



Attention (New Problems of Philosophy)

By *Wayne Wu*

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Attention (New Problems of Philosophy) By Wayne Wu

Attention is a fundamental feature of the mind yet has languished in the backwaters of philosophy. Recent years, however, have witnessed a resurgence of philosophical interest in attention, driven by recognition that it is closely connected to consciousness, perception, agency, thought, justification and introspection. As is becoming clear, attention has a rich philosophical significance.

This is the first book to provide a systematic overview and assessment of different empirical and philosophical aspects of attention. Wayne Wu discusses the following central topics and problems:

- major experiments and theories of attention in psychology since the 1950s
- the neuroscience of attention, including basic mechanisms and models
- attention's intimate relation to agency
- the phenomenology of attention
- attention as a gatekeeper for consciousness
- attention as the basis for perception-based thought about objects
- the role of attention in the justification of belief
- attention in introspection of consciousness.

A key feature of the book is its skilful analysis of the empirical work on attention, and how this relates to philosophy. Additional features include chapter summaries, annotated further reading and a glossary, making this an ideal starting point for anyone studying attention for the first time, as well as being suitable for more advanced students and researchers in psychology, cognitive science, and philosophy.

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Editorial Review

Review

A CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title, 2015

'Wayne Wu in *Attention* not only motivates and defends his distinctive account of attention; he also provides a sweeping but rigorous overview of empirical and philosophical work on attention, spanning the last several decades. Indeed, one of the book's most admirable features is the way it handles the interdisciplinary nature of work on the mind. ... [A] well-written and engaging book that should prove valuable to anyone interested in attention.' - Markos Valaris, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*

'... [A] welcome addition to the philosophical literature on attention. It launches a new and exciting topic of research in attention -- selection for action. I hope that philosophers will be enough inspired by Wu's arguments to continue the discussion on the relationship between attention and action ...' - Carolyn Dicey Jennings, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*

'Attention is a hot topic in cognitive science and philosophy. ... [This] book is both a rich philosophical exploration of attention, and, now, with its clear and comprehensive accounts of classic and recent empirical work, the indispensable starting point for anyone with a philosophical interest in attention. Summing Up: Essential.' - William Seager, *CHOICE*

'A ground-breaking exploration of what happens when we attend to things, *Attention* provides a thorough and original examination of the nature and functions of attention and its relationship to classical problems in philosophy and psychology. If you read only one book on attention this year, make it this one.' - Berit Brogaard, *University of Missouri, St. Louis, USA*

'A masterful survey of current work on attention, at once highly informative and readily accessible. It covers all the main current theories and empirical findings about how attention operates, its neural underpinnings, and its ties with agency, perception, cognition, and consciousness, adding much that is novel and challenging. This will be rich and rewarding reading for anybody curious about attention and the mind generally, and a must for anybody in philosophy of mind, philosophy of psychology, and cognitive science.' - David Rosenthal, *Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA*

About the Author

Wayne Wu is Associate Professor in and Associate Director of the Center for the Neural Basis of Cognition, Carnegie Mellon University, USA.

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