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Psychological Taxonomy for Multisensory Perception

Abstract

The richly multisensory nature of perception and awareness raises several questions regarding psychological taxonomy. In this talk, I'll address one: Why do multisensory effects belong to perception rather than to extra-perceptual cognition? I'll argue that central examples of multisensory effects are perceptual. Rather than advancing a favorite criterion for distinguishing perception from extra-perceptual cognition, I'll appeal to a different strategy. I'll ask: What are the explanatory purposes for such a distinction? I'll distinguish differing explanatory purposes for a distinction between perception and cognition, and the constraints they impose on psychological taxonomy. The first concerns empirical or experimental psychological explanation. The second concerns rational or personal psychological explanation. The third concerns experience and consciousness. The paper characterizes these differing explanatory projects, characterizes the constraints they place on being perceptual, and argues that paradigm multisensory effects satisfy them.