

**Things and places**

**How the mind connects with the world**  
**Zenon W. Pylyshyn**

**Mercredi 19 mai à 17h**

**THE EMPIRICAL CASE FOR A NONCONCEPTUAL LINK  
BETWEEN THINGS AND REPRESENTATIONS:  
INDEXING AND TRACKING**

CNRS, SALLE FRÉDÉRIC-JOLIOT (BATIMENT H, «CHATEAU»)  
 3 RUE MICHEL-ANGE, 75016 PARIS

*Remise du prix Jean-Nicod et cocktail après la conférence*

**Jeudi 27 mai de 14h à 16h**

**THE BASIC INGREDIENTS OF THE MIND-WORLD  
RELATION: INDIVIDUATION, SELECTION,  
REFERENCE AND PREDICATION**

ECOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE, SALLE DES ACTES,  
 45 RUE D'ULM, 75005 PARIS

**Mardi 1<sup>er</sup> juin de 14h à 16h**

**REPRESENTING SPACE I: NONCONCEPTUAL CONTENT  
AND THE EXPERIENCE OF SPACE**

ECOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE, SALLE DES ACTES,  
 45 RUE D'ULM, 75005 PARIS

**Jeudi 3 juin de 14h à 16h**

**REPRESENTING SPACE II: SHORTCOMINGS  
OF «INNER SPACE» PROPOSALS  
AND AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW**

ECOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE, SALLE DES ACTES,  
 45 RUE D'ULM, 75005 PARIS

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**philosophie cognitive**

Conférences Jean-Nicod de

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

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

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**ZENON W. PYLYSHYN**

**THINGS AND PLACES:  
HOW THE MIND CONNECTS  
WITH THE WORLD**

[A.SOURIS : 01 45 21 09 61]



cycle  
 2004



Zenon Pylyshyn

Après des études de physique puis de psychologie aux universités McGill et de Saskatchewan (Canada), Zenon W. Pylyshyn a été professeur de psychologie et d'intelligence artificielle à l'université du Western Ontario (Canada). Il a rejoint en 1994 l'université Rutgers (USA, New Jersey), où il a été directeur du Rutgers Center for Cognitive Science pendant plusieurs années.

A l'occasion des Conférences Jean-Nicod 2004, Zenon Pylyshyn occupe un poste de directeur d'études associé à l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales.

#### Ouvrages de Z. W. Pylyshyn

- 1984. COMPUTATION AND COGNITION, TOWARD A FOUNDATION FOR COGNITIVE SCIENCE. CAMBRIDGE, MA: MIT PRESS.
- WITH DEMOPoulos, W. (EDS). 1986. MEANING AND COGNITIVE STRUCTURE: ISSUES IN THE COMPUTATIONAL THEORY OF MIND. NORWOOD, NJ: ABLEX PUBLISHING CORPORATION.
- (ED.) 1987. THE ROBOT'S DILEMMA: THE FRAME PROBLEM IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. NORWOOD, NJ: ABLEX PUBLISHING CORPORATION.
- 2003. SEEING AND VISUALIZING: IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK. CAMBRIDGE, MA: MIT PRESS.

## Things and places: How the mind connects with the world

### Conférences Jean-Nicod 2004

The problem of how minds connect with the world has been one of those perennial questions in the philosophy of mind that has enjoyed a revival in recent decades, notably in connection with the puzzle of sentience and the question of how concepts and thoughts are grounded in sensory experience. The notions of nonconceptual representation and demonstrative reference have played a central role in this revival. In these lectures I will introduce this issue from a different perspective, based primarily on empirical studies of attentional selection, tracking, perceptual-motor coordination, and certain phenomena in cognitive development. I will describe some of these phenomena to motivate the need for a particular kind of nonconceptual mind-world relation and will introduce a proposal, called the FINST or Visual Index theory, which hypothesizes a limited capacity mechanism within the visual system for realizing such a nonconceptual connection. I begin by focusing on an experimental paradigm we have developed called Multiple Object Tracking (MOT), which provides a concrete illustration of the operation of FINST indexes, and which also demonstrates some surprising properties of this mechanism. I will describe the MOT experiments, together with some recent challenging findings, in order to illustrate how FINSTs provide an account of the visual system's capacity to keep track of individuals while apparently skirting certain deep philosophical problems of individuation and identity.

Indexes provide a different kind of connection between mind and world than that which characterizes conceptual representations. Conceptual representations are related to the world by the semantic relation of satisfaction, whereas indexes provide a direct, epistemically-unmediated and causally-initiated connection, not unlike that exhibited by demonstrative reference. I will suggest that such a mechanism also has important implications for other problems in the philosophy of mind, most notably the question of how we cognize space. I will provide a brief background to this problem, from the views of Henri Poincaré to those of certain contemporary philosophers, psychologists, and neuroscientists. I will examine the popular view that people easily imagine

and think about spatial patterns because they have in some sense internalized space. I will argue that mental representations of spatial layouts do not derive their spatial character by being mapped onto an internal space. On the contrary, representations achieve their spatiality because their contents are projected onto the concurrently-perceived world, thereby allowing them to derive certain critical spatial properties and constraints from real space. Perceptual indexes prove essential to this approach because it is through them that mental representations can be anchored to things that occupy places in real space.

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### Collection Jean-Nicod

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- J. FODOR, THE ELM AND THE EXPERT: MENTALESE AND ITS SEMANTICS (1994) ■ F. DRETSKE, NATURALIZING THE MIND (1995) ■ J. ELSTER, STRONG FEELINGS: EMOTION, ADDICTION, AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR (1999) ■ J. PERRY, KNOWLEDGE, POSSIBILITY, AND CONSCIOUSNESS (2001) ■ J. SEARLE, RATIONALITY IN ACTION (2001) ■ R.G. MILLIKAN, VARIETIES OF MEANING (2004)