

Sept. 2, 1974

Dr. Fales,

I think you will be interested in the following argument.

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Supposition: A man has a perception of two red circles, exactly similar, one above the other. He can give a definite description of either circle.

Question: If glasses are devised to invert his perception, and he doesn't know whether or not he is wearing such glasses can he still give a definite description of either circle?

Discussion: It is obvious that it is not intended that the man can merely give a definite description of his own perception, as any such description could in no way be invalidated by any sort of glasses. What is supposed is that he can give a description of the "physical object" which in the correct circumstances will "cause" him to have the perception. If A is a percept of the man and M is the cause of this percept, let $R(M,A)$ be defined as M causes A in the way the causation takes place when he wears ordinary glasses. Then he can provide the description $(\exists x)R(x,A)$ of M, if he knows he is wearing ordinary glasses. Let $S(M,A)$ be defined as M causes A in the way the causation takes place when he wears special glasses. Then he can provide the description $(\exists x)S(x,A)$ of M, if he knows he is wearing special glasses.

Answer: Now suppose he does not know whether or not he is wearing special glasses. He can provide the following description-

$(\forall x)(R(x,A) \vee S(x,A))$.

If he has ordinary glasses on, then $R(M,A)$ will be true, $S(M,A)$ will be false, and both $R(x,A)$ and $S(x,A)$ will be false for all values of x other than M . So the description will work in this case.

If he has special glasses on, then $R(M,A)$ will be false, $S(M,A)$ will be true, and both $R(x,A)$ and $S(x,A)$ will be false for all values of x other than M . So the description will work in this case.

Conclusion: The consideration of special glasses does not raise any new difficulties for the theory of descriptions. Any difficulties in the description given in the case of a man who does not know whether or not he is wearing these special glasses also applies to the case when he does know.

