



Vision and Mind: Selected Readings in the Philosophy of Perception

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The philosophy of perception is a microcosm of the metaphysics of mind. Its central problems -- What is perception? What is the nature of perceptual consciousness? How can one fit an account of perceptual experience into a broader account of the nature of the mind and the world? -- are at the heart of metaphysics. Rather than try to cover all of the many strands in the philosophy of perception, this book focuses on a particular orthodoxy about the nature of visual perception.

The central problem for visual science has been to explain how the brain bridges the gap between what is given to the visual system and what is actually experienced by the perceiver. The orthodox view of perception is that it is a process whereby the brain, or a dedicated subsystem of the brain, builds up representations of relevant figures of the environment on the basis of information encoded by the sensory receptors. Most adherents of the orthodox view also believe that for every conscious perceptual state of the subject, there is a particular set of neurons whose activities are sufficient for the occurrence of that state. Some of the essays in this book defend the orthodoxy; most criticize it; and some propose alternatives to it. Many of the essays are classics.

The contributors include, among others, G.E.M. Anscombe, Dana Ballard, Daniel Dennett, Fred Dretske, Jerry Fodor, H.P. Grice, David Marr, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Zenon Pylyshyn, Paul Snowdon, and P.F. Strawson.

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