is" rather than that it "appears" because he sees things differently from Earthlings. So what is involved in color judgments is the same thing that is involved in relational judgments, a standard for the ascription of color.

We ascribe color properties to objects. The dispute contained in this argument from relativity is whether these colors are real properties of objects or simply appearances, the allegation being that they are appearances and a physical object cannot appear to be two different colors at the same time, so it must be a phenomenal or mental thing that appears. But there is no reason that the physical object cannot appear differently to different individuals. In Beloff's example we have a surface which we call blue and which a Martian calls a variegated patchwork of blues. What needs to be shown in order for the Representative Theory to gain support is that something is "seen" other than the physical object. But there is no more reason why a thing cannot look different in regard to colors than in regard to largeness and smallness if different standards for ascribing such properties exist;

and if different conditions and differently constituted sense organs are involved.

The question now is what determines which properties are real and which appearances? We cannot distinguish real properties from apparent ones by the real ones being those which exist apart from our perceiving them because that would entail that we discover what properties a thing has without perceiving it. What counts as whether a thing is a real quality of an object must be explained in terms of what is perceived under what conditions. The appearance of a thing and what we perceive are partly determined by the conditions of observation. These conditions can be explained in terms of "Standard Conditions" and a "Normal Perceiver," the real color of an object being defined as the color seen by the "Normal Perceiver" under Standard Conditions."[12]

Such a theory as this enables us to distinguish between real colors and apparent colors. Beloff believes that because it is possible for there to exist in the world two standards, the Martians and ours, there can be no real colors. But on the contrary, apart from some standard or criterion the ascription of a color would not be possible in that we would not know what was meant. Must we say there is no real mile because there exist two standards, the land mile and the nautical mile, that is, does the presence of the standard for the nautical mile make the land mile only an appearance of a mile or vice versa? Ordinarily we do not think of standard conditions for colors because we are unaware of any standard other than the human one. But the arrival of a Martian would not destroy our standards and make all our color judgments appearances. Properly understood then, such a relativism provides no grounds for the existence of mental entities as intermediaries in our perceptions.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Don Locke, Perception and Our Knowledge of the External World, (London, 1967), p. 111.

[2]Ibid., p. 92.

[3]J. L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, ed. G. J. Warnock (Oxford, 1962), pp. 21-24.

[4]Ibid., pp. 46-50.

[5]Don Locke, Perception and Our Knowledge of the External World, (London, 1967), p. 108.

[6]W. W. Tuttle and Byron A. Schottelius, Textbook of Physiology, (St. Louis, 1961), p. 427.

[7]John W. Cook, "Hume's Scepticism," American Philosophical Quarterly, June, 1968, p. 14.

[8]J. L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, ed. G. J. Warnock, (Oxford, 1962), p. 91.

[9]The Works of George Berkeley, Vol. 2, ed. T. E. Jessop, pp. 198, 191. Also, Plato has similar arguments in Book V of the Republic.

[10]D. M. Armstrong, Perception and the Physical World, (New York, 1961), pp. 10-11.

[11]Don Locke, Perception and our Knowledge of the External World, (London, 1967), pp. 103-104.

[12]Ibid., pp. 98-99.

CHAPTER IV

A CRITERION IS NEEDED

The aim of this chapter is to show that Beloff's theory cannot escape an agnostic view with regard to the judgments of others; and further, that such a theory leads to unintelligibility with regard to perceptual claims. I offer a criticism of this theory based on difficulty with criteria for color words which preclude it from being among the least unsatisfactory of theories.

It has previously been noted, in Chapter II, that Beloff admits both primary and secondary qualities to be equally mind dependent; therefore we have no justifications for assertions concerning the properties of physical objects other than by some inference. This could lead to solipsism, a kind of skepticism with regard to the real nature of physical objects and how we are to understand the statements of others, since we each have our own mental representation of the physical world. Beloff recognizes this difficulty as he says:

> Perhaps the hoariest of conundrums in the philosophy of perception is how one observer can tell that he is perceiving the same color as another observer. Those who argue against the view we have taken here that colors, strictly speaking, are mental entities, sometimes evoke this conundrum in order to show that, on our view, we would have to profess complete agnosticism about the fundamentals of each other's sense-experience. . . . Admittedly no evidence can be conclusive in the nature of the case, and so it will always remain logically possible that what I see as red you may call 'red' but see as green, nevertheless there are, I suggest, at least two sound inductive reasons for believing that our colour-perceptions are in fact interchangeable. (p. 79)

This statement is in reference to color perception, but it will apply to all perceptions since they are all mind dependent. It is also obvious here that what he is calling "red" is some kind of private mental entity, so he advances two arguments to show that we all probably see the same color when we see the color red. The problem is how I am to understand another person when he says a thing is red. We need both a criterion for establishing when a thing is red, and on this representative view, a criterion for knowing what another means when he calls a thing red. Beloff ignores this first point, and I shall return to it later, but now, consider how it is I am able to understand another's color judgments.

First, he argues, if memory is admitted as evidence then we know that color perceptions are very stable over the life-cycle of an individual. This seems to indicate that color perceptions depend only on the nature of the nervous system and the quality of illumination. We accept as a biological principle that the more basic the physiological function the more likely it is to be universal over an entire species. So probably we all see the same colors, or very nearly so. This is essentially an argument from analogy, I see a color via my physiological processes, such processes, are similar throughout the entire species, so probably all humans see identical colors. The second argument is that since all observers report color changes in similar places along the color-continuum, probably they all see the same colors. (p. 80)

The first argument involves two steps. First, I know what I mean when I say a thing is red because I remember what red is. And then,

secondly, I know that another means by red what I mean because of the analogous structure of our visual equipment.

First, can memory serve as our criterion for a thing being red, which it must do if I am to know on Beloff's view what "red" means. To be a criterion memory would need to be infallible. Some may object that a criterion need not be infallible and therefore even if memory is not infallible it can still serve as our criterion for the color of private mental entities. But how could a criterion be fallible? Does it make sense to say of a thing that it meets our criterion for being red, but it may not be? If this does make sense then having a criterion means no more than having evidence for something and the concept becomes superfluous. When we set up a criterion for a thing's being x, then when x meets our criterion we say we know this thing is an x. For example: Suppose that we set up as the criterion for genius the capacity to score above fifty on a given test. Then it will suffice to say we know that a particular individual is a genius because he has scored above fifty on our test. This explanation is sufficient because to say that whoever scores over fifty on this test is a genius is to utter "a tautology."[1] The way this term "criterion" is employed suggests that knowledge is bound up in the concept of criterion, and surely no one denies that infallibility is bound up in the concept of knowledge.

Now to return to our problem. Can memory serve as a criterion for color concepts in a private world of percepts. Consider the following experiment.

> We have a man, noted for his integrity, who reports having extremely vivid imagery. His imagery is so vivid, he tells us, that he can generally read off from it all sorts of facts about objects he has recently seen. We present him

> with the following letter-square, and let him scrutinize it for a few seconds:
>
> e m f
>
> r z a
>
> o w p
>
> We then take the square away and ask him whether he has a clear image ot it. He says that he does. We then ask him to read off the letters from left to right, starting from the top and working down. He does so, and makes no mistakes. We then ask him to read them off in the opposite direction. Suppose that, contrary to his likely behavior, he reads them off without hesitation, though he makes several mistakes. We have him do the same thing again- that is, read off the letters in both directions - and he gives the same answers. Without mentioning his error, we then ask him whether his image changed during the experiment. He says, 'No; it remained the same throughout the experiment, vivid and sharp.' In fact, he emphatically endorses all of the following claims, not even considering, so great is his confidence, that they might not be entirely consistent:
>
> 1. The image did not change during the experiment.
> 2. From left to right, top to bottom, the letters were: e, m, f, r, z, a, o, w, p.
> 3. From right to left, bottom to top, the letters were p, w, o, r, a, s, f, m, e. (He was evidently wrong about the italicized letters.)[2]

The point here is that the subject had no way to check his memory, he was wrong, but absolutely sure that he was right. If it were not for the fact that others could correct him, his mistake would not have been discovered. But others cannot correct me or my color judgments because I am the only one who is aware of the colors I am talking about. Others could tell me that most people do not agree with my judgment about a color, but this would not make me wrong, only unpopular. The fact is that memories are not infallible and cannot serve as a criterion for color judgments which are private. We may here, as a concluding thought, wonder if there may not be some source other than memory

that can serve as our criterion in this private world. But we immediately realize that whatever source we may conceive, intuition or whatever, ultimately the criterion has got to depend on memory. This is the case because regardless of the standard we chose to rely on we must be able to remember it. Memory being fallible, stands in need of a check, but this is just what cannot be done in a private world.

Now consider Beloff's argument that I understand what another calls red by what I call red because of our similar physiology. This means that the criterion for my seeing the same color as another is having the same anatomy. (Beloff does not call this a criterion, he says it is a sound inductive reason; but it must serve as a criterion for it is all we have to go on. However, I reject it both as a criterion and as sound evidence.) Now what are we to say of color blind persons who have similar physiological structures, but who cannot see colors? Also, are we to say that before this similarity was discovered no one understood what another meant when the other made a color judgment, one person merely supposed he understood another, but as yet he could not because the criterion for his doing so had not been discovered? And here too I am reminded of how Wittgenstein replied to an analogous position in regard to pain. If I should say that it is only from my own case that I know what "red" means must I not also say the same of other people. "And how can I generalize from the one case so irresponsibly?"[3] In other words the assertion that others probably see the same thing as I do would be groundless. Beloff brings in the fact of similar physiological systems from one individual to another, but we might also realize that there are individual differences from one organism to another. After all, persons with similar physiological

make up have different degrees of intelligence, different mechanical abilities and so forth, so why should we say we all see the same color, assuming seeing is a private mental experience.

Actually the most serious difficulty with this argument is that it presupposes that I have a criterion myself for knowing what color a thing is. We have seen that Beloff uses memory to serve as such a criterion, but memory will not do for the simple reason that it is unreliable as a criterion. As we have seen it would be a strange sort of criterion that is fallible and uncheckable. R. Rhees states the problem like this.

> It is a question of whether I can have a private understanding: whether I can understand something which could not be said in a language anyone else could understand. ('He may understand the language I speak, but he will not understand what I understand.')[4]

So the question is: "Could a person himself, if the Representative Theory is true, know what he meant when he says a thing is red?" The answer must be no because he has no reliable criterion for a thing's being red. A person may argue, as Beloff implies, that the assertion that a thing is red means the color he is presently observing, a red patch of something. But since he is the only one who is aware of this patch his judgment cannot be checked and therefore cannot be said to be either right or wrong. It cannot be said to meet or fail to meet a standard for color judgments. Hence, if it makes no sense to say of a factual judgment that it is neither right nor wrong, then this judgment makes no sense. That is, a person himself cannot be sure when he says that a thing is red if the color he is aware of is red or not. This means he cannot be said to know what red is or what "red" means. And this is the predicament in which Beloff's theory of perception leaves us.

Now consider Beloff's second argument, that since most people see color changes along a color continuum at about the same place we probably all see the same colors. This only means that most people have an ability to discriminate between colors. But does not the fact that we can tell if two observers can discriminate between colors at the same place on a continuum presuppose a public criterion for their doing so. Consider this:

> If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definition but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments. This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so. --It is one thing to describe methods of measurement, and another to obtain and state results of measurement. But what we call 'measuring' is partly determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement.[5]

This means that if we are to use words with sense, as a source of communication, there must be rules for correct and incorrect use and, further, agreement in our judgments. This agreement in judgments is important, for people must agree overwhelmingly about what they notice or observe; for example, that the phone rang, that the lights went out or that a thing is red. People who consistently disagree in such judgments could not speak the same language. This agreement in language is an agreement about what to say and this of course is necessary for agreement in judgments.[6] But this is just what cannot take place in a private world. If we teach someone (a child perhaps) color words, our criterion for his learning these words is his identifying colors correctly, his ability to discriminate between colors and shades of the same color. But Beloff cannot admit we have such a criterion because on his view the colors each of us is aware of are hidden. He, if he accepts this criterion, must say something like this: "Yes, that is our criterion for a person's knowing what red is, but still, we cannot

ever be sure he really knows." So Beloff is forced by his theory to deny the factors that make language possible.

Thus we can conclude that at best the Representative Theory of perception leads to agnosticism in regard to the color judgments of others; but in reality, such a theory precludes an individual from understanding his own judgments of color.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Rogers Albritton, "On Wittgenstein's Use of the Term 'Criterion'", Wittgenstein The Philosophical Investigations, ed. George Pitcher, (New York, 1966), pp. 233-234.

[2]Bruce Aune, Knowledge, Mind, and Nature, (New York, 1967), pp. 34-35.

[3]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe, (New York, 1958), Prop. 293.

[4]R. Rhees, "Can there Be a Private Language," Wittgenstein the Philosophical Investigations, ed. George Pitcher, (New York, 1966), p. 274.

[5]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe, (New York, 1958), Prop. 242.

[6]Norman Malcolm, "Memory and the Past," Meaning and Knowledge, ed. E. Nagel and R. B. Brandt (New York, 1965), p. 524.

CHAPTER V

WHEN WE LOOK AROUND, WHAT ACTUALLY DO WE PERCEIVE?

We have, up to this point, been chiefly concerned with Beloff's theory of perception and the arguments which he claims necessitates such a theory. I would like now to focus our attention on the basic direction that Beloff has taken in his approach to perception. What I wish to say of this direction is that it can be misleading and that without this particular orientation toward perception Beloff might not have held the theory of perception that he does. The reader will recall that he began his investigation by posing this question as an opening gambit: "When we look around or listen to what is going on, what actually is it that we perceive?" (p. 56) His immediate answer is that we perceive what is there, but after due deliberation on the matter he argues we must amend our answer to say that we have percepts which mediate our perceiving what is there. He speaks of distinctions between an "object as it is" and an "object as it appears to be." He further distinguishes phenomenal objects and properties from physical ones; and so it becomes plain that he engages in an object analysis of what we perceive. The question I wish to consider here is: Is an object analysis of perception an accurate analysis?

Here then consider some of the different kinds of answers with which one can reply to the question as to what we see or hear when we look around or listen to what is going on. Some possible answers are:

(1) things (not necessarily Beloff's physical or material things), how things are done or how to do things, why things happen, whether things happen; (2) events, happenings, performances; (3) qualities or properties; (4) relations; (5) states or conditions; and (6) facts. This list is by no means exhaustive and already we can see that our perceptions are many and varied.[1] And how many of these different accounts of perception conform well to an object analysis? That is, which of these answers, any or all, involve our perceiving objects and could be accurately accounted for by describing objects? We may ask then "what is it like to see objects?" or "when do we report seeing objects?" In the case of sighting something in the distant sky, one person may call another's attention to it, saying something like: "Do you see that object up there (pointing), what is it?" We refer to unidentified things as objects, we even have a standard expression, unidentified flying objects. A radar technician picks up objects on his radar screen, but when they are identified as a particular squadron or enemy planes, they are no longer objects. That is, we no longer refer to them as objects, they have been identified and given another more accurate name. In general, "object" is used when what is sensed cannot be named or identified. "Thing" too is a general term like "object," but is used somewhat differently from "object." We tell our children to keep things put in their place in their room, we do not ordinarily them to keep their objects in their place. Here we could, if we desired, name all the things involved, for example, "keep your toys put away while not using them, your clothes, etc. . . .," but we do not need to enumerate; "things" works out very well. So "thing" is a general term that we use to refer to things we could name individually,

but on the particular occasion in question it is not necessary. The uses of "thing" and "object" no doubt overlap, but they can be distinguished. The important point for us to keep in mind is that while everything we perceive can in some instances be referred to as a thing or an object, not everything we see is a thing or object every time we see it. This means, of course, that an object analysis of perception may be misleading.

Max Hocutt offers a solution to what he calls the "paradox of perception." This "paradox" consists of those instances of seeing double, after images, illusions, etc., which sense data were created to explain. He looks at this problem as a verbal problem and one in which the distinction of a class of mental entities is not the only way out. He offers instead a distinction between a "primary use" and a "secondary use" of the question "what do you perceive?". The primary use is not usually a question about perceiving and so it cannot be a question about the objects of perceiving, that is, the question, "what do you perceive?" is not a question about perception. Hocutt suggests we amend such questions to a specific form, for example, what do you perceive when you perceive an x? That is, "what did you see at the ball game?" "What have you heard about Larry?" "Do the pickles taste sweet?" and other similar questions are not questions about perception and therefore cannot be questions about the objects of perception. Then the secondary use is a question about perception, but not about the objects of perception. These last mentioned questions are typically employed by a testor in a color-blind test, such as the dot test in which numbers are formed by dots and the subject in the test is asked to report what, if any, numbers he sees. This question is about perception, right enough,

specifically what kind of perception is going on, normal or color-blind, but it is not about objects of perception. The question "what do you perceive?" is not asking about the objects of perception mainly due to the fact that our perceptions do not have objects. This means that there are objects of the verb "perceive," but these are grammatical objects not objects of a perceptual process which Beloff is supposing them to be. Hence, if we dispense with thinking that we continually perceive objects we will also dispense with the idea of needing a mental object to exist where there is not a real object, as in the case of illusion and double vision.[2] The point I shall try to emphasize in what follows is that what we perceive cannot be mental objects because what we perceive are not objects. The question, which Beloff asks, as to what we perceive, is another formulation of the question as to what the word "perceive" means, or is to ask what is involved in the concept of perception. We will then need to look closely at the different kind of answers one could give to such a question.

In order to further explain Hocutt's idea of the primary use of perceptual questions, we will need to look closely at the use of perceptual statements (statements involving a verb of perception), especially the list Warnock has compiled which appeared at the beginning of this chapter and which is a list of possible answers to Beloff's question. In explicating some of the meanings of these uses of perceptual verbs, I borrow heavily from the work of Arthur Collins in an article which appeared in the Philosophical Review. His thesis in this work is that perception is not the acquisition of knowledge and does not consist of knowledge, belief, or judgment. He holds that knowledge is external to the concept of perception itself.[3] If he is right, if perception is

not a knowledge claim, then it cannot be a claim to knowledge of objects either. Now I do not wish to become involved here in defending his thesis, for I am not as yet convinced he is entirely correct. But much of the work he does in analyzing perceptual concepts is relevant to my purpose in this chapter, apart from whether he has or has not established his thesis.

First, consider perceptual verbs with propositional clauses for objects, "seeing that . . ." clauses. One answer to Beloff's question of what we see could be "I see that . . ."; and we need to see what sort of a claim is involved here. Look at the difference, for example, between "I see that there are pecan trees on this land" and "I see the pecan trees on this land." The first use of "see" here has a propositional object and makes a knowledge claim, however, it does not make a perceptual claim.[4] We might imagine such a statement as a comment, by a prospective buyer, on the value of a section of land. This is, however, not a report on perceptions. Now the second use of "see" does not involve a propositional object. We might imagine this latter sentence as an affirmation to someone giving instructions that the listener does see the pecan trees, can pick them out, will not mistake them for Black Jack, and so forth. That is, someone may give instructions to proceed to the pecan grove and turn north, then ask "do you see the pecan trees?" the answer then comes, "yes," which means "I see the pecan trees." Now this is not expressly a perceptual report any more than the first use. Here "trees" is the grammatical object of "see," but this does not entail that the tree is the object of perception in the sense that perceiving the tree is an action on it, for it does not affect the tree. We have already seen how Beloff treated the double

vision example. We say: "I see two trees." The word "trees" is the grammatical object of the verb "see," but he also supposed there must be a further object to be the object of my perception, the second tree. This led him to the conclusion that there must be mental entities. But, as we have just seen, the verb "see" has only a grammatical object, there is no other. What I am trying to expose here is the difference between perceptual verbs with objects and other action verbs. To cut down a tree there must be a tree to cut; here "tree" is the object of the verb "cut" and an object of the cutting action, in that the tree falls. But to say we see or perceive a thing is not in itself absolutely sufficient grounds for the thing's existence. To say, "I cut down a tree that does not eixst," is peculiar at best, but to say, "I saw two trees where there was only one," is not; for we understand that there can be optical illusions, and so forth. So all there need be with perceptual verbs are grammatical objects, not real objects, and the existence of mental objects can not be substantiated by an object analysis of perception.

Now consider other kinds of perceptual verbs than visual, like "taste" and "smell." These verbs do not normally take a propositional object, that is, we do not smell that bacon is cooking or taste that the ice cream is champagne sherbert. What is standard would be that "I see we are having bacon; and to say this one need not literally see it. Likewise, one might say, "I see we are having champagne sherbert for dessert," and again, one need not see this with his eyes. These kinds of statements are not usually perceptual reports and so are not reports of having perceived objects. Verbs like "hear" and "feel" do take propositional objects, but they are not objects of perception.

Instances of "I feel that . . ." and "I hear that . . ." clauses are not perceptual reports, but rather statements of opinions or rumors. The use of "feel" and "hear" with propositional clauses implies that I do not know, just as such use of "see" implies that I do know. The point being that the propositional use of "see," "hear" and "feel" are not perceptual uses. These three sentences bring this point out.

(1) "I saw that the butler murdered her."
(2) "I heard that the butler murdered her."
(3) "I felt that the butler murdered her."

These sentences would not normally be used by a witness to the murder. The conclusion here is then, that many of the uses of the verb "see" and all of the uses of "hear" and "feel" with propositional clauses do not make statements about perception, but rather indicate the speaker's conviction about the proposition introduced by the that . . . clause. Also, that what I know by taste and smell can be expressed by a "see" expression (bacon example) with a propositional object, and that the resulting expression does not refer to a visual perception. So it turns out that of the verbs which express perception only the verb "see" gives rise to the kind of objects that we might construe as making a perceptual claim.[5] The point for my purposes being the elimination of many of our expressions using perceptual verbs, mostly expressions of facts, like "the fact that . . .", as perceptual claims; and hence, such expressions cannot be analyzed into objects of perceptions. This means they cannot support Beloff's arguments for a Representative Theory of perception, since he arrives at such a theory by an object analysis of perceptual statements.

We now need to consider those cases of the perceptual uses of "see" with quality words for objects. Warnock uses this example:

> Consider a simple case of what we called, with hesitation, seeing a quality, for example seeing the colour of Lloyd George's tie. It is clear that one could not rightly say that one saw the colour of his tie, if one did not get to know at the time what colour it was.[6]

The point being, I take it, that we do not see qualities as isolated objects, but rather we see them as qualities of something. A quality is not something we can see and not realize what it is, it is not like seeing a distant unidentifiable object. Collins attempts further explanation of questions about qualities by seeking a context for such questions. That is, in what situations would quality words be the object of the verb "see?" When would we ask, "Did you see the color of Lloyd George's tie?" We might say this if the color is inappropriate for the occasion, perhaps a red tie at a funeral. Then the reply might be, "yes, shocking." Or if the color was a prearranged means of identification, then the reply might be "yes, that is our contact," or "yes, I saw that it was red." But the reply would never be; "I saw the red of his tie." A negative answer might be, "No, I did not notice," or "I could not see, his back was towards me;: but never "No, I saw the tie, but not the color of it." (This remark could possibly be used to say I just did not notice his tie, but not to mean I noticed his tie but not its color.) These diverse answers to the question of whether or not a certain person saw a particular quality bring out the point that the question about qualities is an invitation to state what the qualities are or to admit that one cannot do so. These questions naturally presuppose the answer will be based on one's perception in the sense that one can describe the object in question only because he has perceived it. But, the answers given are not accounts of perception or reports of perception.[7] The quality itself is not the object

of a perception verb. That is, redness is not an object of any perceptual activity because redness is not an object and our uses of quality words with perception verbs does not treat them as such. And so, it turns out that our quality statements do not lend themselves very well to the object analysis to which Beloff subjects them.

Several uses of perceptual verbs were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and by now we have discussed most of them; seeing things, objects, facts expressed in "that" clauses and other uses of "that" clauses, qualities, and relations (discussed in Chapter III). Two other possible answers to Beloff's question as to what we see were mentioned, seeing states or conditions and seeing events. What would it be like to see a state or condition? To see a state is to see the state of something, like the state of the union or the condition of an automobile. These kinds of things generally resolve themselves into the statement of a series of facts. For example, to see the state of the union is to see that there is excess government spending, that gun legislation is needed, and so forth. To see the state or condition of an automobile is to see that it does or does not need the brakes adjusted, repainted, overhauled, new tires, etc. The majority of these states do not resolve into perceptual claims let alone claims to know objects by perception.

And then what is it like to report seeing an event. This notion usually suggests a definite time and place as opposed to a fact or condition. It is a fact that President Eisenhower was not impeached. This is not an event, if it were, we could ask when it took place, what led up to it and so forth. We give accounts of events and sometimes record those that are noteworthy. We may tell someone of a

sequence of strange events that took place and so on. These are rarely perceptual reports at all, that is, many of our accounts would be from history books, things we have been told, etc. But what of those eye witness accounts where we tell someone what we saw or what happened? Here again we have a case where what happened is the grammatical object of the verb "see," but is not itself an object or a series of objects as we are to suppose it must be if we accept Beloff's account. Such an account would be expressed in terms of phenomenal qualities and objects, percepts and primary qualities. So too, we can conclude, that an account of events on an object analysis would be misleading.

We have now considered many different uses of perceptual verbs and it is surely obvious that in those uses of such verbs which are actually perceptual it would be wrong to say that what we perceive are objects. In fact, in those cases where we do report perceiving objects, instead of claiming to know these objects by perception we are rather admitting that we do not know them, this is why we report perceiving objects rather than naming what we perceive. That is, generally when we refer to something as an object it is either because we are unable to say what it is or we are simply referring to a large group of things that need no individual identification. From this it can be concluded that the object analysis of our perceptions which Beloff employs to advance his Representative Theory is a misleading approach to perception and can only produce erroneous results.

Recall again Beloff's original question: "When we look around what <u>actually</u> is it that we perceive?" (my italics) This <u>actually</u> is to emphasize what we really see as opposed to what we think we see. This implies then that there is some good reason for doubting the

authenticity of what we see. We have previously examined his objections to our "seeing what is there" and found them lacking in logical force. We have just completed several trial answers to this question to see if we could find a basis for positing perceptual objects such as percepts and phenomenal objects, and our search failed to find such a basis. But we were working on this question without the actually in it. We considered the question "what do you perceive?" not "what do you actually perceive?" Now I am at somewhat of a loss as to how I am supposed to answer this question for I do not understand its meaning. I can imagine times and places in which I would know how to respond to the first form of the question. For instance, if I were an aid to a policeman on the homicide squad and we approach the scene of a murder and as we approach I am told by my superior, "Look around and tell me what you see." I understand I am to look for possible murder weapons, evidences, or clues to the identity of the perpetrator and so forth. And I likewise understand the old business tycoon with whom I am visiting in the middle of a large metropolitan area when he says, "Look around, what do you see?" and I reply, "Large new buildings, factories, industry, busy people, automobiles stacked up at intersections," and so forth. Then he replies , "Yes, and it was just thirty years ago that this city was hardly a wide spot on the road. . ." and now I know he used the question to introduce the topic of old memories, to reminisce. But Beloff is not doing anything like this nor is he asking for a scientific explanation of perception nor, I wish to say, anything which is intelligible to us.

Consider this: We are teaching a young person about the relativity of velocity and use the following for illustration. Take a train

traveling at a velocity of one hundred miles per hour across the desert. A man is running along the top of the train at fifteen miles per hour relative to the train. This comes to, if we have a fifteen mile long train and the man started running from the caboose at the constant rate mentioned above, he would reach the engine car in one hour. Thus the man would have traveled fifteen miles across the top of the train while traveling one hundred and fifteen miles across the land due to the combined velocities of the train, one hundred miles per hour, and of the man, fifteen miles per hour. So we explain that velocity is relative to some reference point. Now suppose the child then asks, "How fast is the man actually traveling," or "How fast is he really traveling." Now we must further explain that all velocities except one, the speed of light being absolutely 186,000 miles per second, are relative, that the man is traveling fifteen miles per hour relative to the earth and that if we should like to expand our reference points, say to the center of the earth, we must take account of the fact that the surface of the earth is traveling about one thousand miles per hour relative to its center and so if we wish to calculate the velocity of the man on the train relative to the center of the earth we must now add or subtract, depending on the direction of the train and man, his velocity to that of the earth's relative to the center. Now we can calculate velocities relative to many points, e.g. the sun, other planets, various stars and so forth, all we need do is specify our reference point. But to ask what is the real or true speed of the man is a spurious question, since we have no accepted standard of reference, therefore to call some thing an absolute true and ultimate standard without major overhaul of present scientific theories of velocities

will be purely contrived on our part and hence meaningless. Now I conceive Beloff's question about perception to be much like this one. He asks what one actually sees when he looks around and does so wholly apart from any context which could lend sense to his question. The only sense he can supply is contrived and therefore meaningless. We have no criterion or standard for what we really see apart from a context which lends some doubt that we ought to accept what we see as valid and some standard for attaining the correct answers to our questions.

FOOTNOTES

[1]G. J. Warnock, "Seeing," Perceiving, Sensing, and Knowing, ed. R. J. Swartz (New York, 1965), pp. 49-50.

[2]Max Hocutt, "What We Perceive," American Philosophical Quarterly, Jan. 1968, pp. 49-50.

[3]Arthur W. Collins, "The Epistemological Status of the Concept of Perception," The Philosophical Review, October 1967, pp. 436-437.

[4]Ibid., p. 441.

[5]Ibid., pp. 442-445.

[6]G. J. Warnock, "Seeing," Perceiving, Sensing and Knowing, ed. R. J. Swartz (New York, 1965), pp. 59-60.

[7]Arthur W. Collins, "The Epistemological Status of the Concept of Perception," The Philosophical Review, October, 1967, pp. 453_454.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We initiated our investigation of Beloff's Theory of Perception by scrutinizing his arguments against Direct Realism. They were five in number, which I feel need not be enumerated again. The conclusion was that these arguments were either irrelevant to Beloff's purpose or misconceived. Either way, they entail nothing to preclude the perceiving of physical objects. We then looked at difficulties which Beloff's Representative Theory encountered with the meaning of color statements. We saw that in spite of arguments to the contrary, such a theory could not avoid solipsism; and further, that in a private world of experience certain sensation assertions have no meaning. Finally, we examined Beloff's general approach to perception, his opening gambit; "When we look around or listen to what is going on, what actually is it that we perceive?" We discovered that on his theory we do not see anything. Upon critical examination we also discovered that this question, (at least the way Beloff employed it) was in one sense misleading, in that an answer in terms of objects was anticipated when we in fact do not ordinarily perceive objects. Then in another sense the question was found to be spurious. For all these reasons we can conclude that Beloff's version of perception cannot be correct and that he has not provided any grounds for our accepting his theory.

The conclusions reached in this thesis of course apply specifically to Beloff's theory. There are other forms of a Representative Theory advanced by various philosophers. Perhaps some other versions

of this approach could avoid some of the difficulties Beloff encounters. However, it seems to me that any theory which places us in a private world of experience, whether we experience percepts, sense-data, or whatever, will encounter insurmountable difficulties with regard to the meaning of different kinds of sense-experience judgments. For this reason it becomes apparent that any theory other than Direct Realism is untenable.

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