

The Dual Components of Perceptual Experience^{*}

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Abstract

In experience we perceive things in the world in an immediate manner. However, a dominant philosophical approach, the indirect theory of perception, denies this commonsense view and contends that we see things through something else—some sort of sensory qualities caused by physical objects. In this paper I present a direct theory originally advocated by Reid and Kant and developed in recent time by Sellars, McDowell, and others, according to which perceptual experience involves the interplay between sensory and conceptual capacities, and in light of this the approach merits the label dualism. There are three objections generally raised against dualism. First, if sensations merely cause perceptions, then empirical justification rests on dubious grounds. Second, dualism seems to identify perception with judgment; however, seeing and believing can be independent states. Third, dualism

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regards semantic reference (the intentionality of belief) as prior to perceptual directedness (the intentionality of perception). I argue that an enriched Sellarsian dualism can meet all three objections. First, I portray a dualist framework in which sensations not merely cause but constitute perceptions, and as a result empirical justification can be restored. Second, different senses of seeing are examined and in only one sense is perception identified with judgment. Third, dualism maintains that semantic reference and perceptual directedness are mutually dependent, and thus there is no priority relation between them.

Key Words: perception, experience, dualism, intentionality