

Lecture 01: Seeing Red: Do Humans Visually Experience Categorical Colour Properties?

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1. A ‘subject-determining platitude’ about colour

‘If someone with normal color vision looks at a tomato in good light, the tomato will appear to have a distinctive property—a property that strawberries and cherries also appear to have, and which we call ‘red’ in English’ (Byrne & Hilbert 2003, p. 4)

It is a ‘subject-determining platitude’ that “red” denotes the property of an object putatively presented in visual experience when that object looks red’, and likewise for other colour terms (Jackson 1996, pp. 199–200).

Simplifying assumption:

There is a property denoted by ‘red’ which some objects have; call this property red.

Premise 1:

If the property red (say) is presented in visual experience, then things which have this property thereby differ in visual appearance from things which do not have it.

Question:

Do red things differ in visual appearance from non-red things?

Objectives for this lecture:

understand questions about shared agency

can use the method of contrast cases

understand distributive and collective interpretations of sentences

can distinguish acting together from joint action

familiar with the Simple View

can critically assess objections to the Simple View

References

Byrne, A. & Hilbert, D. R. (2003). Color Realism and Color Science. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 26(01), 3–21.

Jackson, F. (1996). The primary quality view of color. *Noûs*, 30, 199–219.