

The Problem of Perception

By A.D. SMITH

Harvard University Press, 2002. xii + 324 pp. \$45.00

Do the arguments from illusion and hallucination entail that we never directly perceive mind-independent physical objects? This is the problem of perception dealt with by Smith in his recent book. Smith argues that they do not, thus defending direct realism from two arguments central to the philosophy of perception. In doing so, Smith covers an enormous amount of philosophical material. Theories of perception in philosophy are examined and compared in an original manner, showing how each attempts to address the arguments from illusion and perception. Philosophical ideas are traced to their source. Ideas commonly attributed to modern or enlightenment sources are seen to have precursors in more ancient traditions. Moreover, although this work is primarily analytic, Smith also clearly expounds theories in the continental tradition. In explaining his own view he draws appropriately upon some concepts from the continental tradition but, at the same time, takes to task philosophers who he believes misuse ideas from continental philosophy. I doubt that there are any philosophers, even those well versed in philosophy of perception, who will not learn an enormous amount from reading this book. Smith weaves a rich and robust tapestry in his investigation of the philosophy of perception.

Smith begins his defence of direct realism by arguing for two bold claims: that the representation involved in perception does not necessarily involve concepts, and that not all sensations are representational. Smith's discussion of the former is quite outstanding. It is comprehensive, novel and convincing. His discussion of the latter is not quite as good. More discussion of some rebuttals to his claims found in the recent representationalist literature would be needed to convince those not already persuaded.

Smith's detailed and illuminating reply to the argument from illusion relies on identifying aspects of perception that have no corresponding sensation. It is these aspects that account for the fact that only in perception can we distinguish a change in our experience from a change in the objects experienced. This phenomenon of perceptual constancy, argues Smith, shows that what we are fundamentally aware of in perception is mind-independent objects and not our sensation. This shows that the premise of the argument of illusion, that we are directly aware of sensations, is false.

To fully vindicate direct realism, Smith also shows how he believes the argument from hallucination should be resisted. He discusses the position that in hallucination we are not aware of anything, and draws parallels with the way that some philosophers have held that in having mock *de re* thoughts we are not really thinking about anything. Smith's discussion here of McDowell's and Evans's versions of this view is excellent. He ultimately rejects this position, however, and instead claims that in hallucination a subject has sensations but these sensations are not objects of awareness. Instead, the subject is aware of an intentional object. If a subject had a hallucination and then had a subjectively indistinguishable veridical perception the subject would be aware, in both cases, of intentional objects that are qualitatively the same: in the former case, an intentional object that does not exist, and, in the latter case, an intentional object that does exist and that is identical to a mind-independent physical object. Smith then closes the book with a discussion that defends these ideas. In particular, the idea that sometimes intentional objects can be identified with normal physical objects and the idea that we can legitimately talk of non-existent objects. These ideas will be sure to invoke much discussion.

In conclusion, *The Problem of Perception* is a book that no philosopher working on perception should ignore. The breadth of the exposition makes the book a useful reference source, the close examination of the phenomenology of perceptual experience is particularly rewarding, and the book is a valuable, original contribution to the field.

GIRTON COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

FIONA MACPHERSON

ETHICS

New Terror, New Wars

By PAUL GILBERT

Edinburgh University Press, 2003. xii + 164 pp. £9.99

This is an interesting book, well worth reading. It's about the moral and legal questions surrounding war. The title *Philosophy of War* or maybe *War and Terrorism*