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Fulkerson, Matthew, *The First Sense, A Philosophical Study of Human Touch*, Cambridge (Mass.), MIT Press, 2014, pp. ix+219 (hardback).

This book comprehensively addresses, in an empirically informed way, the most salient issues concerning touch. Chs. 1, 2, 3 & 5 address the unity of touch –which has baffled philosophers since Aristotle. The other chapters discuss less essential (but no less interesting) issues concerning touch: ch. 4 argues that touch depends causally, but not essentially, on bodily awareness; ch.6 argues that the awareness of contact is not essential to touch; ch. 7 argues that tactual pleasantness is not a tangible quality, but some subpersonal evaluation of such qualities. One of the few issues left unaddressed, despite the title of the book, is the historically influential idea of some sort of primacy of touch over the other senses.

Fulkerson's account of the unity touch is the highlight of the book. Against “multisensory” views of touch (according to which touch consists in a plurality of senses), he maintains that the haptic modality is a single modality involving different sub-systems. Experiencing an object as *hard, hot* and *round* is a unisensory (haptic) experience, by contrast to experiencing an object as *hard, red* and *round*, which is a multisensory (haptic-visual) experience. This is so, Fulkerson argues, because only the former involves the direct assignment of features to perceptual objects, while the second involves the binding of already bound sets of features. Two main arguments are given to this effect. First, the features detected by touch are *exploratorily bound*, in the sense that the systems detecting them are co-activated during exploratory actions (ch. 3). Second, basic tactile features – temperatures, weight, hardness, texture...– all have an *intensive structure* in the sense that each of them varies along a unique dimension of intensity (by contrast to colors or sounds, ch. 5).

One worry is that such criteria for tactile unity –touch bears on exploratorily bound features; touch bears on intensive features– might seem contingent. Should we say of a creature that would exploratorily bind colors with pressures that it touches colors? Would the loss of the ability to bind pressures with temperatures entail a loss of haptic touch? For Mary in her room, grey and black are arguably intensive qualities: do they thereby become tangible qualities? What should we say of possible cases where exploratorily bound features and intensive qualities cease to be co-extensive? The book, which contains few subjunctive conditionals, provides us with no answers to such questions. Fulkerson, however, avowedly intends to contribute to the “philosophy of psychology” more than to the “metaphysics of mind”. In this respect, his study constitutes a genuine achievement, which manages to integrate a wide range of empirical results into a broadly unified and novel account of actual human touch.