HARVEST MOON

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"A man does something; he lifts, let us say, a stone. In consequence he undergoes, suffers, something: the weight, strain, texture of the surface of the thing lifted. The properties thus undergone determine further doing. The stone is too heavy or too angular, not solid enough; or else the properties undergone show it is fit for the use for which it is intended. The process continues until a mutual adaptation of the self and the object emerges and that particular experience comes to a close. What is true of this simple instance is true, as to form, of every experience. The creature operating may be a thinker in his study and the environment with which he interacts may consist of ideas instead of stone. But interaction of the two constitutes the total experience that is had, and the close which completes it is the institution of a felt harmony."

John Dewy, "Art as Experience"

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Editor's Note

Our last volume ended with the promise that "There shall be a fifth volume this year". The context of that use of "this year" would, unfortunately for us, have the expression referring to the year 2006. Incidentally, it's 2007, which means that something went wrong. Well, it turns out that after about 4 or 5 years, students leave Berkeley to go do other things. Some of these students happen to be editors of *Harvest Moon*, and since this journal is a Berkeleyan object– to be is to be conceived by Berkeley philosophy students– no editors means no journal. So, apparently we cannot predict with any certainty when the next journal is going to arrive on the scene. Maybe the editors of *Harvest Moon* should be required to take Professor Fitelson's Probability and Induction course. Or perhaps we could just see this delay as one that upholds what seems to be a running, albeit slowly, tradition.

Broken promises and perennial delays aside, the important thing is that *Harvest Moon* lives on! Indeed, the year of silence was spent recruiting snazzy new editors and introducing them to the wonderful process of creating a philosophy journal. As you will see in what follows, Berkeley students are uncannily capable of taking on and perfecting new and difficult tasks. In just six months' time, they have produced what you hold in your hands. This, despite the fact that nearly every new editor is a second-year. I'm off to pursue graduate studies in philosophy, and I couldn't feel better about leaving *Harvest Moon* in their hands.

In several respects, *Harvest Moon* is like no other undergraduate philosophy journal. *Harvest Moon* is more than just a medium for talented students to get their name out there; *Harvest Moon* is created with a strong sense of commitment to the intellectual and philosophical life of undergraduates at Berkeley. We are dedicated to sustaining and enriching the intellectual environment that gives so much to us. The

journal is entirely created by the undergraduates at UC Berkeley, who write, edit, organize, design, and typeset each volume. None of this could be done, of course, without help. This volume benefited especially from the guidance and support of Professor R. Jay Wallace, Professor Barry Stroud, Janet Groome, Veronica Padilla, and the ASUC.

Considering the acumen and enthusiasm of the new editors, I suspect the tradition of delays faces a formidable threat. But that's a tradition I'm willing to let the youngsters break. I'm going to go out on a limb here and say: There shall be another volume. But ultimately that's not for me to decide.

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Nick Riggle

May 2007
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Preface

It is always a pleasure to find the latest issue of *Harvest Moon*. I enjoy it almost as much for what it reminds us of as for what it gives us.

What it gives us is six or seven of the best philosophical essays written by Berkeley undergraduates in the last year or so. What it reminds us of is something it would otherwise be easy to miss. You can't miss the fact that there is a large group of serious, hard-working undergraduate philosophy students in Berkeley eagerly taking a full slate of difficult courses across a wide range of fields, often while holding down other jobs as well. What is not so apparent on the the surface is that behind or somehow in the middle of all that vigorous, apparently full-time activity there is a thriving commmunity of fledgling philosophers studying, discussing, writing and rewriting their own efforts to understand and say something defensible in philosophy and to get things right. The outstanding essays in each issue of *Harvest Moon* are a good indication of the energy, the richness, and the high quality of that largely underground philosophical culture. It is an encouraging sign of a promising future for those devoted students and in that way for philosophy itself.

Barry Stroud
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T.A. Greshler

Why Care?

For the actions of people, there is always the argument that the highest level of consciousness can and must exercise dominion over the lower.

Carl Schmitt

When people ask me what this paper is about, I respond by regurgitating the general form and content of the paper: its premises, its conclusions, and its over all motivation. Although this is constitutive of the paper itself, I am selfish. I am writing with one question in mind: What is my role in politics? This question was prompted in the classroom. My professor Hans Sluga and author of *The Care of the Common* stated that, "our greatest political dilemma today is certainly not what party to vote for or what cause to espouse, but *why*, *when*, *to what extent*, and *how* we should engage ourselves at all in political matters"(1). Firstly, I will clarify what the concept of the political means for Sluga. From this, I will examine the crucial implications of the concept– the care of the common– in order to determine my role, and to a greater extent our role in politics.

This paper will be comprised of three sections. In section **1**, I will mirror the format of Sluga's essay and explicate *The Care of the Common.* I will begin by discussing Sluga's existential concerns, which epitomize the uncertainty that permeates human action in present day politics. For Sluga, existential concerns of the political domain call for some new way of conceiving of politics. Subsequently, I will present a glimpse of three important thinkers that inform Sluga's political philosophy. That is, I will elucidate how the political conceptions of Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt, and Michel Foucault are helpful to a certain degree, in that they point our political thought in the right direction, but are insufficiently developed given our present day circumstances. After the realization that these three thinkers leave us with our political roles still undetermined, I will advance and explore the general notion of care and its relation to politics. For Sluga, there are at least three central ways in which humans care: nurturing, guiding, and tending. I will analyze Sluga's notion of triangulation in order to articulate why tending is pervasive in the political realm. Lastly, I will discuss the conclusions of *The Care of the Common* and present my interpretation of Sluga's project.

In section **2**, I will evaluate Sluga's project. There are three points I will consider. First, I will critique Sluga's claim that the notion of caretaking is not to be conceived of as a philosophical thesis. In doing so I will evaluate the consequences of caretaking as a philosophical thesis. Second, I will argue that any viable concept of the political cannot be divorced from the institutional order of a specified state. In this paper, institution refers to systems of government, e.g., democracy, tyranny, and oligarchy. Furthermore, I will argue that although Sluga claims

his conception allows us to think of politics without reference to the institution, the various examples he provides are either directly or indirectly related to institutional practice, and what therefore makes an action political is the relation it bears to the institution. Hence, Sluga attempts to evade the confines of governmental structure only to run up against the walls of institutional order. In fact, we realize through Sluga's analysis, that we are bound in our examination of politics to the political field. And this political field is made possible by the institution. Sluga may appeal to different terms in his discussion of the political, but his argument is in fact harmonious with the traditional conception. My third and final criticism will examine the overall movement of the work, from the seriousness of the existential crisis in the beginning of the essay, to the conceptual answers of Sluga's project. There is an unresolved tension between the way we view our role in politics and the way in which our role is determined by the concept of the political. In order to clarify where I believe this project falls short of its initial promise, I will look at the difference between normative, practical, and descriptive political philosophy. I will argue that the basis for the suggestion of a new concept of the political should not be lost in the translation of descriptive philosophy. It is this idea that gives rise to my positive project, which deals with the question, how can our political concepts affect political reality?

In section **3**, I will present what I believe are the crucial implications of the care of the common. I will maintain that the institution, as the purveyor of care in the political domain, arises out of the care of common. Care can take many forms; however, there are two forms that are of special interest to political philosophy. As a form of political tending, care is a higher order action that imposes itself upon interactions between groups of people in matters of life and in matters of death. Since the decisions made by our institution regard the grave matters of life and death, we should not try to understand politics without regard to the institution, but we ought to incorporate an understanding of the institution in our political conception. By appealing to the realist theory of Thomas Hobbes and the notion of decisionism in Schmitt, I will show that we must be responsible for our political concepts, because in order for them to have any meaning or utility, they must bear down on the institution. In closing, my aim is to resolve the tension between the way we view our role in politics and the way in which our role is determined by the concept of the political.

1 THE CARE OF THE COMMON

Sluga reflects on the notion of uncertainty inherent to human action. Uncertainty is our epistemic condition. That is, uncertainty colors, what we know, or what we can know. Given present day circumstances, where information is everywhere available, media culture proliferates society. One cause of uncertainty could be that we are overwhelmed by the abundance of easily accessible knowledge made possible by the information age. Important questions arise, such as: how do we judge the claims we are presented with, what is true, what is false, and what is inconsequential? Sluga provides examples that "alert us to the precariousness of our situation," these are: "an uncontrolled growth of world population, a quickly disintegrating environment, the accumulations of resources in the hands of the few"(1). Although our survival depends on solving these problems, we find ourselves absorbed in our everyday lives. We function under the illusion that our everyday activities are distinct from these political problems, when in fact they are inextricable from them. Furthermore, the magnitude and seriousness of these problems lends itself to what Hannah Arendt describes as, "the widespread prejudice against politics...—the flight into impotence, the desperate desire to be relieved entirely of the ability to act"(99). When we discover that our relation to political reality is necessary, yet we are devoid of understanding in regard to our political role, it becomes apparent that our political situation is built upon an uncertain foundation.

Sluga maintains that the chief contributor of our political uncertainty is the institution. In the U.S., the relationship between inhabitants of a state and state machinery is blurred. Sluga recognizes this blurring in his explicit claim that, "uncertainty manifests itself in the rampant apathy that is now affecting all democratic societies."(5) However, by democratic societies Sluga is referring to modern representational democracies in contradistinction to the ancient Greek experience of direct democracy. Whereas Plato and Aristotle built their political conceptions within the context of direct democracy, in the present context, politics is no longer a direct process. On the traditional view, all legally recognized male citizens participated in the political domain, and for Aristotle, "a human being is by nature a political animal"(2). This was possible because ancient Greece had the population size of present day Berkeley. In contrast, the U.S. has a population size of close to three hundred million. Since the current population size is unmanageable in terms of direct democracy, in democratic societies,

representational government has become the dominant model. The problem inherent in all representational models is that with each layer of bureaucracy, action is mediated between an individual and the political reality. As a result, we become detached from the political process. We no longer face one another in the political forum, rather there is a message sent to a faceless committee. As the society becomes larger, the bureaucracy expands to fit the needs of the growing population. However, this comes at a price. And many believe that their votes no longer affect the workings of political machinery. Another symptom of political bureaucracy is that for some, detachment correlates with unaccountability. The apathy that many feel in the political domain is analogous to the shift from human, to automated customer service. We no longer deal with people anymore. There is no manager available, only layers of impersonal, pre-fabricated recordings. Since this problem is inherent in the representational system, yet we still want to conceive of the political in order to determine our role in politics, Sluga references three political philosophers, which he claims describe the political without appealing to any institutional order.

The three philosophers considered by Sluga in *The Care of the Common* are Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt, and Michel Foucault. Firstly, Sluga states, "Schmitt sought to show that all our political terms are constructed on a basic friend-enemy distinction"(1). In *The Concept Of The Political* Schmitt provides a criterion for characterizing the political domain. Schmitt maintains that different spheres of, "human thought and action," can be reduced to ultimate distinctions, examples of such distinctions are: morality reduced to "good and evil" and aesthetics reduced to "beautiful and ugly"(26). In some cases distinctions may coincide, for example a morally *good* person can be considered aesthetically *ugly*. However, "the specific political distinction to which all political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy"(26). For Schmitt, the political sphere can incorporate aspects of the other spheres; however, the friend-enemy distinction is the one aspect without which any human activity fails to be political. Schmitt claims that the possibility for war is concrete, and he rejects a notion of the political defined in terms of an abstract model. That is, politics necessitates decision and possible action. Schmitt provides a concrete example, "it cannot be denied that nations continue to group themselves according to the friend-enemy antithesis..."(28). Therefore, Schmitt provides an essential definition of politics as the possibility for warring conflict.

Secondly, Sluga states that, "[For] Arendt...the concept of the political coincides with that of action in which we freely reveal ourselves to each other in the public arena"(1). Arendt understands politics as action, which arises out of diversity, plurality, and commonality. Moreover, political action necessitates a public and common space through which our different expectations, motivations, and desires are resolved into a unity guided by a principle, such as: love, justice, or peace. For Arendt, politics is communicative interaction, which satisfies the need for mutual self-revelation. It is only by means of political action that we come to understand ourselves, through the eyes of others. This type of discovery is not instantaneous but is rather a process of self-formation. For Arendt, politics is a social phenomenon built upon the need to relate to ourselves insofar as we relate to others. Arendt agrees with Aristotle, in that, what is unique to human nature is our capacity for speech and reason. This fundamental capacity for speech and reason is a necessary condition for politics. To clarify, action is fundamental to politics and this is equipollent to communicative interaction. In order to determine if some action is political action, one must examine the nature of the action juxtaposed to other human activities. For this reason, Arendt develops her political philosophy in terms of the contrasting notions of: work, labor, and action. According to Arendt, if we do not attend to our political character by means of action, we will become purely laboring animals. For, it is only through action that we can transcend the mundane and do more than labor. Action is fundamental to politics, it involves direct relationships with human beings, and the words uttered in the public forum only exist in the moment they are uttered. The modality of action is political freedom, and this is not a cultural achievement, but rather this freedom arises spontaneously out of our political interactions. Humans should, according to Arendt, realize themselves through action, and it is in action where politics is made possible.

Lastly, Sluga claims that for Foucault, "...politics is to be grasped as a system of circulating power relations"(1). Foucault argues that analyzing various instances of power relations in everyday life can aid one in understanding power and as a result the political. Foucault does not explicitly state what the relation between power and politics consists in; however, he implicitly argues that all power relations are, either potentially or actually political. One instance of a power relation is the domination of one human action over another human action. For Foucault, power should be understood in relation to action acting

upon action. Thus, power is not something that is held, acquired, or handed down from a central force. For example, the institution of education should not be studied in relation to the rules and regulations the government enforces upon it, rather one should examine the power relations between: students and teachers; students and students; teachers and teachers. From various power relations one can "build up" knowledge of the educational institution, as opposed to examining power in reference to the institution itself. Consequently, Foucault claims that one should analyze power relations on a lower capillary level, and thus acquire a deeper understanding of power and the political.

Sluga claims that these three authors are successful in approaching the concept of the political without a direct appeal to the institutional model. Thus, they demonstrate that there are two different ways in which we can characterize the political, i.e., in terms of the institution or in terms of "a process that may or may not issue in an institutional arrangement"(Sluga 2). Nevertheless, given our current political context they fail to determine "what makes an action political action." Schmitt's conception is too narrow and does not account for the multi-faceted political domain. In addition, "Schmitt's formula fails to provide any direct positive meaning to the interactions of those who recognize each other as political friends"(Sluga 2). Arendt's conception is only feasible if we revisit the notion of direct democracy, and given the increase in population over time, this is far from being realizable. As Sluga relates, "Arendt separates free action so sharply from the satisfaction of basic and persistent needs that politics threatens to turn into something of a political extravagance"(2). Finally, Foucault's conception is extremely broad, and may incorporate things which conflict with our intuitive notions of what it means for something to be political. Moreover, we can only understand politics in terms of the pursuit of freedom from power relations. As Sluga states, "Foucault sees human beings so entirely in the grip of power relations that the space for political action is reduced to the unexplained hope that power always permits resistance"(2). The above three conceptions aid in our understanding of particular features of political existence, yet we are still unable to grasp "to what extent we should engage ourselves at all in political matters"(Sluga 1). In short, what we need is a concept of the political. Sluga harks back to a pre-Platonic conception of the political as expressed by Protagoras in *The Statesman*; this concept is the care of the common. Sluga utilizes this notion in order to provide a concept of the political that can illuminate our present day condition.

Sluga asserts, "what we call human culture is pervasively a structure of care" (3). Humans care for one another. It is just what we do. Care is something that happens across "all cultures and all times." That is, humans are caregivers and care takers. All we need to do is look, and we can conclude that care, in its various forms, is a pervasive part of human existence. However, for Sluga, this is not something that is derived by means of abstracting away from the content of human nature. Rather, Sluga asks us to look around and view how the care structure functions in reality. Care taking is not a philosophical thesis. Therefore, Sluga is not saying that we should care, or that caring is what makes us human; rather he is stating that we do care. For Sluga, the analyzed structure of care is partitioned into three categories: nurturing, guiding, and tending. These actions should not be strictly separated and in some cases they overlap.

Nurturing is the care of one person for another. This kind of care is exhibited between: parents and babies, people and the elderly or the sick. Thus, nurturing is usually exhibited in private and intimate relations, and these private actions are directed toward bodies, which usually are in need of such care. These bodies can include: oneself, a human, a plant, or an animal. For example, a mother might change the diapers of her baby, or a friend A might feed a friend B who can no longer eat on their own.

Guiding is a higher order type of action. Guiding imposes itself onto the actions of bodies, rather than the bodies themselves. Thus, one can distinguish the *guiding* action from the *guided* action. That is, there is a distinction between the actions of guiding and the actions being imposed upon. In guiding, we want to enhance, control, or shape the action of ourselves, or, someone else. Sluga provides an example of learning as a kind of guiding. A teacher guides his students when he extends care toward the actions of a pupil who is reading, writing, and acquiring skills.

Tending is a form of guiding. However, it differs from the aforementioned guiding insofar as it bears on human interactions. Interactions are differentiated from actions, since interaction entails a relation between two or more people. According to Arendt, human interaction is based on plurality and heterogeneity. Thus, human interaction in some cases is problematic, in that, it is based on "different human beings" with different worldviews. Disagreement and competition arises out of human interactions. Thus, tending to human interactions can be problematic insofar as humans find it difficult to resolve their differences.

This often leads to conflict, which can be resolved through tending, by means of peace or aggression. Sluga claims that tending is most prominent in the political domain. In the section entitled, *Politics as Triangulation*, Sluga lists some human activities that we consider to be political in order to judge how they correspond to tending. Tending is a form of social triangulation. That is, triangulating actions involve a binary interaction and an action that imposes itself upon the interaction. Imagine a triangle: one person at the highest point, implementing the higher order action upon the interaction between the other two points at the lower level. The higher order action is in fact tending to the binary action.

Triangulation can aid in our understanding of why some claim that we need politics. This is an idea that can be found in the works of Plato and Aristotle. Because we are deficient in some sense, politics arises out of a social need. Humans have natural and basic needs that can be attended to more efficiently, if there is some system that allows for tasks to be carried out by those with the skills to do so. Thus, when we look at the form of triangulation, which is tending imposed onto binary interactions, we are able to classify activities as political in nature. Sluga presents three different types of objects that tending might be imposed upon, these objects and their corresponding relations may overlap in politics. These are: "one's own interactions with others," interactions between individuals, and interactions between groups of individuals. Tending imposed upon interactions between groups is the kind of care exemplified in the political domain. The form of triangulation, with the objects of tending as groups, aids in our understanding of what "makes action, political action." Therefore, the care of the common is grounded in two facts. First, human interactions are uncertain and problematic, and therefore necessitate tending. Second, humans have the capacity to extend care and are capable of tending problematic human interactions.

In conclusion, Sluga advances a concept of the political that appeals to a form of caretaking unique to human action and interaction. Hence, the notion of political tending or triangulation allows us to classify something as political. The notion of triangulation is dynamic, in that it can be applied to myriad cases, and is practical since it aids in our understanding of politics. Sluga supports his assumptions by asking us to look into the world, and see that care is pervasive in our social and political actions and interactions. What is most essential to the character of Sluga's project is that it does not present the reader with

any normative claims on how we ought to act in the political arena. Rather, by means of describing political action as a form of tending, we can utilize the concept to understand politics. Thus, Sluga's description of triangulation has a practical function in that it allows for the possibility of understanding our role in political reality, yet it does not determine our role. This can be best summarized by a quotation found in Arendt, "The reason for this is that in fact such judgments are never of a compulsory nature, never force others into agreement in the sense of a logically irrefutable conclusion, but rather can only persuade"(104). Sluga considers the care of the common as a way to look at political phenomena; in a sense he is there to persuade those that find it difficult to understand what makes an action political. Therefore, it is up to an individual to either find this description of politics illuminating, or, inconsequential.

2 WHY CARE?

To begin, I will return to Sluga's general notion of caretaking. I will examine whether caretaking, is, or is not, a philosophical thesis. Since the term "philosophical thesis" is broadly applicable, I will narrow the scope of my investigation, and examine if the notion of caretaking holds universally or necessarily. When Sluga explicitly states that the notion of care is, "not meant to advance a philosophical thesis," this reminds me of Wittgenstein's phrase, "To repeat: don't think, but look!"(66). I believe this is what Sluga has in mind when he tells us, not to think about caring as an abstract philosophical notion, but as something that constitutes everyday life. For Sluga, there is nothing deep to be reflected upon in asserting that humans are caretakers and care givers. However, it is interesting to note that, according to Sluga, "in all cultures and at all times human beings care for babies and children"(3). It is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of a human that functions in a social context, but is not embedded in a care structure. To clarify, care begins and arises out of human survival. As babies we are weak and cannot survive on our own. Moreover, human development is made possible by teaching, or what Sluga terms guiding. In all aspects of human social life, we notice that care is embedded within the structure of activity, such as: family units, schools, friends, and the work place. Thus, from culture to culture, the activities that arise out of the care structure may differ; yet, the general notion of care permeates all human life.

I will investigate the possibility that caretaking is indeed a philosophical thesis, since there is something markedly strong about Sluga's claim that, "we are who we are only through caring"(3). The utterance, "who we are" seems to denote an essential attribute of human nature. Sluga asserts that the notion of caretaking follows from his discussion of care, which he takes to be an obvious fact of the matter about humans. I may run the risk of sounding naive; however, what would a claim about human nature look like? One claim might state that: it is necessary that humans care in order to survive. Frankly, all humans care out of necessity, if not, we die. Moreover, in order to judge in this world whether, the notion of care structure is indeed universal, I must not be able to provide a convincing counter example to the claim: every human is a caretaker. We can imagine a single individual that throughout his life did not perform acts of either: nurturing, guiding, or tending. The one exception is an essential care of the self. That is, an individual would administer care for the sake of his survival only. However, on Sluga's account this person could not perform the functions that allow for societal interaction. Obeying traffic signs, working, learning skills, etc. are all part of the care structure. Furthermore, receiving care is a form of giving care. For example, suppose that someone is a gift-giver. By definition, a gift giver is someone who gives gifts. When a gift-giver offers me a gift, and I do not receive it, he is not able to give a gift to me and therefore fails to be a gift-giver. Moreover, if I do receive a gift, which is analogous to receiving care, I allow the gift giver to be who he is, only through my receiving of a gift, or through caretaking. A human that lives outside the care structure, and fails to give or receive care, will have to live in isolation and be utterly self-sufficient. However, when we reflect on the life of such an individual, we assent to the idea that this individual is not fully human. This is akin to Aristotle's assertions that, "Anyone who cannot form a community with others, or who does not need to because he is sufficient... he is either a beast or a god"(1253a30). Thus, it is at least conceivable that Sluga's notion of caretaking, "is essential to being human or that it is an aspect of human nature"(3). This is problematic for Sluga insofar as he maintains that, *The Care of the Common* is not a project concerning human nature.

Sluga adamantly states, "I am neither in the business of determining essences or natures nor in that of making moral prescriptions"(3). This leads me to the question, what is his motivation for not wanting to make any universal claims? I believe this question can be accounted for when we propose that the care of the common is a philosophical

thesis. As a result, caretaking transforms into a notion that would commit Sluga to a strong claim, namely, that care is an *essential* element of human nature. This is akin to Aristotle's claim, that man is by nature a political being. These types of universal and totalizing theories are characteristic of the type of theorizing upheld by the tradition. In modern political philosophy, John Rawls is considered by Sluga to be, "a sophisticated representative of such an institutional, structural, static, and statist understanding of politics"(2). This is not the place that Sluga envisions for his political philosophy. Sluga's analyses of the three philosophers, which take an activist and anti-traditional route in their conceptions of the political, show support for this claim. In regard to the care of the common, Foucault is an important contributor to Sluga's thought. This is supported by Sluga's statement that, "He is in fact, one of my sources for the thought that politics is to be conceived of as a form of care"(8). Additionally, in *The Care of the Common*, Sluga reformulates Foucault's political thought, in order to demonstrate that Foucault is not wholly committed to the notion that everything is political. Foucault's notion of power relations is however very far removed from any traditional conception of politics. Consequently, Sluga conceives of his theory as being in line with these anti-traditional formulations.

In regard to political philosophy, Sluga criticizes totalizing and universalizing theories on account of their being too strict to account for the multiplicity, plasticity, and historicity of political phenomena, along with the way in which they intrude on individual thought. I would even go so far as to say that he views them as stagnant. Thus, if Sluga were to admit that tending is a philosophical thesis, he would not be able to evade the type of criticism he himself advances on the tradition. However, it is of interest to question whether this critique has any grounding. If it were the case that tending is essential to political nature, it would hold in all cases. And when we reflect on the history of our institutional forms, e.g., oligarchy, tyranny, democracy, etc., we notice that triangulation is ever present. That is, no matter what shape the institution takes, the institution will always be responsible for some higher order action, which imposes itself on the binary interactions of its citizens. Thus, it seems that the political concept of triangulation can be applied to diverse situations, and "in all culture and all times," much like a universal rule. In closing, I will leave it to the reader to decide if caretaking should be considered as a philosophical thesis. I will now direct my attention to the role of the institution in politics.

Over the course of history, the institution, and its various political forms change, e.g., from democracy to tyranny; however, there is one thing that persists: an institution. I will loosely stipulate an institution as any governmental system that is responsible for tending to a given people in a specified area of land. Since the institution is a purveyor of care, I maintain that any viable concept of the political cannot be divorced from institutional order. Let us now consider how Schmitt, Arendt, and Foucault understand politics and the institution. Schmitt, in his concrete example I provided earlier, illustrates that states are the components of the friend-enemy distinction. For Schmitt it is not groups of people, or gangs, that are essential to politics, but it is the decision made by the state that makes politics possible. Although Arendt's conception aids in our understanding of what it means to be a political individual through action, the concept is not viable under the present conditions of such a large state. Therefore, her conception presupposes that an institution be small enough to allow for an interactive public arena. Lastly, Foucault is able to dodge the institutional model as he appeals to metaphysically opaque power relations in order to arrive at a political conception. Nevertheless, when Sluga grounds Foucault's political thought and articulates it into a concept of the political, we arrive back at the notion of the institutional model.

When Sluga asks if certain activities strike us as being political, he wants to examine if tending can account for their political behavior. However, all of these activities are either directly or indirectly aimed at the institution. As a result, Sluga states, "politics we might conclude, is nothing but tending—though, typically of course a tending organized in some institutional framework"(6). This is a prime example of how Sluga's concept cannot escape the idea of institutional order. Sluga proceeds by providing other examples, such as: revolutionary activity, terrorism, and the political organizations of Green Peace or the Animal Liberation Front. Although these seem to fall outside the scope of the traditional conception, they do so in an illusory way. In regard to revolution or terrorism, Sluga writes, "these actions can also be seen as political because they aim at changing actions of our instituted governments"(6). As Sluga points out, this stretches the traditional concept, however, it is still recognized in terms of the institution. Political activism is either aimed directly or indirectly at government. If a group attempts to bomb corporate headquarters, it does so in order change the practices of that specific entity. This can be accomplished either by completely destroying the entity, which would remove the

politicized enemy, or by grasping the attention of the media and citizens, in hope that it can change the way in which the entity enacts its practices. This affects the institution because it brings awareness to citizens, in order to affect change in institutional practice. In addition, it points to a weakness in the institution, i.e., the government's inability to prevent disruption within the state. In the second case, these movements want to change behavior and this is done by means of the legal process, which is an institutional product. Interestingly, Hannah Arendt assents to the primacy of the institution and its laws when she writes, "And we can no more change the world by changing the people in it...if we want to change an institution, an organization, some public body existing within the world, we can only revise its constitution, its laws, its statutes, and hope that all the rest will take care of itself"(106). Moreover, Sluga commits to this line of thought when he states, "its agitation is of course directed in part toward changing the laws and thus government action"(6). However, he goes on to differentiate, "non-institutional structures such as medical and research in corporations and universities"(7) from the institution itself. But these structures are either, funded, or directly controlled by the government. Thus, so-called non-institutional structures are the objects of agitation, because humans want to change how the government either allows for, or controls, these entities. In the U.S., all "non-governmental" institutions such as: the penal system, the family, or school districts, answer to the institution, or the state. *A fortiori*, all political action is intertwined with statist institutional practice.

I draw further support for this claim, that we cannot divorce the political from the institutional, by examining Sluga's reconfiguration of Foucault's political conception. We realize that the political domain can be recognized as the difference between, "political strategies of coordination and direction and the domain to which they are said to apply"(10). In order to explain Foucault's modified political conception, Sluga once again relies on an example that is a product of the institution: law. Thus, we can distinguish between the higher order "political strategy "of law making and its enforcement onto the domain of human action and interaction. This example is pertinent in regard to economic legislation and all legislation over bureaucracies or corporations in the political field. To clarify, Foucault claims that corporate power has been outside the scope of the political, i.e., our conception is too narrow to account for newly politicized entities such as, corporate power. However, the narrowness of Sluga's Foucauldian

political concept is not what is at issue here, rather, he did not appreciate how close the relation between these so-called non-institutional entities were to the institution. In fact, many of the individuals involved in large corporations change seats between the government and corporations. Therefore, "corporate and bureaucratic power have...been for too long outside the purview of politics,"(11) not because our conception has been too narrow, but that we have failed to account for these entities in our understanding of the institution.

So far I have critiqued two specific intricacies of Sluga's project. First, I demonstrated that there are two ways of understanding Sluga's notion of care, that is, either to draw our attention to phenomena or to describe an aspect of human nature. Second, I argued that the concept of the political could not be conceived of without reference to the institution. Although Sluga claims to do so, in fact, the traditional conception of politics in terms of the state emerges in the background of all political tending as a stark figure. I will now analyze the overall movement of Sluga's project.

Sluga begins his essay in a distinctive tone. The first sentence reads, "We are standing today on the edge of a cliff and notice the ground before us falling away"(1). Sluga proceeds by listing some of the factors that contribute to uncertainty in the political domain. He continues, "At a moment like ours...the question of the meaning of politics, of its bearing on who we are, the question of our concept and conception of the political becomes inevitable and urgent"(1). From this I conclude that there is a direct correlation presented by Sluga between problematic political phenomena and the urgent need for a new concept. What then is the function of this concept? Once I have the right conception, does this alleviate the apprehension I feel at the edge of the cliff, or does it create a new mountain for me to climb? Sluga does not explicitly state what we should do with the conception he provides. As I have discussed previously, Sluga will not tell us what we ought to do. As a result, Sluga writes with contradictory intuitions. This is most clearly depicted in the statement, "In short, our concept of the political has come apart and with it the sense we once had of what our role might be in the political order." At this point we want to ask, what is a role? A role provides, "why, when, to what extent, and how we should engage ourselves at all in political matters"(1). That is, a role must be a locus of action. However, a role is culturally and contextually formed. For example, a waiter performs a role in the context of a restaurant. A role is situated within the normative features of that specific role; never-

theless, the norms surrounding a role are subject to change. Hence, a role is never stagnant or simple. Most importantly, your role is never closed. Since humans partake in various activities over a lifetime, some roles are permanent whereas others are not. For example, all humans perform the role of caretaker or care receiver. However, at present I am a daughter and not yet a mother. Since we are embedded within a care structure, we inherently maintain a political role. The difficulty lies in determining what that role consists in.

We are promised that our role will be determined, given that our concept of the political can be put back together. Sluga does succeed in putting our concept back together again. We know, for example, that political tending or triangulation, which involves any relation to the institutional order, can aid in our classification of political action. However, Sluga does not reveal or determine the practical application our concept can serve beyond aiding our political thought. I have already discussed why Sluga dislikes and distrusts universal and totalizing theories. Moreover, this type of sentiment can be carried over into the realm of normativity. Sluga does not want to tell anyone how to live. Rather, he wants to present us with a choice. Nonetheless, this does not square with the initial tonality of the project. And there is an unresolved tension between the way we view our role in politics and the way in which our role is determined by the concept of the political. That is, there is a problem designating the relation between the ways we think about politics and how it will bear on our political action. On this point Sluga does not offer a solution. Sluga refuses to be held accountable for anything besides persuasion and practical philosophy. However, his project is practical, since it can facilitate the possibility of determining our role by providing us with a concept of the political that allows us to cope with these existential concerns. Given that these worries are so pressing that they call for an urgent reevaluation of our concept, they also call for utility in our concepts. Since Sluga does not provide us with anything beyond a descriptive project equipped with no further instructions, his philosophy reveals practical insight but fails to give us practical application.

The urgency that Sluga relates in the beginning of his essay is never answered. But that is not to say that Sluga's project is not significant to both the philosophical and political communities. What Sluga does in his project, by providing an understanding, is to allow for an ignition of interest toward politics and provide an initial step toward defining our role. It is in this sense that Sluga is doing politics. By encouraging

an open discussion of political ideas, he is in fact guiding my political reality. Sluga's project made possible the political field for me to dance in. This sentiment is reflected when Sluga compares the current political situation with that of the pre-Socratic Greeks. There are two facts about politics: uncertainty in human interaction and the capacity for tending or care taking. The Greeks were faced with uncertainty. This is similar to the apprehension we feel as we stand at the edge of the cliff. At that time in Greek history the city-state's culture and value were radically changing. Moreover, Sluga parallels the modern advance in technology and information with that of the Greeks. It was at this point that the Greeks understood that God was no longer there to look after them, so they had to care for themselves. This is akin to our lack of faith in the modern institution of government. If the modern community followed the pattern set by the pre-Socratic Greeks, we could evaluate the condition, the problems first addressed in the beginning of Sluga's essay, and realize that the concept of the political or the care of the common, can aid in instituting a new form of politics. However, whereas the Greeks utilized, "conscious reflection on how to organize their political coexistence," Sluga leaves us with no conception on how to organize political coexistence, as such. Thus, instead of bringing the care of the common to bear on political phenomena, he is content to describe the political as it corresponds to his philosophical tendencies. Sluga leaves open a wide range of possible options after laying descriptive groundwork. I will now engage in the positive project of my paper and present what I hold to be the practical implications of the notion of care. It is within the implications of the care of the common that the source of my role in the political field is buried.

3 WHO CARES?

How can our political concepts affect political reality?

The descriptive groundwork has been laid, and Sluga in conjunction with Schmitt, Arendt, and Foucault have pointed us in the right direction. Yet my role remains undetermined. If we follow Sluga's suggestion, we look at politics. Sluga describes some of the existential considerations of the political field, and the political institution as an origin of, "rampant apathy affecting all democratic societies"(1). Sluga then proceeds to clarify how we can understand political phenomena, in order to relieve the sense of apathy we feel toward politics. Since I

am unable to shake the persistent apathetic malaise which often overwhelms my thoughts regarding politics, I revisit what I recognize as Sluga's error in terms of the institution, and investigate the way I conceive of statist politics in terms of Sluga's concept. As I have previously demonstrated, politics cannot be divorced from institutional order; consequently, our political concepts are not viable if they are not formed in regard to the institution. Thus, one implication of the care of the common is that the institution is the purveyor of political tending. Sluga does not proceed past an initial consideration of political phenomena and the production of a corresponding concept. Nevertheless, Sluga has established space for me to investigate further the notion of institutional tending. Hence, I must go beyond description, so that my role, in reference to the institution, can continue to emerge.

The reason why Sluga does not supply us with a role is because descriptive philosophy can only point us in the right direction; however, we have no idea what to do once we arrive. More to the point, what good is a concept of the political if it has no bearing on political phenomena? Sluga—within the context of his political philosophy—would most likely answer: to aid in our understanding of politics. Understanding is the correct initial step toward *grounded engagement.* In what follows I will show why the notion of grounded engagement can be utilized in order to aid in determining our political role. First, I will discuss the difference between the concept and the phenomena.

Concepts are subjective, abstract entities, which apply, or fail to apply, to various facets of human experience. In order to understand how concepts correspond to reality I will explain two different modes of concept application. First, a concept can be prior to phenomena. Thus, a phenomenon is specified in terms of its corresponding concept. For example, if a concept is discussed and a rule passed by a committee, humans will either act or not act in accordance with that rule. When humans obey an artificially stipulated rule, the action is determined by the corresponding concept. If the concept fails to apply to reality, the phenomena will lose its determined meaning. Second, phenomena can be prior to a concept, as a concept is produced for the sake of explaining pre-existing phenomena and is applicable insofar as it relates directly to the relevant phenomena. For example, anthropologists look at remnants of human phenomena and produce concepts, such as structuralism, or structural functionalism, in order to explain or aid in understanding the phenomena under study. In some sense, all of our concepts occur after phenomena; however, these are distinguished from

the other set because they explain, not produce, the relevant phenomena. In the former case, the concept can alter human experience. In the latter case, it is the concept that is altered according to human experience. Nevertheless, both help humans categorize and understand the world. Also the two modes might influence one another. That is, we first consider phenomena and then produce a corresponding concept. If the concept shows that the phenomena should be altered, the conceptualization can be used to reconfigure the phenomena it first sought to explain. This, I will argue, should be the case in politics, and is an exemplar of politically grounded engagement.

First, let us consider what the conceptual apparatus of grounded engagement might look like given the care of the common. Reflecting back on the two modes of concept application, there are four distinct phases of this process: first, we look at political phenomena. Second, produce a concept, e.g., the care of the common, understood in terms of the form and content of a state institution as that which is tending for its citizens. Third, we critically analyze this concept. That is, we can juxtapose it to other concepts and pick out what parts of the abstract model of political phenomena are theoretically good and extract that which is theoretically bad. To qualify, there can be different principles, or normative content, which correspond to divergent political realities. Nevertheless, there exists some standard of normativity, created out of the needs of a given people in a given time. After critical analyses we produce a new concept, not based on phenomena, but rather on the prior concept. The final phase is the instantiation of the concept1. That is, we produce a concept that describes the best possible paradigm of institutional tending, in order to influence, change, and affect the institution to perform acts of tending in the best possible way, given the conditions of the current phenomena.

There are two grounds extrapolated from the notion of the care of the common, which support this method of doing political philosophy. First, we organize ourselves politically for the sake of fulfilling everything from basic to complex human needs; this designates the essence of the institution as the purveyor of political care. Second, every social human being is entrenched in a care structure, and every human being is a citizen of a state. For Sluga, the modern condition of the care structure is one cause for uncertainty. However, some aspects of human co-existence are not uncertain. According to Thomas Hobbes our interactions are partially determinate; humans are equal insofar as all have the capacity to kill one another. The question then becomes,

what is more essential to politics, the capacity to kill, or the capacity to extend care? Furthermore, can we distinguish killing from caring, or could it be two sides of the same political coin? From the standpoint of the institution and tending as its model, it is difficult to distinguish these two acts from one another. Harking back to the Hobbesian model, the state is assembled in order to protect and care for itself and is composed of the individuals in it. In a sense, the institution extends care on the basis of asking or forcing its citizens to kill or be killed in the name of its political existence. Furthermore, when a state renders another state its enemy, it does so in order to extend care for itself and its people. Schmitt also shares this realist insight into politics when he claims, "The concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political"(19) because for Schmitt, the state is defined by its ability to annihilate another state. This is supported by his concrete example. It is the state that decides on the friend-enemy distinction, and the friend-enemy distinction is characterized by the possibility for warring conflict. In terms of triangulation, we can think of the decision made by the institution as the higher order action imposed on an interaction between groups of individuals. This is not to say that killing is a preferred or revered form of caring. Rather, there are myriad forms of political tending that the institution is responsible for, and killing is one of these forms. Therefore, killing is a form of caring.

Upon my reflection that every social human being is entrenched in a care structure, and every human being is a citizen of a state, I recognize that **I am** without a doubt entrenched in a care structure. So far my consideration of the care structure has been in abstraction, I will now reflect upon the existential stages that we are presented with in regard to our political roles. Although at first I found myself struggling, in that, I did not know how to feel, or what to do, in regard to the political realm, I now recognize that the institution has existed as the essential political caretaker. Thus, we can shift our political thought toward the institution and finally determine our role. Put formally, there are four phases of political thought development that occur in regard to our role. First, we can believe that we do not have a role. In this phase, we are completely apathetic toward politics. But in fact we do have a role, and do not know what it is. Second, we know that we have a role, but we do not know what this role entails. It is in this stage of development that we discover that our role is relative to the institution. Third, we know that we have a role, and we know what this role entails. Thus, we move on to the fully descriptive part of the

project. From an analysis of the phenomena we determine the means for a grounded engagement in politics. Four, we now have a role, and we either affirm or deny the role the institution plays in our political life by means of a standard of normativity. Thus, with every choice we take a stand between supporting, remaining neutral, or resisting. The motivating insight from stage three to four is that we have a standard of normativity by which we judge our institution. Normativity arises out of the best possible political tending given the current phenomena. Since every human is involved in the care structure and stands in the relation to the institution, each person is responsible for the phase of his political development.

So what have we been doing? Have I determined my role? I can recall adamantly arguing that I am not a political being, and that none of my actions constitute political action. I have come to terms with the fact that I am, for better or worse, one figure in the all encompassing care structure. And the institution is that which arises out of my needs. I realize that I am responsible to the institution that cares for the matters of human life and human death. I am also responsible to the institution, in that I pay my parking tickets. Moreover, I cannot envisage a political life devoid of statist institutional care. Since I can understand politics by means of the concept of the political, and utilize a standard of normativity on reflection of current political phenomena, I can determine my role. I am at once responsible for and a responsibility of the state. Thus, by exploring my active role, I find it is necessary to examine the best possible institutional model that arises out of the needs of the common. In presenting a methodology for understanding the concept of the political, I not only determine my political role, but also suggest a way for political philosophy to face the institution and potentially affect change in our political reality. Whether or not philosophy attends to this type of project remains to be seen. As I stated before, I am selfish. It has been my intention to determine my role in the political domain. In writing this paper, I continue to do so.

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Dustin Bodaghi

Do Cases of Manipulation and Deprivation Affect Theories of Responsibility?

Life is like a game of cards. The hand you are dealt is determinism; the way you play it is free will.

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Jawaharlal Nehru

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In his article, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," Harry Frankfurt argues that personhood should be defined in terms of the structure of the will. While Frankfurt's concept of personhood does seem to capture something important about our psychology, namely the presence of effective second-order desires and volitions, it is still an inadequate basis for a theory of responsibility.[1] This paper will try to develop a better theory of responsibility by incorporating into Frankfurt's theory of responsibility how agents actually form their desires. Manipulation and deprivation[2] may be responsible for the desires an agent has. A good theory of responsibility should explain how these cases of manipulation and deprivation might make us less inclined to ascribe responsibility to the agent. While there are problems with Frankfurt's account, I do not think any of these objections are decisive against him and will suggest ways for his account to deal with these objections. I will then discuss Frankfurt's account in light of a sanity condition and consider the possibility of a simpler account of responsibility based on the capacity for reflective-self evaluation.

Before delving into problems with Frankfurt's account, I will lay out the basic framework of his account. Frankfurt begins with the concept of personhood and what is essential to it.[3] Many philosophers have argued that if determinism[4] is true, people cannot be appropriately responsible for their actions. In other words, if our present self and actions are the product of a previous chain of events to which we contribute nothing, then we have no ownership over our actions. The problem is to find how, if determinism is true, we can gain some ownership over our actions.

I will now turn to Frankfurt's solution to this problem which relies on the presence of effective second-order desires. Frankfurt understands desires simply as wants towards actions or other desires. A first-order desire is a desire to act in some way. Some of these first-order desires are ones that we actually act on. When we actually act on one of

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[1] The relation between personhood and responsibility will be explained later.

[2] Deprivation is a case where one would not hold an agent responsible because they are not connected to the world in the right way. This will be elaborated later in the paper.

[3] The desire to determine what makes a person stems in part from philosophical literature on free will. A central question in the free will debate is what makes a person and gives them agency in order that people can be held responsible for their actions so that their actions are not simply the product of determinism. Many philosophers suppose a connection between free will and personhood which is intuitively correct.

[4] Determinism is defined as the past + the laws of nature = one physically possible future. Determinism entails there being only one physically possible outcome.

these desires Frankfurt considers this *acting on your will*. To identify an agent's will is "either to identify the desire (or desires) by which he is motivated in some action he performs or to identify the desire (or desires) by which he will or would be motivated when or if he acts" (Frankfurt 325). In simpler terms, we can understand one's will as the effective desire that moves the agent to action. Yet there is also a phenomenon where sometimes we regard our will as in some way alien or divorced from our other interests. This is evidenced by times when we find ourselves acting on desires we wish we were not acting on. This is an aspect of our psychology that Frankfurt calls "second-order desires."

Second-order desires can be understood in terms of the ability to want (or not want) to have desires of the first-order. For instance, one may have the desire to see one's sibling trip because one finds it humorous. Yet one may also wish they did not have that particular desire to watch one's sibling slip and fall because one does not like it that one has that desire. Therefore, even though one may have acquired the first-order desire to watch one's sibling trip due to some chain of past events, it is still in one's control if one wants to have that desire and if one wants that desire to move one to action.

So far we have not seen how an account of responsibility arises from this framework, which is why I will now introduce Frankfurt's concept of volition. A volition is a particular species of second-order desires for a first-order desire to be one's will. The difference between a volition and a second-order desire is that a volition is where one wants (or does not want) it to be the case that one is *moved* by a certain desire. That is, one may want to have a certain desire but "univocally want that desire to be unsatisfied" (Frankfurt 325). Frankfurt gives the example of a physician who deals with narcotics addicts and feels he would be better at his job if he knew what it felt like to desire narcotics. While he wants to be moved by the desire to take narcotics, he does not actually want that desire to be effective[5]; this is an example of a volition. It is important to understand that volition is not defined as only the second-order desire that gives rise to the will because Frankfurt allows for volitional conflict. For instance, I may want to give money to a homeless advocacy group and want to want to give money to the group.

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[5]It is important to distinguish between effective and non-effective desires to determine one's volition. For instance, a social worker might feel more effective in helping the homeless population in their community by living homeless. While they may want to be moved by this desire to be homeless, they may univocally not want that desire to be effective.

But I may also have another desire to keep people off my property, so I scold the member of the coalition for stepping on my lawn instead of giving a donation. Volitions are paramount to Frankfurt's account as he states, "it is having second-order volitions that I regard as essential to being a person" (327).

We can understand Frankfurt's account as a type of sourcehood compatibilism that tries to make good on the claim that an agent must in some way be the source or the owner of the action. The term sourcehood compatibilism comes from a division in the free will debate. Incompatibilists believe that free will is incompatible with determinism and are divided into two groups, leeway and sourcehood incompatibilists. Leeway incompatibilists believe free will is incompatible with determinism, emphasizing that at the time the agent acts the agent could not have done otherwise and therefore lacks free will. Sourcehood incompatibilists believe free will is incompatible with determinism because if determinism is true, the agent cannot causally contribute to the prior chain of events that led to the action. Therefore, since the agent is not the ultimate source of the action, the agent lacks free will. Frankfurt's sourcehood compatibilist account says that even though determinism might be true, free will is compatible with determinism because an agent has the ability to form effective second-order desires which are the product of the agent. Now it can be seen where an account of responsibility emerges under Frankfurt's structure.

Frankfurt generates his sourcehood compatibilism by appealing to the structure of an agent's psychology taken at a snapshot. While the agent's first-order desires may be a product of determinism, the agent's second-order desires give the agent the capacity to choose which actions the agent wants to act upon. To illustrate, Frankfurt offers the cases of the willing, unwilling, and wanton addicts. A 'wanton' is an agent who has second-order desires but no volitions of the second order (although the agent may have other higher-order desires). The willing addict likes the addiction, the wanton does not care about the addiction, and the unwilling addict does not want the addiction. The wanton is not considered a person due to lack of volitions; therefore a wanton need not be considered in an account of human responsibility. The unwilling addict is not responsible, at least not wholly, because the unwilling addict wants to change the first-order desire of addiction but is not mentally or physically able to. Yet we do hold the willing addict responsible even though the agent is an addict. Frankfurt's account tries to explain what the difference between these addicts amounts to. Fur-

thermore, these cases show how we can regard parts of our psychology as not appropriately "us."

To better understand the lessons Frankfurt wants us to learn from these cases, we can look to his four concepts of freedom. The first two concepts concern *freedom of action* and the second two concepts concern *freedom of the will*, which is where moral responsibility starts to matter. Frankfurt's first concept under freedom of action is *acting freely* which highlights actual desire dependence. According to Frankfurt, to act freely is simply to act because you want to. For instance, if I am out playing golf because I want to, then I am acting freely. This freedom is different than *being free to X* (a particular action) which concerns the agent's capacity or constraints to X. "Are you free to X?" is a question about the capacity of the agent. This notion is concerned with the statement "you would X if you willed X" (hypothetical will dependence). Both of these concepts concern freedom of action because neither addresses what the agent *wants* to do. For this reason we must now turn to Frankfurt's concepts that concern *freedom of the will*.

The concepts of *acting freely* and *being free to X* are to be distinguished from freedom of the will, which concerns moral responsibility.[6] Freedom of will is not just a question about freedom to act, but a question about a certain *type* of will. Thus, we are not just concerned with free action but also with whether you can have the will you want. To reiterate, a volition is one's desire that a certain desire be one's will. Moral responsibility is found in one's volitions because they show what desires the agent *wants* to be its will. Frankfurt offers the concepts of *acting of your own free will* and *freedom of the will with respect to X* to explain how moral responsibility ascriptions[7] function. To explain freedom of the will, he starts with the concept of *acting of your own free will*. You act of your own free will when you will to X, you have a second-order volition to will X, plus you act freely (actual volition dependence plus actual desire dependence). According to Frankfurt, you are acting on your own free will when you are doing what you want and you want to want what you want. This is a different question than, "Is your will free?" which concerns *freedom of the will with respect to X*. The way to analyze Frankfurt's account is that you have *freedom of the will with respect to X* when you would will to X if you had a second-order volition to X (hypothetical volition dependence). This

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[6]Moral responsibility is equivalent to the amount of blameworthiness or praiseworthiness of an agent.

[7]A moral responsibility ascription is when one attributes or judges an agent to be praiseworthy or blameworthy.

distinction will be important later.

Thus, the difference between acting of your own free will and freedom of the will with respect to X is that acting on your own free will is a question about acting freely at the time of action, and freedom of the will is a question of the capacity you have. For example, I may act on my own free will so long as it is possible that I can do what I want (like playing the guitar). Freedom of the will is concerned with the question, "Am I free to want my will to be to play the guitar?" Freedom of the will requires that if you had a change in your second-order volitions then you would form a different effective first-order desire. These cases are distinguished by the willing and unwilling addicts, who illustrate how we can ascribe responsibility to an agent even if the agent lacks control over the agent's first-order desires (which answers the challenge of determinism). You could either embrace your addiction or wish you did not have that desire.[8] The willing addict will take the drug no matter what and wants to do so; therefore he is acting on his own free will. The unwilling addict does not have freedom of the will which is why we find him less responsible. Frankfurt's account says it is because the unwilling addict identifies with his second-order volitions not to take the drug and not his first-order desires of addiction that we hold him less responsible.

A problem with how Frankfurt's account deals with these cases is that his theory overlooks how the addicts became addicted. Imagine that the willing addict grew up in isolation in the remote countryside and looked to his father as his only role model. Imagine that the willing addict, who has the correct volitional structure that Frankfurt counts as being responsible, was involuntarily injected with heroin by his father when he was 13. The addict trusted and looked up to his father and therefore wanted to be addicted to heroin like his father. Consequently, he formed the second-order desire to want to want to take heroin. Further, this second-order desire is actually a volition because he wants his first-order desire to take heroin be his will. In this case most of us would consider this agent not responsible, or at least not as responsible, as the willing addict who starts his addiction based on an *independent* desire to try heroin. On the other hand, the unwilling addict may also be responsible if he freely and independently elected to take the drug his first time while knowing the consequences. Frankfurt discusses neither of these possibilities and therefore needs to

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[8]As exemplified by the willing and unwilling addict. It is of concern to find the relevant distinction between the two addicts because the unwilling addict seems less blameworthy than the willing addict.

add some type of tracing condition to make sure that agent formed his desires in affable conditions and was not subject to manipulation or deprivation.[9]

Frankfurt hints at this problem in a footnote at the end of his article when he distinguishes between someone being fully or solely responsible. He gives the example of a light that can be turned on or off by either of two switches. Imagine that two people simultaneously flicked the light to the on position. Frankfurt says that in this scenario neither agent is *solely* responsible for turning on the light but both agents are *fully* responsible for turning on the light. However, this distinction does not resolve the problem of agential history because there are cases where we want to say the agent did not solely or fully engage in the action in the first place. In the aforementioned case, the addict who independently tried heroin "turned on the light" to his addiction and is therefore solely responsible for his addiction. In contrast, the other addict "had the light turned on for him" by his father and is therefore neither fully nor solely responsible for his addiction.

While Frankfurt's account does do some work to explain our complex psychology, it also does not adequately deal with problems posed by cases of manipulation. I will first construct a clear case of manipulation and then pose a more complex case. Imagine that an agent is kidnapped by a neuroscientist and brought to the neuroscientist's lab. In the scientist's laboratory the agent is hooked up to a machine that erases all of the agent's desires. The neuroscientist then replaces the agent's desires with those of a serial killer. Under Frankfurt's account so long as the agent has volitions and second-order desires the agent is responsible, even if the agent kills someone based on those implanted desires. This example may be a bit into the future so now an example removed from science fiction will be considered.

Imagine that someone who works closely with President Y finds out he is about to be fired by President Y for misconduct at an upcoming press meeting. To cover up his misconduct and avoid public humiliation, he convinces secretary Z in President Y's office that President Y is about to use nuclear weapons on his citizens in one hour. Secretary Z, knowing he is close enough to President Y to pull off the murder in that amount of time, decides to kill President Y, and then proceeds to do it. In cases of manipulation like this one, it would not be appropriate to ascribe moral responsibility based solely on Z's volitional structure as Frankfurt's account would suggest. Under Frankfurt's account, Secre-

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[9]Refer to footnote 2.

tary Z would be completely responsible for killing President Y because Z is not forced to act, but acts on Z's own desires and wants to act on those desires. In Frankfurt's terms, Z has freedom of action and freedom of the will because when Z steps back and asks, "Do I really want to kill President Y?" at the time of action, he answers, "Yes." Nonetheless, it would be wrong to think secretary Z is as morally responsible for murder as if Z had had a personal vendetta with President Y or wanted to become a famous serial killer and found killing pleasurable. After all, if Z knew that President Y was not going to kill citizens, he would not have killed Y. Both secretary Z and the "pleasure/serial killer" have the same volitional structure at the time they kill, yet it would be wrong to hold both equally responsible and say they are equally blameworthy. Therefore, Frankfurt needs to account for the possibility of manipulation in forming one's desires. The best way for Frankfurt to deal with this objection might be to appeal to some tracing condition on second-order desires and volitions to determine if they were formed "sanely" or in an appropriate manner.

Frankfurt's account is thus ahistorical because determining freedom of the will is simply a matter of looking at the agent's structure of desires. For this reason we are left with the feeling that Frankfurt's account is incomplete. Cases of manipulation need to be accounted for and, in a similar vein, so does the role of history in the agent's acquisition of desires. The history of how one forms one's desires and volitions is important because there may be cases of manipulation or bad history where we feel the volitions and second-order desires of the agent are insufficient for an ascription of responsibility. Susan Wolfe in her essay "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility" offers the example of JoJo, the son of an "evil and sadistic" dictator. JoJo grows up in the company of his father and, to no surprise, forms similar desires to those of his father. He sends people to prison or death, subjects people to torture "on the basis of whim," and so on. Most importantly, JoJo does not act because he is coerced but acts on his own desires. JoJo has freedom of action and freedom of the will because when he steps back and asks, "Do I really want to be this sort of person?" he answers, "Yes." How can Frankfurt's account deal with cases like JoJo? JoJo has control over his first- and second-order desires, but we do not want to hold him responsible in the way we would if he formed his second-order desires without the influence of his father. Frankfurt offers no explanation of how to make sense of the role of history and manipulation in how an agent forms second-order desires or even first-

order desires. I believe a good way for Frankfurt to deal with cases of deprivation and manipulation would be to appeal to something like Wolfe's sanity condition. As Wolfe says, "we may understand sanity, then, as the minimally sufficient ability cognitively and normatively to recognize and appreciate the world for what it is" (381). A Frankfurt-style account could use this condition to block cases like JoJo's by positing that JoJo is not connected to the world in the right way even though his psychological structure looks as though he is responsible. Thus, it is not clear that Frankfurt's account of responsibility based on a hierarchy of desires cannot incorporate conditions to deal with such cases.

Frankfurt's attempt to create a sourcehood compatibilist position also faces a regress worry. The problem with Frankfurt's account is that even if one's second-order desires can control one's first-order desires, how do we gain control over our second-order desires? Obviously, it would be a shabby defense to posit third-order desires that affect our want to want to have first order desires. This defense would lead to an infinite regress, where the objector appeals to lack of control of the third-order desires to which Frankfurt then posits fourth-order desires and so on. Frankfurt's reply to this regress objection is that "common sense and, perhaps, a saving fatigue" stops the regress because if one refused to identify with a second order desire until a third, fourth, or fifth was formed it would lead "to the destruction of a person" (332). A problem with this response is that the regress only destroys *Frankfurt's* definition of personhood, which may be too narrow. For this reason, I will now discuss another possibility for the marker of personhood: the capacity for reflective self-evaluation.

For Frankfurt, the marker of personhood is the capacity for effective second-order desires that comes from our capacity for reflective self-evaluation. He states, "No animal other than man, however, appears to have the capacity for reflective self-evaluation that is manifested in the formation of second-order desires" (324). After acknowledging this capacity, Frankfurt basically drops the point and focuses on the phenomenon that arises out of reflective self-evaluation: second order desires and volitions. But why focus on the phenomenon that arises from the capacity and not on the capacity itself? Why not think of reflective self-evaluation as the seat of personhood and freedom? This is a more basic element and seems like a better place to start.

Reflective self-evaluation is the capacity for one to evaluate and change one's "self."[10] This includes the ability to recognize one's desires, beliefs, attitudes, and personality traits and for one to be able to change these aspects. The capacity for reflective self-evaluation seems like it is really what is required for freedom and not second-order desires. So long as the agent can reflectively *evaluate and change* itself then it seems possible to get the sourcehood compatibilist account Frankfurt needs. If reflective self-evaluation is true, then it would escape the threat of determinism. Even if one's ability to change one's self is determined, reflective self-evaluation makes it possible to have an account of responsibility. Therefore, in order to have the capacity for reflective self-evaluation one must be able to change and evaluate one's "self."

Whether or not one acts rationally is also important for responsibility, so I will now discuss a rationality condition. If one acts rationally then it seems to affect ascriptions of responsibility. One seems to be more responsible with increasing rationality. Furthermore, if one acts irrationally this also seems to affect one's level of responsibility as in the case of JoJo. The rationality condition is a way of acting that follows what is normal by being in accord with most people's intuitions and beliefs in how they would act (not as an attribute of the agent). I will not give a precise definition for rationality yet there are certain actions that most people would certainly regard as irrational. For the purposes of this paper, using rationality in this way will be sufficient. For instance, if one were to observe a man eating a glass full of nails one would most likely think the man is acting irrationally. Rationality may also come in degrees and is not necessarily something one either has or does not have. Rational reflective self-evaluation is simply the capacity to evaluate and change aspects of one's self in a manner consistent with what most people would consider normal. I will now discuss an example of rational reflective self-evaluation.[11]

Imagine an agent with a first-order desire to X and a second-order desire to Y. When the agent reflects, it realizes that it has these desires, and that it would really like to have the effective first-order desire to Y. As a result, the agent's first-order desire to Y becomes the agent's

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[10]This list of what constitutes the "self" is not decisive or complete as it is a controversial issue in philosophy. What constitutes the self is left as an open question and this openness does not prohibit the ability to comprehend a capacity for reflective self-evaluation.

[11]From now on, when I use the term reflective self-evaluation it will be synonymous with rational reflective-self evaluation.

effective desire. Furthermore, this change has to be in accord with what is normal because of the aforementioned rationality condition. This conception of personhood captures more cases than Frankfurt's theory and is more accurate to our responsibility ascriptions. I will now discuss how the capacity for reflective self-evaluation avoids objections to Frankfurt's theory. Now I will discuss the regress objection before proceeding to the cases of JoJo and Secretary Y and finally to the willing and unwilling addicts.

Appealing to a capacity for reflective self-evaluation can avoid problems faced by Frankfurt's theory. Recall the regress worry mentioned earlier which concerned Frankfurt's use of higher-order desires. If Frankfurt is allowed to posit second-order desires regarding one's first-order desires, he could then posit third-, fourth-, or higher-order desires regarding those desires, and so on. The regress worry threatens the concept of personhood and therefore responsibility. A capacity for reflective self-evaluation avoids this regress worry because it does not appeal to higher-order desires.

While earlier I stipulated it might be possible to build a sanity condition into Frankfurt's account, it is more elegant and clear to appeal to a capacity for reflective self-evaluation. It is odd to try to find a criterion that pays respect to our idea of what makes one sane in terms of first- and second-order desires as Frankfurt's account would require. It is more natural to stipulate that responsibility requires the ability for reflective self-evaluation which involves the evaluation of desires, beliefs, attitudes, and personality traits in a rational manner. The case of JoJo illustrates how JoJo is less blameworthy than an agent who formed values independently in good circumstances. JoJo is less blameworthy because he is not sane with regards to his beliefs about the world, personality traits, and attitudes because most people would not regard him as normal. These aspects of his self are not sane because his upbringing prohibits reflective self-evaluation. Specifically it seems that while JoJo may have a concept of self that he can reflectively evaluate, it is not possible that JoJo can evaluate and change his desires, beliefs, and attitudes in a manner consistent with a normal person. It is JoJo's self, his awareness of his self, and the manner in which he analyzes himself that seem to be the product of his upbringing. His upbringing seems to prohibit a capacity to rationally reflectively self-evaluate.

The capacity for reflective self-evaluation can also explain cases of manipulation like the Secretary Y example. Most people would agree that at the time of action Secretary Y was acting in a rational manner

because she was trying to save her fellow citizens. Her level of responsibility should not be determined by simply looking at the structure of her will. If we did base an ascription of responsibility on the structure of her will she would be considered blameworthy for killing President X because at the time she acted she wanted to want to kill President X. Instead, her rationality in reflecting on her self precluded her from doing anything but killing President X. An irrational choice in this position would be to stand by willingly and take a nap, read the newspaper, or just leave work early to go home. A rational person in Secretary Y's position seems only to have the choice of killing President X because acting otherwise could lead to her fellow citizens' annihilation.

The cases of the unwilling and willing addict seemed like compelling reasons to accept Frankfurt's theory. Frankfurt's theory explained that the unwilling addict is less blameworthy than the willing addict due to the unwilling addict's volitional structure. While both addicts had the first-order desires to take heroin, the unwilling addict wished that the desire to take heroin was not effective while the willing addict wished that it was. However, due to the unclear nature of addiction, intuitions seem muddled with regards to there really being a "willing" and "unwilling" addict.

When one thinks about the "willing" and "unwilling" addict it seems hard to draw the clear distinction that Frankfurt suggests because both seem willing. It seems that both addicts choose to inject heroin and it is not clear if one addict really is unwilling. When the problem is stated in this manner the situation seems more confusing than Frankfurt suggests. Further, it seems that the unwilling addict is more rational than the willing addict in that he wishes he was not addicted to heroin. The willing addict desires to stay addicted to a possibly fatal substance that prohibits the ability to change one's desires and self. Therefore, the willing addict seems more irrational in his beliefs and desires to continue to want to be addicted, as most people would agree. If this is the case, the unwilling addict should be more of a person than the willing addict and therefore more blameworthy than the willing addict. Yet it was the willing addict who seemed more blameworthy due to his want to stay addicted along with the presence of positive beliefs regarding heroin such as heroin is pleasurable, heroin is not morally bad, etc. In contrast, the unwilling addict seemed less blameworthy not only because he desires not to take heroin, but also because he has beliefs that heroin is bad, a negative attitude towards heroin, and wishes addiction was not part of his personality. Therefore,

our intuitions are clouded by the fact that both agents are addicted and this makes it unclear to what extent there really is an "unwilling" and "willing addict."

Due to both individuals being addicted to heroin, it seems that both addicts lack the capacity to reflectively self-evaluate about their addictions. Lacking the capacity to reflectively self-evaluate makes the two individuals not responsible. However addiction functions, it seems clear that one who is addicted to heroin cannot reflect and change their desires for heroin which is precisely why they are considered addicted. Due to their lack of reflective self-evaluation, our intuitions regarding the willing and unwilling addict are more unclear than Frankfurt suggests. The difference between the two addicts is not simply that one has a second-order desire not to do heroin and the other has the opposite desire, as Frankfurt believes. If this were the case then it would be hard to understand the difference between a non-addict who takes heroin and an addict who takes heroin. Instead, the relevant difference should be drawn between an addict and a non-addict which can be understood by appeal to the capacity for reflective self-evaluation. If we take the case of a non-addict, who has the capacity to rationally reflectively self-evaluate, it seems clear they are responsible. In the case of addiction our intuitions regarding personhood are imprecise and therefore it seems we cannot clearly attribute responsibility.

Frankfurt's hierarchical account is a good account of responsibility because it does real philosophical work to explain our complex psychology. While the theory does help us make sense of some of our responsibility ascriptions, it does not adequately deal with the problems of manipulation and deprivation (bad history). Cases of manipulation and deprivation do require that explanations be built into his hierarchical account but it is not decisive that Frankfurt cannot revise his theory to incorporate some tracing and sanity conditions to alleviate these problems. Appealing to a capacity for reflective self-evaluation seems more basic to personhood and avoids the regress worry faced by Frankfurt's account. Further, it is easier to see how a sanity condition could fit in with a theory of responsibility based on the capacity for reflective self-evaluation. Reflective self-evaluation also seems like a better way to distinguish between an addict and a non-addict.

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Richard Sandlin

Perception and Intentionality

To say that a philosopher is in the grip of an inappropriate picture of perception makes it sound as if something rather disreputable is going on.

M.F. Burnyeat

In my view, perception is one of the most important areas of philosophical study. It is a phenomenon that bears on epistemology (is perceptual experience sufficient enough to ground our knowledge of objects in the world?), metaphysics (what is the nature of color?), action (how much is body movement related to, or bound up into perception?), language (how is demonstrative reference connected with perception?) and aesthetics (how much of ones appreciation for beauty is tied up with perceiving?). In this essay, I will center my discussion around three competing theories of perception.[1]

The goal of this essay is to try to understand how it is that perception can be intentional. There are five parts to the essay. I will begin by focusing on intentionality and then give an account of the relationship between intentionality and perception. I will then discuss various benefits of holding an Intentional Theory of Perception. However, some doubts will be raised as to whether we can reasonably hold what I call a Pure Intentional Theory of Perception. Finally, I will try to disarm a particular objection that the Pure Intentional Theorist may offer if we give up one of the theory's central theses. I will then discuss a picture of perception that deals with the Intentional theorists' worry and shores up the particular weakness from which I believe the Pure Intentional theory suffers. This alternative picture is usually called the Disjunctive Theory of Perception, but I will call it the Relational View of Perception.[2]

I. INTENTIONALITY

Intentionality is the mind's "directedness" towards the world. "Intentionality" describes the phenomenon of how it is that our conscious psychological states can be "about" some object or state of affairs in the world. Beliefs, desires, fears, hopes, wishes, etc. are all examples of intentional states. These states are typically expressed by a proposition. I will call them propositional attitudes when they are so expressed. Take the proposition: that Nick has a beard. We can hold

[2]I call it the Relational view because I will emphasize the relation between perceiver and perceived that follows from holding a Disjunctive view.

certain propositional attitudes towards this proposition. The picture is this:

> I (believe/desire/fear/hope/wish, etc.)   that Nick has a beard.

Holding any one of these propositional attitudes towards this proposition constitutes being in an intentional state. The proposition in the above schema represents the content of the intentional state, and the propositional attitude its form. The question I will be concerned with is whether or not our perceptual experience is intentional. Is it the case that I perceive Nick's beard in virtue of the intentional content *that Nick has a beard*?

II. PERCEPTUAL INTENTIONALITY

Some philosophers claim that our perceptual experience is intentional; they endorse an Intentional Theory of Perception. In this theory, the perceptual report verb "see"[3] functions in a way similar to a propositional attitude (such as belief or desire): "I see [propositional attitude] that Nick has a beard [proposition]." My perceptual experience is "directed towards" or "about" some object or state of affairs in the world. The important point is this: I am perceptually aware of objects or states of affairs in the world in virtue of intentional content.[4] The "in virtue of" phrase expresses the relation between a perceiver and the intentional content of the thing perceived.[5] It is in virtue of the representational content *that Nick has a beard* that I perceive Nick and his beard. There are two important consequences of this claim which warrant discussion.

First, on this view, the intentional content of our perceptual experience presents us with material objects in the world (tables, chairs, trees, persons, etc.).[6] When I attempt to describe my experience, say in seeing a rose garden, all I can express in this description is a proposition containing the intentional content *that the rose garden is in front*

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[3]There are several other perceptual report verbs as well: "touch" for example. My use of "the perceptual report verb" here does not mean "the one and only."

[4]Intentional theorists use terms such as "representational content" or "propositional content" interchangeably with "intentional content." I will use them in this way as well.

[5]I discuss this relation more explicitly in section V.

[6]It is not clear if we perceive bodily sensations in virtue of intentional content. That is a question I will not address in this essay as I am only concerned with the phenomenon of perceiving the external world.

of me. What I see is *that the rose garden is in front of me.* Second, on this view we are only perceptually aware of what our representation of the world is a representation *of*: we are not aware of the representation itself. When I see the rose garden, I am aware of it in virtue of the fact that it is in front of me. I am perceptually aware of the rose garden and not the intentional content *that the rose garden is in front of me.*[7]

These points bring out the transparency of perception. Veridical (accurate) perception is transparent in this way: one is only aware of material objects and not any aspect of the representation of those objects. I do not see the representation of the rose garden; I see the rose garden itself. Therefore, the objects of perception (what make up the content of perceptual states) are material objects.

The above two consequences lie in direct contrast to a Sense-Datum Theory of Perception. The Sense-Datum view claims that we are aware of objects called sense-data in virtue of a mediating process. Sense-Data are mental objects such as colored expanses, and are involved in a mediating process between a perceiver and a material object. When a rose is presented to me, I am not really aware of the rose itself. What I am really aware of is an object which only exists in the mind, such as a pink expanse. One then infers from the experience of the Sense-Data that there exists an actual rose in the world. I am aware of the representation itself and not what the representation is a representation *of.* Perception is not transparent on the Sense-Datum view nor does it place us in any direct contact with the world. An Intentional theorist claims, contra the Sense-Datum view, that 1) we are perceptually aware of material objects directly, and 2) we are aware of the properties of what a representation is a representation *of* and not the properties of the representation *itself.* It is clear that the above two views give quite different pictures of perception. I will now discuss why I think the Intentional view is stronger then the Sense-Datum view.

III. Benefits of the Intentional Theory of Perception

There are three benefits to holding an Intentional Theory of Perception. First, the view effectively addresses cases of visual hallucination. Suppose I am not experiencing an actual rose garden outside my window,

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[7]For a clear discussion of this point see Gilbert Harman's "The Intrinsic Quality of Experience," *Philosophical Perspectives 4*, 1990, esp. pp. 34-40.

but instead am experiencing a visual hallucination of a rose garden. The experience of the illusory rose garden is supposedly experientially identical to a perception of an actual rose garden. Sense-Datum theorists have argued that from experiential identity it follows that we must be said to only be visually aware of sense-data. This is allegedly so because for any veridical perceptual case, it could, for all we know, always be the case that we are hallucinating the very same content. This point motivates the entire Sense-Datum theory: if the content of a veridical perception is the same as a corresponding hallucination, and there are no objects present in hallucination, then there are no material objects present in veridical perception. In order to counter this claim, the Intentional theory must give an adequate account of perceptions and their hallucinatory equivalents.

An Intentional theorist claims that the difference between a perception and its hallucinatory equivalent is one of causation. In the veridical perceptual case there is actually a rose garden in the environment causing my perceptual experience of it. There is no rose garden in the environment to cause my hallucinatory experience.[8] A material object is actually present in the former case whereas no material object is present in the latter case. However, visual hallucinations share the exact same content with that of its perceptual equivalent. The proposition *that Nick has a beard* has the same intentional content if I actually perceive or simply hallucinate that Nick has a beard. The Intentional theorist has maintained the commonality between the two cases, while still giving us a difference between them. The commonality consists in the experiential identity of the two cases and the difference lies in what causes them.[9]

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[8]A rose garden could, however, cause an illusory experience. There could, for example, actually be a rose garden in the environment that was filled with red roses but that caused experiences of blue roses. The Argument from Illusion is motivated by examples like these. Though this argument is also used to motivate the Sense-Datum theory, I do not have the space to discuss it here. For an excellent discussion of both the Argument from Illusion and Argument from Hallucination, see A.D. Smith's book *The Problem of Perception* (University Press, 2002).

[9]This makes it seem as if the Intentional theory suffers from the same problem as the Sense-Datum Theory: if the content of the perception and hallucination are exactly the same, how can we distinguish between the two. This seems to prove the Sense-Datum theorists' point but it does not. On the Intentional theory the world is represented as mind-independent and it is material objects in that very world that cause this particular representation. I have already argued that transparency is an important feature of perception and it is the transparency of perception that saves the Intentional theorist here and presents problems for the Sense-Datum theorist. The Intentional theorist is only saved for a while, however, as I bring up reasons for doubting his view of hallucination in section V.

A second benefit to holding the Intentional Theory of Perception lies in its correct description of the phenomenology of perceptual awareness. Essentially, the Intentional Theory of Perception argues for the transparency of perception. Suppose I happen to see my bearded friend Nick. What I am seeing is Nick and his beard. But it also seems that the phenomenon reveals, on some level, a psychological "directedness" towards what I am seeing. This "directedness" is a relation between me, the perceiver, and the proposition *that Nick has a beard*. It is in virtue of this relation that I perceive the scene as I do. If stopped and asked what it is that I see, I will say "Oh, that Nick has a beard." What I am phenomenally aware of are not the qualities of the representation itself, but rather what that representation is a representation of. It seems a correct phenomenological description of our perceptual experience that it is "directed toward" or "about" some object or state of affairs in the world.[10]

The Sense-Datum Theory of Perception is much weaker on this point. On this theory, when I see my neighbor's rose garden I am only aware of colored expanses. But this doesn't correctly describe the transparency of perception. I am not aware of sense-data, such as colored expanses. I am aware of flowers and petals and stems and birds and insects.[11] This is what the phenomena reveal to me. The Sense-Datum theory is not a position that describes the perceptual phenomena correctly.

A third benefit to holding an Intentional theory follows from the idea that we are perceptually aware of mind-independent objects. Our belief in a mind-independent world is explained by our perceptual experience representing the world as mind-independent. This point makes it easier to argue for a kind of realism about the world. Perception gives us access to a world that is independent of us. We believe there is a rose garden in the environment and independent of us because we experience it as such. Belief in a mind-independent reality is what explains many of the actions we take with regard to objects. I move the chair in part because I believe it exists in a mind-independent world. Perception

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[10]The Intentional Theory still does not describe all the phenomena correctly. It is not the whole story. I bring it up at this point because I think it is a much stronger phenomenological account of perception than the Sense-Datum Theory. I discuss reasons for thinking that perception has some non-conceptual and non-representational aspects to it in my discussion of the Pure Intentional Theory of Perception in sections V and VI.

[11]I am implicitly holding a Naive Realist view of Perception, as do the Intentional theorists. To argue for it here would take me beyond the scope of this paper. The point here is, in perception, the phenomena reveal material objects to us.

reveals a world of tables and chairs and trees and persons. These are the kinds of objects we cope with in our everyday dealings with the world. Our perceptions, on the Intentional account, put us in a position to think about, discuss and use material objects.

This brings out the point that the Intentional theory gives a stronger explanatory account of our belief in a mind-independent world than does the Sense-Datum theory.

The Sense-Datum Theory of Perception stresses that we are perceptually aware only of non-material sense-data, such as colored expanses. This makes it much harder to argue that there is a world of mind-independent objects with which we interact, for how can we arrive at a concept of objectivity if mental objects are all that we perceive? The Sense-Datum theory must give an account how we believe in a mind-independent world if we only perceive mental objects. The Intentional Theorist has a strong account of how we can believe in a world of material objects. We believe in a world of material objects because we perceive those very objects.

IV. Objections to the Intentional Theory

Despite the benefits of an Intentional Theory of Perception, objections persist. I want to focus on the problem of the over-intellectualization of perception: the idea that it is in virtue of conceptual content that perceive as we do. In order to deal with this problem, I will need to discuss a particular version of the Intentional View, which I will call the Pure Intentional Theory of Perception.

A Pure Intentional Theory holds that there is nothing *in addition* to intentional content that constitutes our perceptual awareness. There is no non-representational feature of our perceptual experience, but there is a question of whether the intentional content of perception is conceptual or non-conceptual. Correspondingly, the Pure Intentional Theory comes in two varieties: 1) those who claim that the intentional content of perception is conceptual and 2) those who claim that the intentional content of perception is non-conceptual. I believe that the Pure Intentional Theory of Perception is mistaken regardless of whether the intentional content of perception is conceptual or non-conceptual. I discuss my objections to the conceptualist position in this section and my objections to the non-conceptualist position in the next section.

According to the conceptualist, our perceptual experience is conceptual "all the way down." This means that there is no perceptual

state which relates us to the world in a non-conceptual way. But on the surface, this view is counter-intuitive. I will give three examples which I believe show this to be the case.

The first example has to do with color concepts. I certainly posses the color concept *blue*.[12] The concept *blue* figures in my experience when I see a blue flower. This is so because I recognize that the term ' blue' applies in this case.[13] The flower is represented to me *as a blue flower*. Now consider the fact that there are many shades of blue. I can recognize some of the shades of blue, like sky blue. I can come across a flower which I perceive as, not only *blue*, but *sky blue* because I have the concept *sky blue*. There are, however, certain shades of blue that I have no concept for. My friend may have a blue scooter, but its particular shade is completely unknown to me.[14] In fact, I have never seen this particular shade of blue before.

The point is this: I represent this particular scooter *as blue*, but my experience is one of that particular shade of blue which is unknown to me. The intentional content of my perception is *that there is a blue scooter over there*. But this clearly does not completely describe my perceptual experience as I have no concept for this particular shade. So it seems that there is in this case something in addition to intentional content which partly constitutes my perceptual awareness.

A possible response to this conclusion would emphasize that we have the concept *that particular shade of blue*, and that this is what constitutes the intentional content of the perceptual experience. This is the point John McDowell makes against theories arguing that perception is, at least partly, non-conceptual.[15] McDowell concedes that not all color experiences can be captured under lexical concepts such as *red*, *blue* or *green*. We can capture certain color experiences conceptually by using a demonstrative such as "this" or "that." Hence, we can capture my unknown shade of blue with the expression *that particular shade of blue*.

It seems, however, that demonstrative concepts are not really conceptual at all. This can be seen if we focus on an important ability

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[12]Throughout this essay, names for concepts will appear in italics and the terms used to express those concepts will appear in scare quotes. So the concept *blue* is expressed by the term 'blue.'

[13]I am not going to give a theory of concepts. It is enough for my purposes that when I hold the concept *blue*. I recognize that the term 'blue' applies in such-and-such a case.

[14]This is actually a true story. It turns out that the scooter is either 'ballpark' or 'candy' blue.

[15]See his *Mind and World*, Harvard University Press, 1994, pgs. 56-60.

we have when holding a concept: namely, the ability to *recognize* when that concept applies to particular objects. By holding the concept *blue*, I can recognize when the term "blue" applies to a particular object that has as one of its properties the color blue. The concept applies to scooters, cups, hats, birds, the sky, etc.

McDowell, in arguing for the existence of demonstrative concepts, claims that there "is a recognitional capacity, possibly quite short-lived, that sets in with the experience" and is "exploitable as long as it lasts, in thoughts based on memory."[16] What McDowell means is that when I perceive my friend's blue scooter, I can recognize it as *that particular shade of blue* as long as 1) I am confronted with the object that has "that particular shade of blue" as one of its properties and 2) can remember my experience of that shade.

But suppose, for example, that I can recognize *that particular shade of blue*, and I remember this experience for only a few seconds. On McDowell's account, it would follow that the demonstrative concept is held only for only a few seconds. Once my friend retreats on his scooter, I will have forgotten the color experience and therefore will no longer hold the demonstrative concept of textitthat particular shade of blue.

The problem lies in the idea that I can use this supposed concept *only* when directly confronted with the object or property it is expressive of. *That particular shade of blue* ceases to be a concept once the acquaintance between the perceiver and object ceases, and I forget the color experience. This fact seems to violate one of the conditions for somethings being a concept: namely, that once I have a particular concept, I can use it to recognize many particular objects over a long period of time as having the property that particular concept is expressive of. Once I have the concept *blue*, I will be able to recognize it whenever I am confronted with a blue object.[17] And this is something I cannot, necessarily, do with *that particular shade of blue.*

A second example of the non-conceptual content of perception is given by Christopher Peacocke.[18] Consider the following case: at T1 I see a tree at 250 feet away from me, and at T2 I see the very same tree at 750 feet away from me. I represent the tree to be the same height at both T1 and T2 and do so conceptually. Yet, when I am at T1, the tree takes up more of my visual space than when I am at T2. This is a phenomenologically correct description and it leads to this important

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[16]Ibid. p.57-58.

[17]Given that the perceiver is in an optimal perceptual situation of course.

[18]See Ch. 1 of *Sense and Content*, Oxford University Press, 1983

conclusion: despite the sameness of conceptual content in the two cases, there seems to be a difference between the experiences. This conclusion leads, in turn, to the idea that there is, contra the conceptualist, a non-conceptual aspect to our perceptual experience. It is not *only* conceptual content that constitutes our perceptual experience.

A conceptualist could respond to this criticism by denying that the conceptual contents are the same in T1 and T2. A conceptualist could claim that what accounts for the different feature in experience between T1 and T2 is a difference in the conceptual contents of spatial relations. I am closer to the tree in T1 than in T2. I represent the tree conceptually as *being 250 feet from me at T1*, as opposed to *750 feet from me at T2*. It is the difference in the respective conceptual content of the spatial representations between T1 and T2 that explains the difference in experience between them. Height (identical conceptual contents) and distance (distinct conceptual contents) are both represented conceptually in these experiences.

I believe this response faces a phenomenological objection. We do not experience this spatial difference conceptually. The difference lies in how I experience the tree. In T1, the tree simply takes up more of my visual field then it does in T2. There need be no difference in conceptual content. However, we do experience the height of the tree to be the same in both cases, and we experience this in virtue of representational content. I see *that the tree is this tall*. The tree example shows how perceptual experience has a non-conceptual aspect to it. For the conceptualist, *every* perceptual experience of the tree must be conceptual. The above example illustrates how that assertion cannot be so.

A third example of the non-conceptual aspect of perception is given by the examples of animals with higher cognitive functions and human infants. I can say with some certainty that my dog Ranger does not posses the concept **tree**. What I am certain about is that he perceives the tree. It would seem very strange to claim that Ranger cannot perceive the tree merely because he doesn't hold the concept **tree**.

I can say with certainty that my nephew Ethan does not hold the concept **tree**. It certainly seems that he does perceive trees when he is taken outside to play in the front yard. If this is true, it would seem wrong to deny that he perceives the tree simply because he doesn't hold the concept **tree**. The conceptualist view seems to miss the mark when it comes to animals with higher cognitive functions and human infants: they would have to deny that these creatures can perceive at

all. And that denial seems wrong.

V. THE RELATIONAL VIEW

I have been arguing that the conceptualist variant of the Pure Intentional Theory of Perception does not give an adequate description of the phenomenology of perception. What it leaves out is the non-conceptual aspect of perception. There is, however, another variant of the Pure Intentional Theory that seems more promising. The non-conceptual variant of the Pure Intentional Theory holds that perception is exhausted, contra the conceptualist variant, by non-conceptual, intentional content.

Consider the above example of perceiving a tree at differing times and distances. Remember that the tree is represented the same in T1 as it is in T2, but that the respective perceptual experiences were different. The example purports to show that perception is exhausted by intentional content and yet not exhausted by conceptual content. Essentially, this is the position of the Pure Intentional Theorist of the non-conceptual variant. We perceive a scene in virtue of intentional content but that content is non-conceptual.

There is, however, a particular worry that the Pure Intentional Theorist may have if the non-conceptual variant of his theory holds true. The worry is this: claiming that perception has a non-conceptual aspect to it opens the door for sense-data. The worry stems from idea that *something extra* is added to perception if, say, the tree example is correct. In that example, there is an experiential quality to the experience that is over and above any conceptual content. This *something extra* has the potential to disprove the transparency of perception: the idea that we perceive what our representation is a representation *of* and not the representation itself. This would violate one of the central ideas and chief motivations of the Pure Intentional Theory. If the transparency of perception is violated then it seems sense-data will be re-introduced into the picture.

One of the crucial themes of the Pure Intentional Theory is that we perceive material objects in virtue of propositional (or intentional) content: I see *that Nick has a beard*. But presumably, you, too, can see *that Nick has a beard* : two perceivers can share the same content. This is a point of strength for the Pure Intentional Theory in that it allows no room for the idea that two perceivers of the same scene can each have a separate sense-data to their respective perceptual contents

that the other does not share.

Allowing no room for sense-data seems to be one of the motivations for holding a Pure Intentional theory. As mentioned in section III, the notion of sense-data leads to worries about how we could ever justify our belief that we perceive mind-independent objects. The Pure Intentional Theory disarms these worries by holding that there are no sense-data present in perception.

The answer to the above is this: perception has both a non-representational and non-conceptual aspect to it, but it *does not follow* that, perception must therefore also have sense-data that feature in its content. This idea can be recognized if we focus our attention on an aspect of perception that the Intentional Theorist leaves no room for: the perceptual relation between a perceiver and the thing perceived.

Tim Crane gives a clear account of the nature of this relation means when he says, "perceiving an object is an essentially relational state, of which the object perceived is a constituent; so the perception is *constitutively dependent* on the object perceived the phenomenal character of a genuine perception is determined by how the perceived world is."[19] John Campbell gives an even more explicit characterization of this relational view:

> the phenomenal character of your experience, as you look around the room, is constituted by the actual layout of the room itself: which particular objects are there, their intrinsic properties, such as color and shape, and how they are arranged in relation to one another and to you.[20]

So to say that a perceiver is related to the thing he perceives is to say this: the layout of the scene perceived constitutes the phenomenal character of the perception itself. I will call this view the Relational Theory of Perception.

This is quite a different picture from the Pure Intentional view. Consider the previously used example of seeing my bearded friend Nick. On the Relational view, when I perceive Nick, his beard, among other things, is an actual constituent of my perception. The important point is this: the perceiver is related to an *object* on the Relational view and is related to a *representation* on the Pure Intentional view.

The notion that perception is a relation between a perceiver and

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[19]Tim Crane, "Is There a Perceptual Relation?" (*Perceptual Experience*, eds. Hawthorne, John and Gendler, Tamar, 2006, p.140).

[20]John Campbell, *Reference and Consciousness* (Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 116)

an object leaves little room for the view that two perceivers of the same scene do not share the same perceptual content. Suppose I see my friend Nick as I walk with my sister. If my sister and I are in roughly the same area, then the phenomenal character of our respective perceptions of Nick will be the same. This is so because the exact same objects and properties that are causing my perception are also causing her perception. Nick's beard, glasses, straight hair, etc. are the constituents of both her perception and mine. There is no difference in content between my perceptual experience and hers.

It seems that the Relational view still may allow room for a difference in content between my sister and me. For example, my sister will not have the exact same perceptual experience I have since she is in a different spatial location than I am. But the example of differing spatial relations does not open the door for difference in content. This is so because both my perception and hers are transparent and constituted by the same layout of objects. There is a difference in perceptions between us but that difference is simply, and uninterestingly, one of spatial location and not content.

The Relational View also in no way violates the transparency of perception. My sister and I perceive Nick and his beard: we do not perceive *something extra* in addition to this. On the Pure Intentional Theory, perception is transparent in that we perceive what our representation is a representation *of*. On the Relational view, perception is not representational and it need not be in order to preserve the transparency of perception.

It should now be clear why a Relational view of perception is appealing. On this view, perception is, in its primitive state, a *non-conceptual* and *non-representational* relation between a perceiver and an object. No concepts or representations are present during this relation. As argued earlier, this is an important aspect of perception for which the Pure Intentional Theorist leaves no room. Two perceivers of the same scene will share the same phenomenal content. As argued earlier, this is an important aspect of perception for which the Sense-Datum theorist leaves no room.

There are at least two other interconnected reasons why it might be preferable to hold a Relational view of perception: 1) the theory gives a strong account of the difference between perception and hallucination, and 2) the theory gives a stronger account for why we hold the belief in a mind-independent world than does the Pure Intentional Theory.

The Pure Intentional Theory posits that a perception and an in-

distinguishable hallucination share the same intentional content. The difference between the two lies in the fact that the perception is actually caused by an object, whereas the hallucination is not. But this explanation cannot be so on the Relational view. If an object is an actual textitconstituent of a perception, then there can be no indistinguishable hallucination to play the same constitutive role. This is so because there is no such object present when one hallucinates: there is simply no object there to constitute the phenomenal content of your experience during a hallucination.

It is certainly true that both a perception and a hallucination can depict the same scene, but what makes this fact so is not shared intentional content. When I see Nick's beard, I am either having a perception of the beard or am hallucinating the beard. [21] On this view, a perception and a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination are not mental states of the same kind. On the Intentional view, both are of the same mental kind in that both are represented. On the Relational view, perceptions are relational, while hallucinations are represented; they are simply not mental states of the same kind.

The Relational view has not sacrificed what we have sought to preserve: namely, the commonality between perceptions and subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations. Yet the theory also preserves something that the Pure Intentional Theory has no room for, and that is the intuitive notion of the relation between a perceiver and the object perceived. This view leads to my final point: that the Pure Intentional Theory makes it difficult to see how we have a belief in a mind-independent world.

Consider that hallucinations are mental images, and if a perception and hallucination are of the same mental kind, as they are on the Pure Intentional Theory, it would follow that perceptions are also mental images. On the Pure Intentional view, perception is dependent on the mental image of the perceiver and this makes it difficult to justify our belief in a mind-independent world in that we would have to extract that belief from mind-dependent images. And while this is not to say that the Pure Intentional Theory leaves room for a kind of Idealism, it does bring out how the theory drives a wedge between mind and world.

There is no such wedge on the Relational view. It is easier to see how we would have a belief in a mind-independent world if objects in that very world were actual constituents of our perceptual experiences.

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[21] This is why what I call the Relational view is often called the Disjunctive theory. As seen here, it gives a disjunctive analysis of perception.

It would be our experiences themselves that provide for this belief, and not representations of those experiences. This seems to be a most intuitive idea and another important reason why a Relational view of perception is so appealing.

I have discussed three different theories of perception in this essay: the Sense-Datum Theory, the Pure Intentional Theory and the Relational Theory. I argued that the Intentional Theory provides a much stronger account of the phenomenology of perception than the Sense-Datum theory but that it suffers from a tendency to over-intellectualize perception. I concluded that the Relational theory is most desirable in that it (1) argues for the non-conceptual aspect of perception, (2) avoids the idea of sense-data by preserving the transparency of perception and (3) accounts for the intuitive idea that perception is a relation between the perceiver and the layout of the scene perceived.

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DAVID J. FRIEDELL

Brandom's Account of Singular Terms

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but *names* will never hurt me.

Unknown

INTRODUCTION[1]

In *Making it Explicit*, Robert Brandom offers a theory of meaning that is a version of "inferentialism."[1] As its name suggests, inferentialism is the view that meaning ought to be explained in terms of inference. It is a criterion of adequacy for any theory of meaning, inferentialist or not, that it provide an account of singular terms. Brandom has his own reasons for including such an account (365-366); this paper focuses not on these reasons but on the account itself. That is, how he explains what singular terms *are*.

A couple of preliminary points are in store: first, although it is commonly thought that singular terms are expressions that refer, or purport to refer, to particular objects, Brandom thinks that this fact should be used to explain the notion of an *object* rather than the notion of a *singular term* (360). Second, he thinks that proper names (e.g., 'Aristotle') and definite descriptions (e.g., 'the tree outside of my window') are both kinds of singular terms. In this way, he rejects a Russellian account of definite descriptions (and any other account on which definite descriptions are not singular terms).[2] These are both controversial matters that I will not discuss at length. However, for the purposes of this paper, it is important to keep in mind that he rejects a Russellian account of definite descriptions as well as the view that singular terms ought to be explained in terms of reference to particular objects. I will thereby grant him both of these points but leave open the possibility that they could be shown elsewhere to be incorrect, or correct.

The central aims of this paper are two-fold: exegesis (part 1) and criticism (part 2). I spend most of part 1 explaining the notions that are needed to spell out Brandom's account of singular terms. I believe that the exegesis offered here is clearer than his own presentation, largely because I do not invoke what he calls "simple material substitution inferential commitments" or "SMISCs."[3] Instead, I make heavy

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[1] I am very grateful to John MacFarlane for helping me with this paper. An earlier version was written for his 2006 seminar on *Making it Explicit*. I would like to thank Nicholas Riggle, my fellow undergraduate, for all of his very helpful comments on previous drafts, and Robert Brandom for generously meeting to discuss some of my ideas.

[1] Unless stated otherwise, all citations in this paper are from Robert Brandom. (1994). *Making it Explicit*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

[2] Bertrand Russell thinks that definite descriptions are not singular terms but quantifiers. See Russell 1905.

[3] For Brandom's discussion of SMISCs see pp. 370-376.

use of his notion of *material involvement* (sec. 1.3). I begin Part 2 by explaining some of the reasons why his account might seem plausible (sec. 2.1). Next, I continue this discussion by considering some futile objections (sec. 2.2). Lastly, I discuss an original objection and argue that it pressures him to reject a view that he seems to endorse, namely, the view that definite descriptions always carry existential import (sec. 2.3).

1

1.1 Substitution and the Syntactic Criterion

Brandom's account of singular terms includes a syntactic criterion and a semantic criterion. He takes them to be independently necessary and jointly sufficient for an expression to be a singular term. We begin with his notion of *substitution* and then use it to spell out the syntactic criterion.

For Brandom, any substitution involves three expressions with distinct substitutional roles: the component expression being "substituted for," the compound expression being "substituted in," and the shared expression that is a "substitution-frame" (368). For example:

(1) Socrates is bald.
    _____

    Aristotle is bald.

Here, 'Socrates' is *substituted for*; that is, we substitute another component expression *for* it ('Aristotle'). 'Socrates is bald' is *substituted in*; that is, the substitution of 'Aristotle' for 'Socrates' takes place *in* that sentence, which is a compound expression. Lastly, 'α is bald'[4] is a *substitution-frame*: an incomplete expression, common to both lines of a substitution, consisting of a function with at least one argument place.[5]

One might hold, in opposition to Brandom, that substitution-frames can be substituted for. For instance, one might think that, in (2), the substitution-frame 'α is a philosopher' is substituted for the frame 'α is bald':

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[4]As a matter of convention, Brandom represents substitution-frames with the help of Greek letters such as α and so will I in this paper.

[5]It might help the reader to consider how Frege characterizes "sentence-frames." See Dummett 1981 (Chapter 2).

(2) Socrates is bald.
   _____

   Socrates is a philosopher.

However, Brandom claims that substitution-frames are not substituted
for but are instead "replaced" (369). In support of this, he says: "A
sentence frame is not a prior constituent of a sentence...but a prod-
uct of analyzing it" (369). That is, substitution-frames are formed
via "omission";[6] in (2), 'α is bald' can be formed only by omitting
'Socrates'. Since 'α is bald' does not exist until we first omit another
expression, we cannot omit it and insert 'α is a philosopher' in the same
way that we can simply omit 'Socrates' and insert 'Aristotle'.

   Now we can understand Brandom's syntactic criterion.

   THE SYNTACTIC CRITERION: An expression is a singular
   term only if it can be substituted for.

Predicates are taken to be substitution-frames (that can be replaced).
We now look at the notions that are needed to spell out the semantic
criterion. This will take us through section 1.4.

1.2 SUBSTITUTION-INFERENCES AND SYNTACTIC KINDS

In harmony with inferentialism, Brandom's semantic criterion relies on
what he takes to be an inferential difference between singular terms
and predicates. More specifically, he focuses on the roles of these ex-
pressions in "substitution-inferences." These are inferences that contain
one premise and one conclusion, such that the conclusion results from
an expression in the premise being substituted for, or replaced by, an
expression of the *same syntactic kind* (370). Two expressions are of
the same syntactic kind iff no well-formed sentence that contains one
of them can be turned into something that is not a well-formed sen-
tence by having the contained one substituted for, or replaced by, the
other one (368). Brandom seems to hold that it follows from this that
proper names and definite descriptions are of the same syntactic kind–
and that all substitution-frames with one argument place (one-place
predicates) are of the same syntactic kind. I will assume this as well.[7]

   Examples (3) and (4), then, are both substitution-inferences:

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[6]I borrow this term from Dummett.

[7]However, perhaps proper names and definite descriptions are not of the same
syntactic kind. Thanks to John MacFarlane for suggesting that 'the celebrated
astronaut John Glenn ran for president' is a well-formed sentence and that 'the
celebrated astronaut the first man to orbit the earth ran for president' is not. If

(3) Hitchcock is British.
———————————

The director of *Psycho* is British.

(4) Frank is British.
———————————

Frank is European.

(3)'s conclusion results from substituting the definite description 'the director of *Psycho*' for the proper name 'Hitchcock', and (4)'s conclusion results from replacing the substitution-frame 'α is British' with 'α is European'. (5), however, is *not* a substitution-inference:

(5) Jim is running.
———————————

It is not the case that Todd is running.

Although the conclusion results from replacing 'Jim' with 'it is not the case that Todd', these two expressions are not of the same syntactic kind. For, some well-formed sentences that contain one of these expressions can be changed into something that is not a well-formed sentence by replacing the contained expression with the other one; e.g., 'Sarah likes Jim' is a well-formed sentence, but 'Sarah likes it is not the case that Todd' is not.

1.3 INFERENTIAL CORRECTNESS AND MATERIAL INVOLVEMENT

Brandom's semantic criterion also appeals to a notion of *material involvement*, which, in turn, relies on a notion of *inferential correctness*. Thus, we will first look at the latter and then use it to spell out the former.

   Although unclear on the matter, Brandom hints that the relevant notion of *inferential correctness* involves "status-preservation" (370). This sort of talk echoes Brandom's discussion of "scorekeeping practices" that are required for language and which involve two "deontic statuses": "commitment" and "entitlement." Brandom explains these

———————————

so, then 'John Glenn' and 'the first man to orbit the earth' are not of the same syntactic kind, even though they are codenoting! Since this matter bears not on what Brandom takes to be the essence of a singular term but merely on whether or not all singular terms are of the same syntactic kind, I will for simplicity's sake set aside this worry and assume, as I believe that Brandom does, that definite descriptions and singular terms are of the same syntactic kind.

statuses with a "phenomenal explanation" according to which someone is committed or entitled in virtue of being taken and treated by scorekeepers as having such a status (166). Still, it helps to think of entitlement as being very similar to epistemic justification. Commitment cannot be as easily characterized. It is similar to belief, but only in a loose sense, according to which 'Jim believes the axioms of arithmetic' implies 'Jim believes that $114 + 51 = 165$'.[8]

Brandom focuses on three types of inferential correctness that involve commitment and entitlement: incompatibility entailment, commitment preservation,and entitlement preservation. An inference of the form $A \vdash B$ is *incompatibility-entailing* iff everything that is incompatible with B is incompatible with A, where it is understood that two propositions are incompatible iff commitment to one precludes entitlement to the other. An inference of the form $A \vdash B$ is *commitment-preserving* iff it is the case that, if someone is committed to A, then she is committed to B. It is *entitlement-preserving* iff, if someone is entitled to A, then she is entitled to B (as long as there are no incompatible commitments).

It will help to look at the following paradigmatic examples, chosen by Brandom:

(6) Wulf is an animal.
   _____
   Wulf is a mammal.

(7) Benjamin Franklin invented bifocals.
   _____
   The first postmaster general of the United States invented bifocals.

(8) This is a dry, well-made match.
   _____
   It will light if struck.[9]

(6) is incompatibility-entailing, commitment-preserving, and entitlement-preserving. (7) requires a more nuanced analysis: Brandom says of (7) that "in the appropriate context, commitment to the premise

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[8]It might also help the reader to consider that the fundamental thing that triggers sanctions in Brandom's scorekeeping model is being committed to a proposition without being entitled to that proposition (178-180).

[9]These examples are from Making it Explicit pages 160, 370, and 169, respectively.

involves commitment to the conclusion" (370). The appropriate context, here, is one in which relevant scorekeepers take Benjamin Franklin to be the first postmaster general of the United States. In this context, (7) will count as commitment-preserving (as well as entitlement-preserving). (7) is not incompatibility-entailing, because some things are incompatible with the conclusion but compatible with the premise; e.g., 'The first postmaster general of the United States was Alexander Hamilton, who never invented anything'. (8) is entitlement-preserving but neither incompatibility-entailing nor commitment-preserving. For, there are cases in which a dry, well-made match will not light if struck; e.g., on the Moon. So some things are incompatible with the conclusion and compatible with the premise and commitment to the premise does not entail commitment to the conclusion.

It is fair for us to assume that, for Brandom, an inference is correct iff it is incompatibility entailing, commitment-preserving, or entitlement-preserving—otherwise it is incorrect. Even if this is inaccurate, it is adequate for our goal of understanding *material involvement*. Although he briefly introduces this notion without clearly explaining it (370), the following definition attempts to flesh it out so that the notion of a SMSIC is not needed for our purposes:

> THE DEFINITION OF MATERIAL INVOLVEMENT: an expression p is materially involved in an inference A iff there is an expression of the same syntactic kind that can replace, or be substituted for, all instances of p, resulting in a new inference A′, such that the following two conditions are satisfied:
>
> (i) either A is correct and A′ is incorrect or A is incorrect and A′ is correct.
> (ii) A′ does not involve an intensional context that is not present in A.

It will help to look at some examples. Consider (3) again:

(3) Hitchcock is British.
    _____
    The director of *Psycho* is British.

Here, 'α is British' is not materially involved, because (3) is correct (commitment and entitlement-preserving), assuming that relevant scorekeepers take Hitchcock to be the director of *Psycho*, and there are no

substitution-frames that can replace 'α is British' to produce an incorrect inference, except for frames that introduce an intensional context. For instance, if we replace 'α is British' with 'α is a good director' or 'α is mysterious' or 'α is overweight' or even 'it is not the case that α is American', the resulting inference is still correct. Accordingly, the following are both correct (commitment and entitlement-preserving) inferences:

(10) Hitchcock is a good director.
————————————
The director of *Psycho* is a good director.

(11) It is not the case that Hitchcock is American.
————————————
It is not the case that the director of *Psycho* is American.

The only way to produce an incorrect inference is to replace 'α is British' with a substitution-frame that introduces an intensional context; e.g., 'Sarah knows that α is a good director'. The resulting incorrect inference is:

(12) Sarah knows that Hitchcock is a good director.
————————————
Sarah knows that the director of *Psycho* is a good director.

Other ways of producing incorrect inferences rely on intensional substitution-frames like 'Sarah said that α is a good director' and 'Sarah believes that α is a good director'. But with condition (ii) in place, these kinds of frames are blocked from consideration, and we can safely say that 'α is British' is not materially involved in (3).

Conversely, 'Hitchcock' and 'the director of *Psycho*' are materially involved in (3), because if we substitute, say, 'Spielberg' for either of them (but not both), then the resulting inference is incorrect, and no intensional context is introduced—satisfying conditions (i) and (ii).

It is worth noting that one might think that condition (ii) is a circular way of dealing with a problem that intensionality poses for Brandom. On the one hand, omitting condition (ii) entails that 'α is British' counts as materially involved in (3)—something which Brandom surely does not want. On the other hand, including condition (ii) introduces a notion of an *intensional context*. And a common way of characterizing intensional contexts is to say something like the following: a sentence A has an intensional context iff an expression can be

substituted for one in A that refers to, or applies to, the same object(s), resulting in a sentence B, such that the inference A ⊢ B is incorrect.[10] But this presupposes a notion of an *object*, which Brandom intends his account of singular terms to explain in the first place. He opens himself to a similar worry via his discussion of "primary occurrence" and "secondary occurrence"—the occurrences of expressions in extensional and intensional contexts, respectively (373-374). He explains these two types of occurrence in terms of SMSICs but also appeals to them in order to explain SMSICs. In this way, Brandom deals with intensionality by having the notions of a SMSIC and *primary occurrence* work together to play the role of an unexplained explainer. In my presentation, the only difference is that a notion of an *intensional context* plays this role.

Let's look at another example to further clarify the notion of *material involvement*:

(13) Joe is French.
      ————————————
      Joe is European.

'Joe' is not materially involved in (13), because (13) is correct, and we cannot make it incorrect by substituting for 'Joe' an expression of the same syntactic kind. Conversely, the substitution-frames 'α is French' and 'α is European' are both materially involved, because replacing either of them (but not both) with, say, 'α is three years old' results in an incorrect inference without introducing an intensional context, thereby satisfying conditions (i) and (ii).

1.4 Symmetry, Separation, Substitution-pairs, and the Semantic Criterion

Brandom's semantic criterion also relies on a notion of *inferential symmetry*. An inference A ⊢ B is symmetric iff it and B ⊢ A are either both correct or both incorrect. Otherwise, it is asymmetric. For instance:

(14) Jim is a son.
      ————————————
      Jim is a male offspring.

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[10]A similar characterization of intensionality is offered in Soames 2003 (p. 357). However, Soames' characterization is in terms of sentential truth rather than inferential correctness.

(15) This is red.

     ——————————

     This is colored.

(14) is symmetric, for it is correct, and so is its converse: 'Jim is a male child ⊢ Jim is a son'. (15) is asymmetric, for it is correct, but its converse ('This is colored ⊢ This is red') is not.

There are two final notions that are needed to understand the semantic criterion: *separation* and *substitution-pair* (my terminology). *Separation* is simple: an expression in an inference is separate from another in the same inference iff neither expression contains the other. For instance, in 'Hesperus is bright ⊢ Phosphorous is bright', 'Hesperus' is separate from 'α is bright', 'Phosphorous', and 'Phosphorous is bright' but not from 'Hesperus is bright'. The notion of a substitution-pair is simple, too. A substitution-pair for a given substitution-inference is a pair of expressions, such that one is substituted for, or replaced by, the other. Thus, the substitution-pair for 'Clemens is a writer ⊢ Twain is a writer' consists of 'Clemens' and 'Twain'.

We can now understand Brandom's semantic criterion for singular terms.

> THE SEMANTIC CRITERION: An expression is a singular term only if all substitution-inferences that have a substitution pair that consists of it and another expression, such that nothing separate from these two expressions is materially involved, are symmetric.

As stated in section 1.1, Brandom takes the syntactic and semantic criteria to be independently necessary and jointly sufficient for an expression to be a singular term. Thus, he takes an expression to be a singular term iff (a) it can be substituted for, and (b) all substitution-inferences that have a substitution-pair that consists of it and another expression, such that nothing separate from these two expressions is materially involved, are symmetric. This position will be critiqued in part 2.

2

2.1 THE APPEAL OF BRANDOM'S ACCOUNT

In part 1, I presented Brandom's account of singular terms but excluded his notion of a SMSIC. In its place, I included (and fleshed out)

his notion of *material involvement*. Some might prefer a Brandomian presentation that mentions SMSICs. Either way, the criticism I offer in part 2 can be modified to deal directly with such a presentation.

We will take Brandom's account to under-generate if it does not count at least one singular term as a singular term. We will take it to over-generate if it counts at least one expression as a singular term that is not a singular term. I will try to show here why his account might appear to neither under-generate nor over-generate. It should be kept in mind that we are granting that proper names and definite descriptions are singular terms.

Let's look first at under-generation. It seems obvious that all singular terms can be substituted for. So we will suppose that they all satisfy the syntactic criterion. It is much harder to see if they all satisfy the *semantic* criterion, but considering examples like (16)-(19) might make it seem as if they do.

(16) Hesperus is bright.
      _____

      Phosphorous is bright.

(17) Hesperus is beautiful.
      _____

      The tree outside my window is beautiful.

(18) Hitchcock is mysterious.
      _____

      The director of *The Birds* is mysterious.

(19) The director of *Psycho* is British.
      _____

      The director of *The Birds* is British.

All of these inferences have a substitution-pair that consists of two singular terms. (16)'s pair consists of 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorous'; (17)'s pair consists of 'Hesperus' and 'the tree outside my window'; (18)'s pair consists of 'Hitchcock' and 'the director of *The Birds*'; (19)'s pair consists of 'the director of *Psycho*' and 'the director of *The Birds*'. Furthermore, none of these inferences materially involves anything that is separate from these substitution-pairs. And all of the inferences are symmetric; (16) is correct both ways, as long as relevant scorekeepers take Hesperus to be Phosphorous; (17) is incorrect both ways, as long as relevant scorekeepers take Hesperus not to be the tree outside my

window; (18) is correct both ways, as long as relevant scorekeepers take Hitchcock to be the director of *The Birds*; (19) is correct both ways, as long as relevant scorekeepers take the director of *Psycho* to be the director of *The Birds*. Thus, considering these examples (and other similar examples) might make it seem as though whenever a singular term is part of a substitution-pair for a substitution-inference, such that nothing separate from that pair is materially involved, the inference is *symmetric*—in accordance with the semantic criterion. Thus, it should be intuitive why it might seem that all singular terms (a) satisfy the syntactic and semantic criteria, and (b) therefore count as singular terms on Brandom's account. This issue will be revisited in sections 2.2 and 2.3, but for now we move onto over-generation.

In order for Brandom's account to over-generate, it would have to count as a singular term at least one expression that is not one. I will discuss here only predicates. His account rightly entails that all predicates are not singular terms. This is not only because predicates are taken to be substitution-frames that cannot be substituted for, meaning that they fail the syntactic criterion, but also because they fail the *semantic* criterion. This becomes intuitive once we look at examples such as following:

(20) This is blue.
_____
This is colored.

(21) Sally is tall.
_____
Sally is extended.

(20) and (21) are both *a*symmetric, because they are both correct and both of their converses are incorrect. Moreover, (20) does not materially involve 'this', which is the only expression separate from the substitution-pair consisting of 'α is blue' and 'α is colored', whereas (21) does not materially involve 'Sally', which is the only expression separate from the pair consisting of 'α is tall' and 'α is extended'. Thus, these predicates fail the semantic criterion; for, according to it, an expression is a singular term only if all substitution-inferences that have a substitution-pair that consists of it and another expression, such that nothing separate from these two expressions is materially involved, are *symmetric*.

More importantly, for any predicate of the form 'α is F', we can invoke a predicate of the form 'α is F or G', such that there is an

asymmetric substitution-inference that (a) has a substitution-pair consisting of these two predicates, and (b) does not materially involve anything separate from them. For instance, following this strategy, it is fairly easy to produce an *asymmetric* substitution-inference with a substitution-pair of 'α is bald' and another predicate, such that nothing separate from these two expressions is materially involved. (22) is such an asymmetric inference:

(22) Frank is bald.
      _____

      Frank is bald or thin.

For these reasons, predicates do not count as singular terms on Brandom's account.[11]

2.2 SOME UNSUCCESSFUL OBJECTIONS TO BRANDOM'S ACCOUNT

The following would be a counterexample to the semantic criterion: an *asymmetric* substitution-inference that has a substitution-pair consisting of at least one singular term, such that nothing separate from this pair is materially involved. I will now discuss two objections that attempt, but fail, to produce such a counterexample. This ought to further clarify why it might seem that Brandom account does not undergenerate. The first objection involves (23):

(23) Jim is tall.
      _____

      An object is tall.

_____

[11]It remains a question as to why sentences do not count as singular terms on Brandom's account. This becomes salient when one considers that (a) Brandom acknowledges that sentences can be substituted for in embedded contexts (369), and (b) he argues that all expressions that can be substituted for satisfy the semantic criterion (see section 2.3 of this paper). Brandom suggests an answer when he claims that singular terms are "essentially subsentential" (400). One interpretation is that this means that singular terms can have semantic content only as sentence-parts. Brandom states that sentences, on the other hand, can have semantic content on their ownhen their utterance "has the significance of performing a speech act of one of the fundamental kinds" (367). Perhaps, then, his account really has three criteria: the syntactic criterion, the semantic criterion, and what can be called 'the essentially subsentential criterion'. However, since I do not adequately understand the nuances of Brandom's position on this matter, I have chosen to set aside this issue. Let it suffice that the ultimate explanation of why sentences do not count as singular terms on Brandom's account, assuming that there is such an explanation, has no bearing on the central objection of this paper, outlined in section 2.3.

(23) is asymmetric; it is correct, and its converse is not. One might think that it is a substitution-inference with a substitution-pair consisting of a singular term ('Jim') and another expression ('an object') and that it does not materially involve any expression separate from this pair. But this is not so for two reasons. First, 'α is tall', which is separate from 'Jim' and 'an object', is materially involved; if we replace it with 'it is not the case that α is tall', then we get an incorrect inference: 'it is not the case that Jim is tall $\vdash$ it is not the case that an object is tall'. Second, 'an object' and 'Jim' are not of the same syntactic kind, because 'I see an object of great importance' is a well-formed sentence, but 'I see Jim of great importance' is not. Thus, (23) is not even a substitution-inference. For these reasons, (23) fails to show that there is an asymmetric substitution-inference that (a) has a substitution-pair consisting of at least one singular term, and (b) does not materially involve anything separate from this pair.

We borrow our second fruitless objection from Brandom. He considers the following (388):

(24) The skinniest person in the room can't fit through the narrowest door.
————————————
The fattest person in the room can't fit through the narrowest door.

(24) is asymmetric; it is correct, and its converse is not. It has a substitution-pair consisting of two singular terms: 'the skinniest person in the room' and 'the fattest person in the room'. But it, too, poses no threat to Brandom. Speaking generally about examples like this one, he says:

> "These examples clearly turn on interactions between the predicates used to form definite descriptions and those involved in the sentence frame in which the description is embedded. Just by their nature, such asymmetries do not generalize across sentence frames generally and so have no systematic significance of the sort appealed to in the substitutional account of the difference between singular terms and predicates" (388).

This point can be put more clearly by invoking material involvement: 'α can't fit through the narrowest door' is materially involved in (24), because (24) is correct and becomes incorrect if 'α can't fit through the

narrowest door' is replaced with, say, 'α is kind'. Thus, since 'α can't fit through the narrowest door' is materially involved and is separate from both 'the skinniest person in the room' and 'the fattest person in the room', (24) fails to show that there is an asymmetric substitution-inference that has a substitution-pair consisting of at least one singular term, *such that nothing separate from this pair is materially involved.*

2.3 Another Objection to Brandom's Account

This section covers another attempt to produce the sort of counterexample discussed in 2.2. Unlike the previous attempts, however, this one poses a problem for Brandom. I will argue that it pressures him to reject the view that definite descriptions always carry existential import.

Suppose that there is a barn, henceforth referred to as 'the barn', and that all relevant scorekeepers are agnostic as to how many men the barn contains. That is, they have no idea how many men are in the barn. With this in mind, consider the following substitution-inference:

(25) The man in the barn is happy.
────────────────

The tallest man in the barn is happy.

(25) is a counterexample to Brandom's account if the following two conditions hold:

(i) It is asymmetric.

(ii) It does not materially involve any expression separate from both 'the man in the barn' and 'the tallest man in the barn', which constitute a substitution-pair of singular terms.

Condition (i) holds; (25) is correct, but its converse is incorrect. 'The man in the barn is happy' entails 'there is only one man in the barn, and he is happy'.[12] If there were only one man in the barn, then he would have to be the tallest (because there could be nobody taller or of equal height). Thus, 'the man in the barn is happy' entails 'the tallest man in the barn is happy'. But 'the tallest man in the barn is happy' does not entail 'the man in the barn is happy', because the former, unlike the latter, leaves open the possibility of there being more

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[12]For this discussion, a statement of the form 'A entails B' means that A ⊢ B is correct.

than one man in the barn. Thus, (25) is asymmetric, and condition (i) holds.[13]

Although harder to tell, it might seem that condition (ii) holds. With little reflection, we can see that it holds unless 'α is happy' is materially involved—that is, unless 'α is happy' can be replaced by a non-intensional substitution-frame, resulting in an incorrect inference. Intuitively, (25) remains correct when 'α is happy' is replaced by most frames; e.g., 'α is sad', 'α laughs', etc. It might seem that the only exceptions are *intensional* frames, such as 'Jim said that α is sad' and 'Jim believes that α laughs'. If so, then 'α is happy' is not materially involved. Thus, it might seem that condition (ii) holds and that (25) is a counterexample to Brandom's account.

Brandom seems to overlook examples that are like (25). Still, how he might respond can be gauged by looking at his argument that aims to show that all expressions that can be substituted for satisfy the semantic criterion (378–381). Roughly put, he supposes that there is an asymmetric substitution-inference Pa ⊢ Pb, such that Pa ⊢ Pb is correct and Pb ⊢ Pa is incorrect. (P is a substitution-frame; a and b are expressions that can be substituted for.) He then attempts to show that P is materially involved, by showing that there are non-intensional substitution-frames that can replace P to produce an incorrect inference. He discusses two types of frames that fit this description: those that involve negation, and those that involve a conditional. For instance, if we replace P with ¬P, then we get ¬Pa ⊢ ¬Pb; and since Pb ⊢ Pa is incorrect, this inference must also be incorrect, according to Brandom. Additionally, if we replace P with a frame that results in $(Pa \rightarrow p) \vdash (Pb \rightarrow p)$[14], then this, too, must be incorrect, according to him. Thus, Brandom is confident that, by invoking frames that involve either negation or a conditional, he can show that any frame is materially involved in an asymmetric substitution-inference with a substitution-pair consisting of singular terms.

Can Brandom employ this general strategy to show that 'α is happy' is materially involved in (25), thereby showing that condition (ii) does not hold? That is, can he show that 'α is happy' can be replaced by a non-intensional substitution-frame that involves negation or a conditional, resulting in an incorrect inference? Let's first consider negation

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[13]Note that (25) is still asymmetric if we suppose that the relevant scorekeepers take there to be more than one man in the barn. What is important is that we do not suppose that they take there to be only one man in the barn, because then they would take the tallest man to be the only man—and (25) would be symmetric.

[14]"p" is a propositional variable

and see what happens if 'α is happy' is replaced by 'it is not the case that α is happy', resulting in (25a):

(25a) It is not the case that the man in the barn is happy.

━━━━━━━━━━━━━

It is not the case that the tallest man in the barn is happy.

My intuition is that (25a) is correct; I believe that its premise entails 'there is only one man in the barn, and he is not happy'. And this undeniably entails the conclusion of (25a). Still, Brandom might argue that (25a) is incorrect. This can be so only if its premise entails not 'there is only one man in the barn, and he is not happy' but merely the following disjunction:

> D: *Either* there is only one man in the barn, and he is not happy *or* it is not the case that there is only one man in the barn.

There are many possible scenarios in which (a) there is more than one man in the barn (satisfying D's second disjunct, thereby making D true), and (b) there is a tallest man in the barn, and he is happy (making the conclusion of (25a) false). Thus, if the premise of (25a) entails merely D, then (25a) is incorrect.[15]

In order for Brandom to hold that the premise of (25a) entails not 'there is only man in the barn, and he is not happy' but merely D, he must reject the following principle:

> EI: All definite descriptions carry existential import. In other words, a proposition that contains a definite description of the form 'the F' entails 'the F exists'.

What I have said about 'it is not the case that α is happy' is true for other replacements of 'α is happy' in (25) that involve negation; e.g., 'it is not the case that α is shy' and 'it is not the case that α runs'. In each case the resulting inference is incorrect only if its premise, of the form 'it is not the case that the man in the barn is F', does not entail a proposition of the form 'there is only one man in the barn, and he is not F'. And this is so only if EI is wrong.

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[15]Russellians would allow that merely D is entailed, for they think that 'it is not the case that the man in barn is happy' is ambiguous due to a kind of scope-ambiguity. It can mean either 'Not: (the x: x is a man in the barn)(x is happy)' or '(the x: x is a man in the barn)(Not: x is happy)'. This explanation seems unavailable to Brandom, given that he takes definite descriptions to be singular terms.

Having covered negation, let us consider replacing 'α is happy' with a substitution-frame that contains a conditional. Replacing it with 'if α is happy, then it is sunny' results in (25b):

(25b) If the man in the barn is happy, then it is sunny.
       _____

       If the tallest man in the barn is happy, then it is sunny.

Similar to (25a), whether or not (25b) is incorrect boils down to whether or not its premise entails 'there is only one man in the barn'. If so, then it is correct. If not, then it is incorrect. And, in order for Brandom to maintain that the premise of (25b) does not entail that there is only man in the barn—and thus that (25b) is incorrect—he must reject EI.

What I have said about 'if α is happy, then it is sunny' is true for other replacements of 'α is happy' in (25) that involve a conditional; e.g., 'if α is rich, then the stock market is doing well' and 'if α is healthy, then he exercises'. In each case, the resulting inference will be incorrect only if its premise, of the form 'if the man in the barn is G, then p', does not entail 'there is only one man in the barn'. And this can be so only if EI is wrong.

It should be noted that it would be telling for Brandom to reject EI, because, in chapter 7 of *Making it Explicit*, his discussion of Frege suggests that he endorses it. Although inexplicit, he seems to agree with Frege that being committed to a proposition that contains a definite description of the form 'the F' entails two commitments: (1) an existential commitment—i.e., a commitment to there existing an F, and (2) a uniqueness commitment.e., a commitment to there being only one F (432-434). It seems, therefore, that Brandom actually endorses EI.

To bring my argument all together: (25) is a counterexample to Brandom's account, unless 'α is happy' is materially involved in (25). This is so only if there is a non-intensional substitution-frame that can replace 'α is happy' to make an incorrect inference. There is a frame of this sort that involves negation or a conditional only if EI is wrong. Thus, assuming that the only possible candidates are frames that involve negation or a conditional (and I see no other possibility), Brandom can maintain that (25) is not a counterexample only if he rejects EI (which he seems to endorse).

At this point, I will introduce two examples that are similar to (25):

(26) The February 29th of the rainiest year in history is a Monday.
       _____

The day before March 1st of the rainiest year in history is a Monday.

(27) The 100th person in line is funny.

─────────────

The person in line whose numerical position is closer to 100 than is the numerical position of any other person in line is funny.

These are a little more complex than (25), but they serve the same general purpose. The main idea with (26) is that it is asymmetric, if relevant scorekeepers have no idea whether or not the rainiest year in history is a leap-year. Its premise entails its conclusion, simply because any February 29th of any year must also be the day before March 1st of that year. But the conclusion does not entail the premise, because if the rainiest year in history is not a leap-year, then the day before March 1st of that year is a February 28th. Likewise, (27) is asymmetric, if relevant scorekeepers have no idea how many people are in line. Its premise entails its conclusion, because its premise entails that there is a 100th person in line—and if that were so, then that person's numerical position would be closer to 100 than would be the numerical position of anyone else. But the conclusion does not entail the premise, because if there were, say, only 40 people in line, then the 40th person would have a numerical position that is closer to 100 than is the numerical position of anyone else. Brandom might respond to (26) and (27) by replacing their respective substitution-frames with ones that employ either negation or a conditional. Nevertheless, unless he rejects EI, he must accept that (26) and (27) are counterexamples.

Conclusion

I have discussed Brandom's account of singular terms as involving the claim that an expression is a singular term iff (a) it can be substituted for, and (b) all substitution-inferences that have a substitution-pair that consists of it and another expression, such that nothing separate from these two expressions is materially involved, are symmetric. I have outlined some of the reasons why his account might appear to neither over nor under-generate, covered some futile objections, and raised an objection that pressures him to reject EI: the view that definite descriptions always carry existential import.

I will close by briefly sketching another available response for Brandom. Rather than rejecting EI, he could bite the bullet and accept that

(25), (26), and (27) are counterexamples to his account. In doing so, he could allow for a special class of singular terms that would include expressions such as 'the tallest man in the barn', 'the February 29th of the rainiest year in history', and 'the 100th person in line'. These differ from "unspecial" definite descriptions such as 'the man in the barn' and 'the tree outside my window' in that they appeal to a kind of ordering, whether it be height-ordering, the ordering of the days on a calendar, or a numerical kind of ordering. While conceding that this special class of definite descriptions does not cohere with his account, perhaps Brandom could revise his account so that all other singular terms do.[16]

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[16]This response was suggested to me by Brandom himself with one important difference: he suggested that 'the tallest man in the barn' be excluded from this special class of singular terms, as he felt that it was more problematic than 'the February $29^{t}h$ of the rainiest year in history' and 'the 100th person in line'. It seems plausible to me, however, to group 'the tallest man in the barn' with the other two on the basis that all three appeal to some kind of ordering. Perhaps Brandom's hesitance is related to the fact that, while (26) and (27) rely on facts about the calendar and facts about our system of numbers, (25) relies merely on the meaning of the word 'tallest'.

Garson Leder

The Measurement Problem

Out yonder there was this huge world, which exists independently of us human beings and which stands before us like a great, eternal riddle, at least partially accessible to our inspection.

Albert Einstein

Introduction

At the moment, Quantum Mechanics is the dominant theory of the subatomic world. However, the act of quantum measurement results in an a significant breakdown between the theory and human experience. The measurement problem follows as such: the governing dynamics of quantum mechanics predicts that an electron should be in a "superposition" of indefinite position; however, whenever electrons (or any subatomic particles) are measured, they are found to be in fixed, definite positions. Does this apparent contradiction imply that quantum mechanics (QM) is missing some hidden variable which would explain this discrepancy, or are there two governing laws– one for when a particle is not being observed, another for when it is? Another question stemming from this is: is micro-measurement even possible? Does the act of measurement gauge objective properties of the external world, or does it in fact cause the results? In this paper, I will argue that, accepting the dynamics of quantum mechanics, objective micro-measurement is not possible; and that furthermore, it is meaningless. I will also argue that QM should be used as an instrument to produce results, not as a descriptive theory of how the universe objectively *is*.

Measurement

It is important, first, to define what we mean by 'measurement'. Measurement will be defined for the purposes of this paper as the act of obtaining accurate data of what something objectively is, independent of the act of observation. To count as a measurement, then, there must be an independent reality to observe. Here, I will use the Einstein, Podolsky, and Rosen definition of *real*. They state:

> "If, without in any way disturbing a system, we can predict with certainty (i.e., with probability equal to unity) the value of a physical quantity, then there exists an element of physical reality corresponding to this physical quantity." [EPR 138]

Under this definition an enterprise would not be considered a measurement if the act of measuring causes, or interferes with, any intrinsic or essential property of the thing being measured, nor would it be a measurement if the result did not give an objective account of the thing being measured. I believe this limited definition is necessary if the point of measurement is to learn about how the subatomic world *is*, independent of interference or observation.

The Measurement Problem

As stated, the dynamics of QM predicts that the outcome of any sub-atomic measurement should be an indefinite "superposition". This notion of superposition will be introduced here in relation to electron spin properties. It is the case that electrons have opposing spin properties along axes in every possible direction. When we measure the spin along a particular axis (call it axis 1), we probabilistically record spin in one of two directions (say spin up and the spin down). It is also the case that if we measure the spin of a different axis (say axis 2), we record spin in one of two directions (say left and right). However (and this is important), if we again measure the spin along axis 1 (lets say it was spin-up) after measuring the spin along axis 2, we once again obtain a 50/50 probability of measuring spin-up or down. Naively, we should have expected to record spin-up again (for we had already definitively recorded its spin along that axis), however the act of measuring another axis has seemingly nullified the results of the first test (or made it a probabilistic rather than definite).

Note that this is not just to say that we cannot *know* the spin property of more than one axis at a time. As David Albert states, "this is not a question of ignorance", rather this is a question of ontology. It appears that if quantum mechanics is correct, then it is *impossible* for there to be definite properties of more than one axes at a time. Furthermore, if the dynamics of QM is correct, it is not at all clear what it can mean to be a "definite property" in the first place.

It is apparently the case that before being measured, the spin properties of electrons are in a "superposition" of indefinite position. The difficult and bizarre concept of superposition can be made explicit by reference to Alberts black box experiment.[1] In this experiment, a measuring device for the spin properties of electrons is devised so that a single electron enters through one aperture to be measured (say, along axis 1)[2] and, depending on the result of the measurement, exits through one of two apertures (one for spin-up and one for spin-down). After the initial measurement, the electron is then directed down one of two pathways that merge into one exit where the electron can again be measured.

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[1] Here, I will follow Alberts explanation of his experiment.
[2] Though theoretically, any axis can be measured.
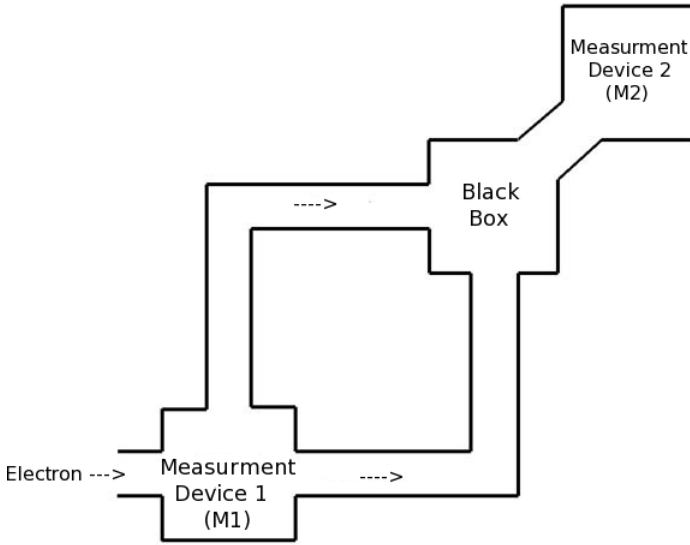
(Figure 1a).

It is important to note that, as far as can be told, no property of the electrons are affected by this (the experiment can be stopped, and the electron measured, at any time in this experiment). With this in mind, we can predict that if, say, an electron is measured for spin along axis 1 (at M1), the electron should leave the measurement device through one of two apertures (a or b). If the electron is measured to have spin-up, then it will always leave out of aperture A, travel along pathway A1 and exit out of the black box to be measured again. Similarly, if measured spin-down, then it will leave aperture B, travel along B1 and exit out of the black box.

Now, if an electron is measured along axis 1 and registers spin-up at the first measurement, then it will again measure spin up once leaving the black box (for no other axis was measured). As Albert states, this is what we would predict, and this is, in fact, what is observed. However, if we start the experiment by sending an electron with a definite spin measurement along a different axis (say spin-left on axis 2) into the measuring device (which initially records spin along axis 1) and again measure spin on axis 2 once the electron has left the black box, we should expect to find a 50/50 result of spin-left/right electrons (because we are measuring along two axes). What in fact we do find is 100 percent spin-left electrons. This should not happen. We have already seen that if we measure the spin of one axis, the rest (even

if previously measured) must be indefinite. It is not at all clear what is going on here. Further oddities arise if we attempt to block one of the two pathways to see what is going on. If we put a barrier along path B1 two new predictions should be met: the number of electrons exiting the black box should be halved (the 50 percent with spin-up will be stopped), and, in accordance with the previous experiment, 100 percent should be spin-left. However, what in fact happens is the number exiting the device is halved, but the electrons are once again in a 50/50 probabilistic split. It is not obvious what the possible explanation for this phenomena can be.

Albert's experiment baffles any classical explanation. How did the electron retain its definite spin property after being measured along multiple axes? What pathway did the electron take? Did it leave the first measurement device measured spin-up or down? We know that it did not take A1, because when we blocked B1 the result was 50/50, and the same goes for B1 if the wall is placed on A1. So, it seems clear that the electron did not take either route alone. However, it is also the case that it did not take both (whatever that would mean), because the experiment can be stopped at any time (by a wall) and the electrons are invariably found in one of two pathways. It certainly could not have taken neither (for the same reasons). So, it seems, the electron is in a strange superposition of not having traveled down both routes, and not having traveled down neither route, and not having traveled down a single route, but somehow having arrived at the end of the measurement device.

So here is the problem: the dynamics of quantum mechanics, which is seemingly right about everything besides measurement, defines the subatomic world by a wave function and predicts that the outcome of measurement should be a superposition. However, without exception, no superposition has ever been observed– every form of measurement delivers a definite spin measurement. Furthermore, the fact that we do experience a measurement as having a particular outcome (say, by reading a computer screen or witnessing an indicator light), is seemingly in direct contradiction with QM.

If the dynamics are taken as complete and literal, the measurement device itself should be in a superposition. According to the dynamics of QM, the wave function of the particle being measured should become "entangled" or joined with the wave function representing the measuring device (since all macroscopic measuring devices consist of microscopic particles, these particles should become entangled with the

wave function of the particle being measured). The measuring device, then, should actually be in a superposition of something like indicating spin-up and spin-down on its display screen. Furthermore, once the measurement has been observed, the observer herself (who is a physical system like the measuring device) should become entangled in the original wave-function and, therefore, be in a superposition of *seeing* either spin-up or down. But we know from experience that this is never the case– we always witness a definite result when observing a measurement.

What, then, explains the discrepancy between QM and experience? The collapse postulate (an ad-hoc, descriptive addendum) accurately predicts a probabilistic "collapse" of the superposition into one of its possible states. It appears as if the wave function probabilistically collapses into one of its two possibilities whenever measurement is made. So, it seems that there are two laws governing the subatomic world: the dynamics of QM (which predicts a wave function), and the collapse postulate (which predicts a probabilistic collapse).

Quantum mechanics has a problem. The dynamics by itself does not account for everything that is observed. Three possible solutions to this problem are to accept that there are two distinct rules for the subatomic world, to deny that collapse occurs and postulate that there is some hidden variable that explains why we appear to observe collapse, or to deny collapse and any hidden variables. A forth alternative, and the established orthodox view, is to accept the measurement problem as an instance of the limit of empirical human understanding.

The Copenhagen Interpretation

The orthodox Copenhagen interpretation of QM, lead by Neils Bohr, claims that it is impossible to fully understand the quantum world with our classical concepts and classical expectation for certainty and objectivity. In this interpretation, it is useless to speak of inherent properties that are somehow manipulated by observation– nothing can be known except what we can experience. Here, the notion of measurement is inextricably linked to what we know about the subatomic world. In Alberts experiment, then, we are really witnessing two different measurements: one in which the electron (somehow) travels down both pathways, and another when it travels down one (when we stop the experiment to find the location of the particle). This may seem bizarre, but it is no mystery– it is just how things are. The Copenhagen interpretation of QM states that any attempt to understand the

quantum world independent of observation is a misguided, fruitless, and confused quest for understanding. As Bohr states: "The limit, which nature herself has thus imposed upon us, of the possibility of speaking about phenomena as existing objectively finds its expression, as far as we can judge, just in the formulation of quantum mechanics." [Bohr] This is to say that only way to obtain experiential knowledge of the quantum world is through experimentation and measurement which necessarily interact and influence the object of measurement. For adherents of this interpretation, there just is no such thing as objective quantum world: all knowledge of the subatomic world must necessarily take into account our interaction with it.

There is, seemingly, a limit to our knowledge in that we can only experience our interactions with the quantum world. The Copenhagen interpretation claims that to postulate that there is some observer independent quantum world with observer objective properties is a meaningless and impossible endeavor. As Schrdinger states: "There is only observation [and] measurement... we must now explicitly not relate our thinking any longer to any other kind of reality or to a model." [Schrodinger 157] The Copenhagen interpretation, then, interprets as meaningless and misguided the search for some observer objective quantum world. It just accepts the bizarre and seemingly incomprehensible (and certainly classically impossible) consequences of the formalism of QM as the limit of human understanding– it is just the way the world is.

This does not seem to be the most obvious or reasonable conclusion. It does not make sense to abandon our fundamental beliefs about the underlying nature of reality (or even the belief that there *is* such a reality). The Copenhagen interpretation is not really an interpretation at all [Baggott]. Rather, it is an acceptance of the dynamics of QM and its consequences. The Copenhagen view just accepts the problem as the limit of human knowledge without trying to understand or interpret the data. However, there are alternative ways to interpret QM and still retain the belief in a comprehensible, observer independent world.

The Everett Interpretation

The Everett interpretation of QM states that the linear dynamics of QM alone is sufficient to explain the workings of the world. It states that collapse does not occur and superpositions are in-fact actual. Everett can be read as concluding that there are different worlds, or different minds, for every possible superposition. It follows that the reason we

seem to experience definite positions is because we are experiencing (either in a separate world, or separate mind) one of the two possibilities of any particular superposition (while another 'you' is experiencing the other).

The many-worlds version posits an actual world where every possibility of every superposition obtains. The world actually "splits" or divides every time an apparent collapse occurs. This interpretation postulates an infinite number of distinct possible worlds. This is to say that each possible world is actual, unique, unobservable, and unknowable. The many-worlds interpretation can be viewed as a branching world view, with each observed superposition forking off as distinct worlds. Every act of measurement, then, branches out into independent realities where the possibilities of the superpositions actually obtain.

The Many Minds interpretation of Everett, advanced by Albert and Loewer, postulates a continuous infinity of minds for every sentient observer. From this, it is reasoned that half of an observers mind witnesses one of the two possibilities of any particular superposition, while the other half of the minds observe the other. In this theory, there is no such thing as collapse– every possibility is realized in the mind of the observer. For example, if a measurement is preformed on axis 1 of electron A, then, under this interpretation, half of the observers minds would record A as having the property of spin-up, while the other half would record spin-down (with neither half being able to communicate with the other). And, furthermore, if a measurement is preformed on axis 2 of A, the same split would result. However, it is important to note that this is a *continuous* infinity of minds– the minds recording the results of the second measurement are 'fresh'; it is not the case that the two halves that recorded the spin along axis 1 are now themselves halved to correspond to the two possibilities of axis 2 (remember that QM does not allow a particle to have two determined properties). Rather, a 'fresh' infinity of minds experiences every new possibility of a superposition.

This is possible, but highly unpalatable. Big questions arising from this theory are: what exactly does it mean for there to be a different mind or universe for every possible superposition? How does the universe actually split, or how do minds split– what could possibly be the process? This is the vexing thing about non-collapse theories of QM, they offer many possible solutions to the measurement problem, but they are all untestable.1 There is no consequence in accepting or denying them. Furthermore, measurement in the Everett interpretation is

meaningless. There is nothing to measure: every possible outcome is actual (either in multiple worlds or minds).

The Bohm Theory

The Bohm theory also accepts the dynamics of QM and denies that collapse occurs, but postulates that there is some hidden variable (the determined position of every particle) that explains the apparent collapse. Bohm postulates that the wave function is actually a physical thing that pushes the particle along. This is a purely deterministic theory that states that particles have definite paths that they travel along the wave function. This theory states that while it appears that collapse has occurred, in reality the particle is just preceding as it is destined to. There is no collapse, here, because there is no such thing as a superposition. For Bohm, the apparent random position of subatomic particles and the notion of superposition is misleading and only the result of our inability (and the seeming impossibility) of knowing a particles exact position. If a particles position where to be known, and its wave function calculated, then its exact location and future locations can be determined. This theory, while possible, is asking much of its proponents. It asks one to explain away the measurement problem by relying on a completely determined universe that we can never know. Bohm's theory is untestable and adds nothing to the dynamics of QM. The theory produces no new observations– it is just a possible (and seemingly ad-hoc) explanation of the counterintuitive implications of QM.

Furthermore, measurement (as we defined it) is trivial in Bohms theory. It turns out, here, that the outcome of a measurement of a subatomic particle depends on the orientation of the measurement device. The particle will always follow the same path along the wave function, but depending upon the placement of the measuring device (say if its top and bottom are flipped) the particle will enter the device in different regions of the detector and register different spin properties– the same particle that registered spin-up will be measured as spin-down. This means that spin properties are not intrinsic to particles or wave functions, and that measurements of these non-intrinsic properties are not really the kind of measurements that we are looking for. This is because, since we cannot know the position of the particle, we cannot know where it is entering the device, and, therefore, the measurement result is not saying anything substantive about the object being measured– just that it has a position that we arent aware of that results

in our measurement coming out x (but it could have been different if we moved the device). So, under Bohms theory, the outcomes of our measurements are trivial, because we never really know what we are measuring (the position of the particle).

The GRW Theory

The GRW theory offers an explanation of measurement that is free of multiple minds and worlds or hidden variables. It explains collapse as a random effect of the wave function. According to the GRW theory, particles randomly jump from superpositions to definite states at a minuscule probability. The theory states that when a particle is measured its wave function becomes entangled with the trillions of particles in the measuring device, thereby raising the probability of collapse to near certainty. It is also the case, here, that if there is one collapse in an entangled system, the entire wave function must collapse as well. A serious problem with this theory is that when measurements are preformed without large measuring devices (such as florescent screens), it appears that collapse sometimes will not occur once the measurement is made; it occurs only *after* it is observed by a sentient being. Only once the result is observed and becomes entangled with the particles of the eye of the observer, will there be sufficient subatomic particles to statistically guarantee collapse. This means that the measuring device, as well as the particle being measured, actually has no definite result until it is observed. Therefore, if one is to accept the GRW theory, or other collapse postulates, then measurement, as we define it, is meaningless in the subatomic world. How can we be said to objectively measure something which we cause? This, indeed, is worrying if one wants to postulate a world independent of observation.

Interpretations of Measurement

It seems then that none of the major theories explaining (or explaining away) the measurement problem are anywhere close to convincing. It is difficult to accept a theory that offers nothing new to the dynamics of QM (Bohms), but only offers a possible (and un-testable) explanation for the workings of the subatomic world. It is equally as difficult to accept Everetts theory, which postulates multiple worlds or minds and which is also untestable. What is the point in accepting a theory that has no test implications or empirical significance? The GRW theory is, in principle, testable (although in practice it is not)1, yet relies on

a equally puzzling premise of "spontaneous collapse". However, there is no consequence in accepting or denying any of these theories (other than peace of mind). None of the interpretations provide any new data, nor are they even realistically testable. It seems we are left with a multitude of possible explanations that we cannot verify.

We can just accept that the puzzle of measurement is a problem with our epistemological access to the world, not with QM itself.. The theories explored in this paper are all attempts to describe a real quantum world while making sense of the confusions we witness in the macroscopic world. Their lack of force or believability can be attributed to their attempts to try and make sense of the microscopic world by use of macroscopic concepts and terms (such as particles and waves) that do not apply. The Copenhagen interpretation states that we are macro-systems trying to understand micro-systems, and this is just a bridge that we cannot cross. This may be the case, but it seems a bit early in the history of QM to close the door. As Bohm states, "the history of scientific research is full of examples in which it was very fruitful indeed to assume that certain objects [such as atoms] or elements might be real, long before any procedures where known which would permit them to be observed directly." In light of the history of scientific discover, it is reasonable to hold on to the intuition that the world is inherently knowable and logically non-contradictory rather than accept the formalism of QM as perfect. It is not unreasonable to think that it is the fault of QM and its explanatory power that is to blame for the confusion. Furthermore, as we have seen, the Copenhagen interpretation does not explain anything– it is epistemologically empty. It does not explain how or why measurement affects the quantum world: it just accepts the measurement problem as a non-problematic (to QM) mystery. However, it is not obvious why we should accept an apparent problem with a relatively young theory as an inescapable problem with our relation to the world (rather than as a problem with the theory). It makes sense, then, to continue to use the dynamics of QM and the collapse postulate in practical physics, and to continue searching for a verifiable explanation to the apparent contradiction of measurement problem.

Measurement Problem Revisited

The measurement problem, then, remains. There is an explanatory gap between what QM predicts, and what we experience, that needs to be filled. So, where does this leave QM? QM, as stated, is the most suc-

cessful theory of modern science. However, it is not necessary to accept its ontology as real. The dynamics works up until measurement, and the collapse postulate accurately explains what we observe after measurement. It makes sense, then, to understand QM as an instrument to obtain results rather than adhere to problematic, non-consequential, and equally possible theories attempting to address the breakdown between QM and experience. The puzzle of measurement still has no clear answer, but QM nevertheless produces practical and repeatable results. However, until the mystery of the decoherence between observation and QM is solved, no interpretation of can claim to be an accurate theory of how the world intrinsically is.

So, if there are no conclusive solutions for the measurement problem, is measurement possible? Accepting QM, No. None of the interpretations (as we have seen) allow for measurement in any meaningful or non-trivial sense. The non-collapse theories of Everett and Bohm result in measurements whose outcomes are dependent on which world/mind a "you" are in, or the arbitrary position of the measurement device, respectively. The random collapse GRW theory results in an outcome that is caused by the measurement itself. Measurement is only meaningful if there is some objective thing to be measured– in QM, it seems, there is no definite object of measurement. Therefore, it is possible that the traditional Copenhagen model is correct, and the quantum world may be unknowable beyond our interactions with it. However, as we have seen, it is certainly premature to draw the line of human understanding at this point. Furthermore, measurement in the Copenhagen interpretation is not measurement at all: there is no thing being measured, only an apparatus/wave/particle/observer system that is created. It seems clear then that, as it stands, quantum measurement tells us nothing about how the world is; it only shows us how the world seems.

This is not to say that the experimental process cannot produce useful and meaningful practical results (laser, transistors, and quantum computing, for instance). What this does say is that there is an ambiguity in the use of measurement. It may be useful, then, to differentiate between measurement (as used here) and experimentation or experimental results. Measurements, here, are not being preformed as much as data is being created and observed. It seems best, then, to refer to the results of quantum measurements as readings, rather than results. QM tells us how the world seems when we interact with it, but not how it objectively is independent of observation.

Furthermore, it is possible that QM could be wrong and micromeasurement could be possible. The dynamics of QM are seemingly accurate, but by no means are they certain. It is logically possible, if unlikely, that superpositions do not exist and that QM is wrong. It is also possible, that something like the Bohm theory (with definite, determined positions) will turn out to be true and allow for meaningful measurement. The world is by no means necessarily the world posited by QM. However, at the moment QM is the dominant theory and, therefore, it follows that no current measurement of the subatomic world is possible.

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Aaron Norby

Structure and Visual Perception

Already a 'figure' on a 'background' contains. . .much more than the qualities presented at a given time. It has an 'outline', which does not 'belong' to the background and which 'stands out' from it; it is 'stable' and offers a 'compact' area of colour, the background on the other hand having no bounds, being of indefinite colouring, and 'running on' under the figure. The different parts of the whole. . . possess, then, besides a colour and qualities, a particular *significance*. The question is, what makes up this significance, what do the words 'edge' and 'outline' mean, what happens when a collection of qualities is *apprehended* as a figure on a background?

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Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception

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INTRODUCTION: NON-SENSIBLE PERCEPTION AND PERCEIVING AS ORGANIZING

What I see I see in context, and what I see is also more than what faces me. A wall painted red is not the same red when a green is introduced– the complements enhance each other and the red becomes striking. A single light bulb flashing in the dark becomes part of an observed movement when paired with another, alternately flashing, light. Further, I perceive not just the spine of a book which is exposed on a bookshelf, but see it as having a depth, as being solid, and having a certain size and shape which remain constant even when my view of it changes. The look of an object is tied into the larger situation in which we encounter it; and our experience of an object from any particular perspective consists in the experience of more than merely the facing front of that object, more than what can project itself onto the retina– there is a visual presence, in one sense or another, of the hidden back of the object. What, however, is the connection (if any) between these two phenomena– that of context and that of amodal or non-sensible[1] (in Merleau-Ponty's terminology) perception?

Accounts of the latter have been offered by Alva Noë and Sean Kelly, among others, as ways of understanding the perceptual constancies and real presence (the idea that we are presented with mind-independent objects not reducible to our experiences of them), and are offered without marking a prominent place for the relevance of context. This is not to say that these theories ignore the role of context in perceptual experience– they do not. Both of them, and perhaps most theories of perception, would agree, I think, that objects are always seen in context, and that context affects the character of perception. However, one can admit the relevance of context to perceiving, and may even agree with the claim I will make, specifically, that context is best understood as a Gestalt-organizational phenomenon, without thereby recognizing the notion as of central importance.

What I will try to argue is that an account of context may in fact provide the grounds for an attractive account of amodal or non-sensible perception, which will in turn explain the constancies and real presence. This line of thought, which takes point of departure from my understanding of the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty,

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[1]For the most part, in this paper I will use the term 'non-sensible' rather than 'amodal' to mean roughly, 'perceptually present without a direct causal impact'– the term is preferable only insofar as the perceptual presence of a hidden feature can be a visual one, and is thus in some sense modal.

will proceed by beginning with an analysis of the simplest cases (seeing two-dimensional figures on a page) which reveal the fundamental characteristics of organization in perception. After this central groundwork is laid, an account of the perception of normal three-dimensional objects will follow naturally.

PART I: A NORMATIVE THEORY OF PERCEPTION

To explain how we can see what is not sensibly present– that is, explain real presence, amodal perception, and the constancies– Sean Kelly argues for a Merleau-Pontian theory of perceptual normativity.[2] According to this approach, the way that whole real objects and constant colors are experienced in spite of our always-limited views is that these are experienced as deviations from an optimum view in which the whole of the object would be revealed to the perceiver. So, for the case of color constancy, say, for example, I'm sitting at my kitchen table of yellow linoleum. Unless I step back and adopt the so-called "painterly attitude", the tabletop will look all one uniform color despite the fact that parts of it are lit more brightly by the fixture overhead, and parts of it are overlain by shadows. These variations in apparent color are not experienced as variations in surface color, but rather as deviations from an ideal lighting condition. As Kelly puts it, my experience tells me, "*here* the color looks as if it is not presented in the optimum way; *there* it looks better".[3] This does not mean, of course, that Kelly equates the constant surface color or the hidden sides of the object themselves with a mere *experience* of them, but rather he argues that the real object or color remains in the background as an 'optimum' view: "the real constant color or thing…is experienced as that maximally articulate norm against which every particular presentation is felt to deviate".[4] This, however, leaves open a basic gap in a theory of direct perception– how it is that *any* view, optimal or not, can be an immediate presentation of an object.[5]

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[2] The theory which I argue for later in the paper is meant to be Merleau-Ponty as well. For the sake of keeping everything straight, I will subsequently refer to Kelly's interpretation of Merleau-Ponty simply as Kelly's theory rather than as Merleau-Ponty's.

[3] Kelly, 2005: pp.84-85.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp.97-98.

[5] To clarify a bit, by an "immediate presentation" I mean an understanding of perception that does not require intermediaries between the perceiver and the ob-

The human perspective is, of course, limited. I see a statue, and it looks to have a back, but I can't see the back right now from the place I'm standing. The ideal view then would be the view which sees the object from every possible perspective at once, what Kelly calls, "the view from everywhere". Now, he does not think that the view from everywhere is a view that anyone could actually attain, but is rather the ideal towards which any normal perspective is felt to tend. Thus, all lesser points of view are able to have the object as their content in virtue of their reference (by way of felt norms of deviation) to the optimal view. In virtue of what, however, would we be justified in saying that the view from everywhere is a perception of the full stable object? In one sense, this question seems to simply miss the point– it is in virtue of the fact that the view from everywhere is a look at every side of the object that this optimum would present the complete object, and thus can serve as a basis for typical views' being of the object and not merely of one side. However, there is a problem here, and I think that Kelly is at least peripherally aware of it when he says, "Even if I could have this view [the view from everywhere], however, it would not present the real thing as a determinate particular...[Rather] the real thing should be that which stands as the background to every particular presentation of it".[6] For any naive realist (which Kelly seems to take himself to be), the object itself will be the background to every presentation of it, because, simply put, that is what the naive realist position states– that perception puts the perceiver in a direct relation to the object she perceives (and not, say, to some representational content). The difficulty though is in saying *how* perception is a relation to its object, and simply making reference to an ideal view does not quite get at that issue. The only way that the felt tensions in Kelly's account can be understood are as experiences constituted by their relation to *other* (although indeterminate and never-experienced) experiences. This, at least, is what I will try to show.

Now, it is true that Kelly does not claim that we ever actually do or could experience the optimal view, and that it is only present as the background to any normal views which I have of an object. Moreover, even if I had the optimal view, this is itself only experienced as a 'null deviation' from the optimum, and the object remains as that

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jects of perception. Thus, most sense-data views, or, more to my point, views which construe the perspectival aspect of experience as something like 'subjective' qualia, are views in this paper that I mean to avoid, but without laying out substantive arguments as to *why* they ought to be avoided.

[6] *Ibid.*, p.95.

which stands as the background to all of these possible (or impossible) experiences of it. This, however, is where the problem lies. The point can be made clearer by considering the nature and type of norms that the 'felt deviations' need to be. One way that "norm" and "normative" are often used is to mean something like "normal" or "typical". We might say that there is a norm of walking or a norm of saying "hello" when you see someone you know, a norm for a man to wear a tie to a wedding, and so on. For this type of norm there is no clear or essentially important relation to a particular optimum performance or conformity. Of course, there are clear cases of success and failure in each, and certainly better and worse ways to do each, and one may think that there is in fact a very best way to say hello; but what is important is that these norms are *not essentially defined* by an optimum. For example, in the norm of wearing a tie to a wedding, the norm is constituted by a pressure to wear a tie one way or another (within reason, of course), but, when we consider it strictly in terms of its being a norm, there is not an essential place for a striving toward the best way to comply with the norm. In other words, I can comply with this sort of norm without there being any optimum way to do so. In Kelly's account of perceptual experience, however, it is important to notice that the normativity is of a wholly different kind.

In the case of perceptual normativity, the optimum is *constitutive* of the norm and thus of one's experience of the norm. If we say that my seeing a table from *this* point of view is a perception of the table as a whole in virtue of the fact that my experience is a feeling of deviation, we should ask, A deviation from *what*? In order to make sense of the account we must understand that the felt deviation is a deviation only in terms of that from which it deviates (the optimum, that is, the view from everywhere). Even if we agree with Kelly that the view from everywhere is indeterminate and is never actually experienced because it is what stands in the background of all possible experiences, nevertheless the only way for the account to remain coherent is to say that the view from everywhere *is* an experience of a sort (assuming, of course, that views are experiences). My present view can be a deviant *view* only if that from which it deviates is also a view. Thus, insofar as my normal experience is experienced as a deviation from the optimum, the result is that my present experience is constituted and its character determined by yet another experience (though, as I said, an indeterminate one). Part of the content of the perception, then, is not the hidden parts of the desk themselves, but other more determinate experiences

of those parts. So, rather than explaining how my seemingly limited point of view on things is nevertheless an object-involving relation, the normative theory appears to turn perception into a mere 'experience-involving' relation. Now, of course, Kelly does argue that the object itself is best thought of as that which stands in the background to every perspectival experience of it (including the view from everywhere). If this is true, as it seems to be, and if what I have said so far is correct, then it is not at all clear what the 'felt tensions' do to make it so, for these can only relate my experience to other experiences of an object, without ever explaining how it is that any experience might be *of* an object. The normative account, then, seems superfluous or at least (as I will argue in Parts IV and V) not to be the basic story of how whole objects with their hidden sides can be perceptually present.

Further, I think certain phenomena are difficult to accommodate into the normative theory. Specifically, Merleau-Ponty describes the case of looking over a desk with white papers over it which, although some are in shadows and some are not, the papers appear at first to be all "equally white". However:

> "I decide to look more closely. I fix my gaze upon them, which means that I restrict my visual field. I may even look at them through a matchbox lid, which will separate them from the rest of the field, or through a 'reduction screen' with a window in it the sheets change appearance: this is no longer white paper over which a shadow is cast, but a gray or steely blue substance...".[7]

The surfaces, by looking through the reduction screen, cease to display color constancy, and the apparent color of the shadow becomes the 'real' surface color. Why should this be? According to the normativity theory, this constancy occurs because I have a sense that where there are shadows the paper is not well lit, and so the perception in some sense makes reference to ('reference' not in any technical logical-linguistic sense, but merely in the sense that Kelly means it– as a deviation from its optimum) how the paper would look if it were better lit. The lighting still lights just as well– through the screen I can see parts of the paper just fine. Kelly might reply that the norm changes when the tube is held up to the eye and the context is blocked out. However, this change in norms, if that's what it is, cannot be explained by the normative theory alone– the normative theory posits the felt tension

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[7]Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962: p.262.

in terms of a norm which is supposed to be the real color or shape, but does not tell us why a change in context should entail a change in the perception of what the real color is. It would seem that the normative theory is at best incomplete, and what it needs is an account of the relation of a perception of an object to its context. However, I will argue, once we give an adequate account of the role of contextual relations in perception, it will be less clear that the normative theory is in fact necessary for or fundamental to perceptual experience.

Even certain simple cases suggest that bringing in normativity and felt tensions is rather superfluous to the phenomena. Consider looking at a spot on a white page (for example, one of the spots in fig. C (see Appendix)).[8] This is a classic case of the Gestalt notion of a 'figure' on a 'ground', and as such is an example of amodal perception– we see the page running on underneath the spot, and the spot looks like it is on the page. Thus, the part of the page which does not project onto the retina is nevertheless part of the content and phenomenal character of the perception. However, this seems to be as simple as it gets. It certainly does not seem as if there is a better or optimal view which needs to be invoked; indeed, it is not at all clear what the view from everywhere would even mean in this case. To say that there is, say, a 'felt tendency' to lift the dot off the page and look underneath seems to simply overstate the phenomenology of the experience. At this stage, what I want to show by pointing this example out is merely that there are cases in which a much more basic notion– that of Gestalt grouping– may readily make sense of a case of amodal or non-sensible perception where invoking normativity seems unwarranted. In later sections my aim will be to show that once this basic phenomenon of the figure and ground of the spot on the page is explicated more fully, there is enough apparatus in order to explain not only this simple case but the more complex cases of three-dimensional objects.

Part II: The Sensorimotor Theory

Like Kelly, Noë takes seriously the demand that an adequate account of amodal perception be given. Unlike Kelly, Noë does not think that

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[8]I should note that these can be seen either as spots sitting on the page or, alternately, as black holes in the page. This bistability, however, does not affect the main point of my argument, for all that is required is that the spots *can*, veridically, be seen as sitting on the page. At any rate, the same point can be made with the letters printed on this page, which appear to sit on the page, but which are not, I think, bistable as figure C is.

all we typically see is the constant color of an object[9], but rather that
we see *both* the wall's uniform color and its uneven lighting. This
is likewise true for shape– "a silver dollar may look elliptical – when
we view it from an angle, or when it is tilted in respect of us – even
though it also looks, plainly, circular".[10] This is what he calls the
"two-dimensionality" of perceptual experience. So, in the case of the
hidden side of an object, it is, in Noë's terms, both present and absent.
It is true that there is a sense in which I do not see the back of the
house, but there is also a sense in which it is in fact visually present to
me. The way the back of the house is visually present is in virtue of
'implicit' sensorimotor knowledge of how the appearance of the house
would change as I move around it. Thus, my perception of the back of
the house is not simply my perception of the facing side, but rather *in*
my seeing the front of the house I am given *access* to the back of the
house, and likewise I have access to the whole real shape of an object
though its various perspectival presentations:

> "When you visually experience the plate as circular, you do
> so relying on your implicit knowledge of the way the plate's
> appearance – its look – varies as your relation to the plate
> changes. You encounter its real shape (its circularity) in
> your experience, thanks to your encounters with its merely
> apparent shape (its elliptical look)".[11]

Likewise, I see the constant color of the thing because of my knowledge
of how its appearance would change throughout variations in lighting
and shadow. Thus, on the sensorimotor account, to perceive is to be
in possession of a particular kind of knowledge and skill.

Noë writes, "In a way, the main idea of my book is that we experi-
ence as much as we do because we see so little."[12] It would seem, then,
that we are justified in asking exactly what the 'so little' that we see
exactly is, and how it is related to the whole objects that we typically
take as the objects of perceptual experience. In other words, an account
should be given of *modal* content (i.e., the mere front of the tomato,
the apparent color variations across a table due to shadow), and how
this constrains or leads a perceiver to enact one certain sensorimotor

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[9]For remember, on Kelly's view, we do not see but 'feel' the tensions or deviations
that are the uneven surface appearances. Whether these feelings properly count as
contents of perception, I am not sure.
[10]Noë, 2005a: p.1.
[11]Noë, 2004: p.123.
[12]Noë, 2005b: p.8.

understanding or another. This question is particularly pressing in the case of color perception, for here Noë maintains that our experience of a color is in fact exhausted by the range of appearances in which we encounter it.[13] He explains color constancy then by claiming that we see the color a surface appears in *this* light, but we are able to amodally perceive the real constant color through our understanding of the "color critical conditions"[14]– our awareness of the various ways the color may look through changes in lighting and shadow. However, certain cases seem to present a problem for explaining color constancy in terms of sensorimotor understanding. In White's Illusion (fig. A) the two gray bars are of equivalent luminosity even though they look to be quite different. First, it would seem clear that we have to count what happens to the gray bars when the black bars are added as part of the color's sensorimotor profile– *that's* what happens when the gray is put in that situation, just as we might understand, on Noë's theory, what happens when a shadow crosses over them. However, the point made by the sensorimotor theory is that knowledge of the sensorimotor profile is what accounts for a perceived *constancy* of color– what we have in White's Illusion, though, is a change not only in apparent color but in perceived constant surface color.[15] If it is true that to see two colors as distinct is to see them as having distinct sensorimotor profiles, then what we perceive when we look at White's Illusion are two distinct colors. Each of the two grays in the illusion look like they will respond differently to shadows or changes in lighting. The illusion persists no matter what one's knowledge of the various appearance properties of the two gray bars might be– one may well aware of, and have had plenty of experience with, what happens when a gray bar is contextualized into a column of black bars in this way, but will nevertheless see the two gray bars as different colors. Thus, a sensorimotor explanation seems to generate a kind of confusion: the appearance of the gray bars in this particular context is part of their sensorimotor profile (and so it should be a perception with the same color content), but at the same time, this aspect of the profile is one in which the grays look to take on

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[13]Thus, as he puts it, phenomenalism (that the various appearances are all there are to the color) is in some sense right when it comes to color even if it is unattractive when applied to three-dimensionality and shape (Noë 2004: p.141).

[14]Noë, 2004: pp.125-126.

[15]Although there is a case to be made for gray's not technically being a color, I will continue calling it such for, at the very least, it would have a sensorimotor profile in the same way that blue or red would. Also, it is commonly treated as such: e.g., "the color of my suit is gray". This is not a point on which anything hangs.

different surface colors (that is, look to have different sensorimotor profiles). We would be forced to say that the sensorimotor profile– which constitutes the surface color– is such that it contains a different color, and thus a different sensorimotor understanding. So, it would seem, there is a clear difficulty here in explaining the perception in terms of sensorimotor understanding.

Of course, on behalf of the sensorimotor theory, this is an illusion, and as such is a case of breakdown in normal perceptual functioning. Noë himself does address cases of breakdown and nonveridical perceptions in terms of the sensorimotor theory. He writes, explaining that our seeing of stars in the night sky is nonveridical (the fact that we know those points of light are balls of fiery gas does not mean that the content of the perception is one of a ball of fiery gas), that "an experience is nonveridical when it has a different content than it seems to have".[16] First, in response, I would say that the fact that White's illusion is an illusion does not work against the main purpose of my argument, which is to show that anything like sensorimotor understanding depends for its efficacy upon some more fundamental feature of perceptual experience. If we say that the sensorimotor theory is excused from explaining this illusion, precisely because it is a case of nonveridical perception outside the bounds of normal perceiving, I want to ask, What is it then that sets those bounds? Although it is a case of breakdown, the theory would nevertheless say that we do enact some sensorimotor understanding of the scene, even if it is the wrong one and so, at least in some cases, it looks as though the enacting of a certain understanding or other must be explained in terms of some other kind of perceptual content. This other kind of content, I will argue later, is a type of gestalt-organizational content. True, the sensorimotor theory can, and should, maintain that the way something looks is the way it looks in context. This much Noë certainly does not deny. The problem, however, is how to give a full account of contextuality, and to know what the implications of such an account might be for theories of perception. This is the line I will follow for the rest of this paper.

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[16]Noë, 2005a: p.48.

PART III: INTRODUCTION TO AN ALTERNATE MERLEAU-PONTIAN APPROACH[17]

A theory of perception must not eschew the relevance of context to the character of perceptual experience. This much is easy to demonstrate. Think only of the example, provided by Merleau-Ponty above, of what happens when one introduces a reduction screen into one's field of vision. Or the effect of the black bars on the gray bars in White's Illusion, or the addition of the diagonal lines in Zöllner's illusion (fig. B). What must be realized is not only that a contextual or organizational influence is produced with the introduction of these elements (the black bars, the screen, the diagonal lines), but that, more importantly, an organization which was *already there* is broken up. In other words, all objects of perception are perceived in context, and so for any theory of perception to be complete an account of context and its influence on both the phenomenal character and content of perceptual experience must be given. There is a tendency, I think, even after the need for a role for context is admitted, to nevertheless assume that the role is in some sense a subsidiary one and that context is a mere addendum to whatever one's theory might be. True, the reduction screen affects how the pieces of paper look to me, but this does not upset the basic intentional relation to the pieces of paper– pieces of paper are still the content of my experience after the screen is introduced, and it is this relation which we should analyze. Context, we might say, is relevant only insofar as it affects the intentional relation to the objects of my ex-

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[17]Very little of what is argued below will go to show that the view I defend is a better *textual* interpretation of Merleau-Ponty than is Kelly's. However, this issue is of interest, so I make a short note here. For one thing, the idea of "maximum grip" and tensions to get a better view are rarely mentioned explicitly in the *Phenomenology*, which contains five or six references at most. Further, in the sub-section beginning at the page break on 371 in which Merleau-Ponty writes, "I...reach the real color or the real shape when my experience is at its maximum of clarity" (371), he goes on to write, "the thing appeared to us above as the goal of a bodily teleology, the norm of our psycho-physiological setting. But that was merely a psychological definition...which reduces the thing to those experiences in which we encounter it. We now discover the core of reality: a thing is a thing because, whatever it imparts to us, is imparted through the very organization of its sensible aspects" (376). Although this one passage is hardly definitive (for one thing, it is not perfectly clear that 'norm' here refers to what I think that it does), it is one example which may give reason to raise doubts as far as the textual issue goes (which, as Kelly himself points out (2005: p.75-76) does not go very far). What would be necessary for a serious defense of the textual issue is out of the scope of this paper.

perience, but context is not itself a fundamental term in that relation.[18]
This, however, is not the attitude taken by Merleau-Ponty. Following
his work, I will try to show that context and organization, the gestalt
"figure-ground' structure, is in fact "that without which a phenomenon
cannot be said to be perception at all" [19]; and furthermore, that to give
an account of organization is in itself to provide a viable theory of the
fundamental characteristics of perceptual experience.

PART IV: ORGANIZATION IN TWO-DIMENSIONAL FIGURES

First, when the idea of the figure-ground organization of perceptual
experience is invoked, it must be realized that the structure is not one
of a simple relation between two terms (the figure and the ground).
Rather, there are several distinguishable forms of organization which
all interact in order to constitute the perceptual scene. The two most
basic organizational forms are 'intra-figural' and 'figure-background'
organization, which together compose the more general figure-ground
structure.[20] Now, for the sake of explanatory clarity and for the im-
portance of understanding the close relationship of the most simple
perceptual experiences to the most complex, my discussion will begin
with an analysis of two-dimensional figures and drawings.[21] Looking
at the distribution of spots in fig. C, we see not just any arbitrary
array but two distinct groups, and the same two groups will be seen
by any normal perceiver.[22] Thus, the perceptual relation when I look
at fig. C is not just a relation to some spots which are such and such
distances from each other, but rather I am presented with two *groups*
of spots, and my relation to each spot is to a member of a group. The

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[18]The issue of whether perception is a true 'relation' or is representational (the de-
bate between disjunctivist and representationalist theories) I will hold off discussing
until Part VII.

[19]Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962: p.4.

[20]A note on terminology: 'intra-figural' is as far as I know a term of my own, and
so should not be expected in Merleau-Ponty's writings; I introduce it merely in the
service of clarification, which is not Merleau-Ponty's strong suit. Furthermore, in
most literature on the subject, 'figure-background' and 'figure-ground' are used to
mean the same thing; I, however, use the former to refer to a specific sub-feature of
the latter.

[21]As Aron Gurwitsch writes, "the 'figure-ground-structure' is exhibited by all per-
ceptual phenomena, starting from the simplest possible case of a uniformly colored
spot appearing on a homogeneous background" (1957/1964: p.112).

[22]For example, the same constellations have been seen in the night sky "for ages"
(Köhler, 1947: p.83).

spots taken singly have their own form as well and demarcate distinct objects with irregular shape and undifferentiated color– that is, we can describe the individual dot as a certain organization of color into a form. The diamond inside the box in fig. D forms, in similar fashion, a particular closed and solid shape. These are all examples of intra-figural organization.[23] The objects (the spots, say) look to be sitting on a background, but there would be no spots and no groups of spots to sit on that background if the spots themselves did not have some sort of organization which constitutes their differentiation from other elements in the scene. Here we see at the same time what the second form of organization, that of 'figure-background', describes– that the spots do in fact appear to *sit* on the white paper which looks as if it runs on underneath the spots. Likewise, the diamond may appear itself to be a figure sitting over the background of the surrounding box. So, what we have is an organizational whole– an organized figure standing in a seemingly simple relationship to a ground.

Now, if we want to be more precise about what exactly we have before us, the question becomes, How then is it that the white appears to continue on under the spot (that is, how can I perceive something about the white background) when it is hidden from view? How, that is, can it be said to *appear* at all? At this point one could simply deny that one actually perceives the page continuing underneath the dot. This, though, would not be a particularly attractive route. The idea that one's perceptual experience is limited to what is projected onto the retina (and it is not clear on what other grounds we could deny experience of the page under the spot) has been widely refuted. In particular, the psychologist J.J. Gibson speaks of the 'occluding edge' and the common phenomena of perceiving items which are strictly speaking occluded or hidden from view, and points out that there is experimental evidence suggesting that even infants perceive more than "the environment seen-from-this-point".[24] Aside from evidence provided by

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[23]In addition, there is an analogous organization found in the temporal dimension. For example, if I see three successive points of light, followed by a pause, followed by three more, I will perceive two groups of three. Likewise if I hear three tones in a similar pattern (for that matter, any piece of music will rest on this principle). As the psychologist Köhler puts it, "temporal 'dots' form temporal groups just as simultaneously given dots tend to form groups in space" (Köhler, 1947: p.89).

[24]Gibson, 1986: p.195 and p.201. Gibson writes that the "discovery that a closed contour or *figure* in a display involved the appearance of a *ground* that seemed to extend without interruption behind the figure was well known" (p.191). Although Gibson does not say which experiments on infants he has in mind, one such study, performed by Slater and Morison (1985), demonstrated that babies as young as two days old "have the ability to perceive objective, real shape across changes in slant"

psychologists, I take it as phenomenologically obvious that, in general, perception includes more that what is unobstructedly seen from a particular perspective, and that, in particular, the spot appears *over* the page while the page appears to run on underneath the spot. Of course, like most phenomenological points, anyone can simply refuse to accept my claim at this point; it is nonetheless of interest to continue as if it were a simple fact about perceptual experience, and I will do just that. However, even if we all agree for the moment that the page actually looks to be visually present under the spot, the hard question still remains. In what does the hidden page's visual presence consist?

It consists in the look of the spot itself, what Merleau-Ponty calls the 'expressive value' of the figure. Expressive value, or 'expression'[25] is best understood, I believe, as a primitive or irreducible kind of appearance. By primitive I do not mean to straightforwardly claim that the visual presence of the hidden page is not explainable in any other terms, but that the appearance is just as basic as the appearance of the spot itself.[26] Thus, it may be that one's theory explains all perceiving in terms of representational content or conceptual content, or whatever else, and so the perception of the page would be similarly explained, but would be explained without invoking some additional 'special' kind of content that need not be invoked in explaining the perception of what is sensibly[27] visible. While Kelly's normative theory or Noë's sensorimotor account will tell us that the page's visual presence can be explained by a tension to 'get a better look' at the page, or our sensorimotor knowledge of how the visual scene will change if we peek underneath the spot, these need not in fact be invoked in understanding the phenomena. And this is for two reasons. One, the presence of the page under the spot should not be understood as the presence

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(1985: p.337); i.e., experience is not limited to what is projected onto the retina.

[25]It is difficult to find the proper term to indicate what is meant. An important point is that 'expression' as used here is entirely distinct from the more familiar usage that the word has in logic and philosophy of language– the distinction should become clear. An alternate term I will use is 'suggest' (a term suggested by Hubert Dreyfus), and often I will use the two in hendiadys. Merleau-Ponty alternately uses the terms 'intend' and 'signify' to capture the same idea; these, however, are even more problematic, I think, than 'expression'.

[26]This is, of course, to ignore the sense of reducibility which is meant in 'reducible to neural or physiological processes'. That issue I'll leave alone.

[27]I will use the term 'sensible' or 'sensible presence' to refer to what is visually unoccluded and projecting onto the retina, as opposed to mere 'visual presence' which may be shared by both what is occluded and unoccluded. Further, the term does not strictly refer to the causal impact of something on my senses, but to the visual experience. Thus, the term 'sensible' as I use it roughly corresponds to the notion of 'modal', as opposed to 'amodal', perception.

of another possible experience or perceptual episode, but the presence of an object– in other words, there is the experience of the presence of a something, and not necessarily an experience of the possibility of another experience. Two, and more importantly, the visual presence of what is occluded is present in the phenomenal character of what is sensibly visible.

Pulling apart the non-sensible or amodal visual presence of an object, or of a part or property of an object, from the presence of a possible sensible experience of that part of the object is not obviously desirable. Indeed, in general it seems true that when an object x looks like it is F, then it is also true that I could have a better or more determinate experience of x's F-ness (if x really does in fact have property or feature F, and if I am not already having a sensible experience of x's F-ness). For example, if I am looking at the face of something which looks flat, it also seems, as Noë's theory makes clear, that I could move around and get a better 'edge-on' view of the object's flatness. Further, the point only makes sense if we've already accepted that someone can have an experience of something without having a *sensible* experience of that thing (that is, that one can have an experience of the occluded parts of an object); for of course if something is sensibly present then, *ipso facto*, I have a visual experience of that thing.[28] This latter observation shows only the truth of 'if I sensibly perceive x's F-ness, then I perceptually experience x's F-ness', and I do not want to deny this. Nor do I want to deny that, for the vast majority of cases, if I have the (non-sensible) perceptual experience of x's F-ness, then I am also presented with a possible sensible experience of x's F-ness. Rather, what I want to deny is that non-sensible perceptual experience is constituted by a reference to (either in the form of a tendency toward a better look or a knowledge of a more determinate appearance) more sensible experiences of it. Take the example of the spot on the page, or the perhaps even better example of the diamond on the box (fig. D). As I have pointed out, there seems no obvious answers to the questions, 'What is the dot or the page viewed 'from everywhere'?' or 'What are the sensorimotor contingencies here for looking at the page under the dot?' There are no answers because these other possible experiences of the page do not exist, and in looking we see they do not exist– the page looks like it continues under the spot, and the diamond looks like it sits

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[28]It should be noted that on the understanding of the term 'sensible' offered above, it is true by definition that what is sensibly present is experienced (which is not true for the use of 'sense' to mean 'causal impact').

over the box,[29] without it looking like I could lift either of them up and get a better (or even just a different) look. There is no experience of the hidden page other than one of it under the spot. Of course, both Kelly and Noë could say that the spot is an illusion, and it looks the way it does precisely because I am presented with the false perception that the spot looks like it is on the page and so also the illusion that a different, more determinate view of the spot could be had. The fact that my knowledge of the impossibility of getting a different view does not affect the look of the scene, then, is no problem. However, this move seems a dubious way to describe the experience. I do not just know, intellectually, that there is no other or better view. It seems to me that the page looks like it is running under the spot and it *also looks* like there's no better view of it– part of the phenomenological character of the scene is its simplicity, that it is part of its appearance that there is no more to see. Thus, it seems wrong to say that the visual presence of the hidden part of the page consists in either an implicit knowledge of some other appearance or a felt tension to get a better view.

Even if we agree that the case of the spot on the page is not a case of illusion, it may be argued that it is nevertheless a case of breakdown in normal perceptual function, and that the normative and sensorimotor theories are not committed to explaining *all* cases of perception. However, because this case is a case of amodal or non-sensible perception, it makes sense to say that these theories ought to be able to give an explanation. These theories are, after all, theories of what it is to perceive something even though it is hidden from view; that is, of that which *constitutes* and makes possible amodal perception in general.[30] Further, the fact that there exists a case of non-sensible experience irreducible to either norms or sensorimotor understanding is enough to establish a foothold for my alternative view which takes the phenomenon of the spot on the page as its paradigm case. What the view which I propose claims is that we should understand the visual presence of the hidden part of the page as immediately visible in the phenomenal character of what is sensibly present (i.e., of the spot). One result of this theory, if it can be expanded to explain the perception of more complex three-dimensional objects, is that the sensorimotor understanding

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[29]This example is more bistable than the dots, so the diamond appears over the page only if the perceiver gets the right Gestalt set-up so that the diamond is the figure, rather than a hole in the middle of the box.

[30]Note also that denying the ability to explain this case would mean denying the ability to explain an extremely common case: the same phenomenon is manifested in all printed material (the words on this page, for example, do look to sit on the page).

which I might have of the back of an object, or the tendency to go and get a better "grip" on the back, are themselves made possible on the basis of the basic experience of the object as a whole that is already had simply in looking at the front. In other words, rather than saying that my experience of the hidden part of some object is constituted by my experience of the possibility of some other experience of the object, we should say that my experience of the possibility of another experience of the object is grounded on my experience of the hidden part of the object.

An important step in making sense of the claim that the page under the dot has a visual presence in the look of the dot itself is to notice that the page is present *indeterminately.* On this point, I agree with Kelly's phenomenology (and textual interpretation). He writes, "on Merleau-Ponty's view, I have a positive presentation of something indeterminate, a presentation of *an I do not know what,*"[31] and this is understood as markedly distinct from the ground under the figure being indeterminate as to whether or not it is actually *there.* Rather, there is a perceptual presence of a ground under the dot, we perceive that the page is there, but that presence is itself unclear. Of course, both Noë and Kelly can allow that the presence of the page under the spot, or any hidden part of a scene, is an indeterminate one. The main difference, however, is that they both understand the experience of that indeterminateness in terms of the possibility of a more determinate experience of what is not hidden. To repeat somewhat, I do not want to deny that, in most instances, the possibility of making the indeterminate parts of the visual field more determinate is a very real and important part of the experience; what I deny is that that is the fundamental explanation of the experience. On the Merleau-Pontian alternative, the experience of the possibility of having a more determinate (or even a different) experience of what is non-sensibly present presupposes a more basic experience of that indeterminate presence. Taking this view is what allows us to understand how it is that the page under the spot can have an indeterminate visual presence without there being a tendency toward a better view or knowledge of what a different look would entail.

If the notion of expression is at least provisionally accepted, what must be looked at next is the fact that the spot has an expressive value (or 'suggests' the page) only because of the context in which it is embedded.[32] To some extent, this point is trivially true given what

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[31] Kelly, 2005: p.81.

[32] Of course, even a perceptual demonstrative proposition may be said to not be context-free insofar as it depends on the presence (perhaps perceptual presence) of

has already been said about intra-figural organization. If we look at the figure (the spot) as itself an organized form, and if the form is what expresses the hidden ground, then that suggestion cannot occur without some structure over and above the suggestive or expressive structure (namely, the structure which forms the figure into a cohesive whole). However, the figure also depends on the larger situational context to give a more or less definite sense of the hidden parts which are expressed. That is, the phenomenal character and content of the expression in a case in which a spot is surrounded by a green background will not be the same as the spot which is surrounded by white. This is because in the one case there is an indeterminate presence of a hidden green ground, and in the other of a hidden white ground. Additionally, if the background is confused, and the spot is perhaps surrounded by a swirl of colors, the presence of the occluded ground will be *more indeterminate* than when the spot appears against a more undifferentiated background. As Gurwitsch, who takes a similar view, points out, "the indeterminateness of aspects not actualized through a given perception but to which that perception implies references admits of degrees."[33] Thus, expression, the perceptual presence of what is hidden, occurs not by a simple two-term relation between the figure and the background, but in virtue of a larger whole into which the two are organized.

The point then, is that there is not something over and above our perceiving the figure which then constitutes our perceiving the occluded ground (e.g., a felt tension), but that what we in fact perceive is constituted by an organized *whole*, and this is what accounts for the fact that hidden parts of the visual field can be partly manifested in the appearance of the un-occluded figure. In saying this, however, I want to be very careful about what is and what is not part of the content of the experience. In saying that the dot has the look that it does and expresses the ground in virtue of the overall contextual organization in which it appears does not mean that the organizational relations themselves are objects of one's perception. Take, for example, the relations which go to make the spots in figure B into groups. The spots in one group are certainly not unrelated to the spots in the other group—indeed, they are at the very least related in terms of their physical

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the object to which it refers (such as in McDowell's account of *de re* demonstrative thoughts, in McDowell, 1984). This is not, however, the role of context that is relevant in the figure-ground case. Rather, there is context relevant to the appearance of an object which is external to that object (or thought about the object). I believe that the relevant understanding of context will become clear.

[33]Gurwitsch, 1957/1964: p.236. His term "references" here is very similar to the notion of expression that I am elaborating.

proximity and in the fact that together they compose a larger system of two groups; but, physical proximity is not enough for inclusion in a group– consider the 'outside' dot in fig. F (or, for another, if you draw a stray line through the Zöllner illusion, it will be physically close to the rest of the configuration but nevertheless look out of place). Insofar as the spots belong to one or another group, there is a sense in which the relations between spots within a group are 'tighter' than those between the groups, and the spots 'go together'.[34] These organizational relations, what Merleau-Ponty sometimes calls 'lines of force', are not the objects of perception but are what make the perception of objects (like the spots) possible. Thus, on Merleau-Ponty's Gestaltist picture, we are still able to maintain commitment to the so-called 'transparency' of perception– the fact that what we see are simply normal objects, and not qualia or the influence of context. That is, we certainly perceive the context and what is organized, but we do not see it *qua* context or contextual influence. To put it another way, think of Zöllner's illusion (fig. B). The horizontal lines appear non-parallel in virtue of their situation amid the short diagonal lines– and so we can say that there is a specific discernible relation of influence between the diagonal and the horizontal lines. What we see, though, are the non-parallel lines themselves only. It would be a mistake to reify the organizational relations between the lines and say that they are in fact part of the contents of the experience. What we see is not the influence, but the result of the influence.

So, to put this all into a formula, *a particular figure has a phenomenological character which expresses the indeterminate presence of hidden parts of the visual field in virtue of the organizational influences of the context in which it is situated.* If this is true, then there is no 'raw' figural element which maintains its appearance independent of the context and organization in which it is situated; there is no figure whose appearance does not involve a larger grouping. The parts, as it were, are never prior to the whole. As Merleau-Ponty puts it when considering the Müller-Lyer illusion, "an isolated, objective line, and the same line taken in a figure, cease to be, for perception, 'the same'."[35]

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[34]By 'tighter', I do not mean only in terms of physical proximity, but rather something more like the way that my relation to my father is tighter than my relation to my uncle. It is perhaps worrisome that my characterization of the organizational relation is metaphorical; I am not sure, however, of any more precise way of describing it. For the immediate purposes this figurative language is not too detrimental– the important point is that we have some idea (if only vague) of the organizational forces as distinguishable from the objects themselves which we see.

[35]Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962: p.13

There are thus two claims I am making here: one, that the appearance of an object is in all cases related to its context; and two, if there is no such thing as an object whose appearance does not involve its context, then there is no such thing as a 'raw' sense-data which can be decontextualized and yet remain the same. As to the first, this is part of the force of starting my analysis with and focusing so heavily on very simple perceptual phenomena– the figure-ground structure is present at the ground level of visual experience. Now, this does not quite show definitively that all perceptual experience involves something like the figure-ground structure (which I will argue in Part V). However, at this point I think it is a reasonable move to make, since rejecting it would mean that we would need disconnected theories to explain our experience of simple figures and of complex objects. This prospect seems, I think, unappealing at the very least. In addition, there is, as I will try to show, a fairly straightforward way of expanding the figure-ground structure to explain more complex and everyday perceptions. The second point (that there are no decontextualizable sense-data) is simply a phenomenological point arrived at by looking at figures like the ones that I have discussed. This claim has implications not only as (yet another) reason to reject sense-data theories, but also for how we must describe the transparency of visual experience and what it is to be perceptually aware of something.

Remaining within the same two-dimensional boundaries, consider figure E. As Köhler describes it, in figure E "under normal conditions the letter K is visually non-existent,"[36] despite the fact that the observer will likely have had enormous experience with that letter. That is, unless someone is told of the presence of the letter 'K' in the drawing, rarely will anyone see a 'K' there. Instead, one will see an 'I' figure enclosing a diamond. Now, of course, saying that in certain contexts objects or figures cannot be recognized is a long way from saying that those figures are literally not perceived. However, I now ask, if the letter K *is* perceived in figure E, for example, in what sense is this so? Dretske, for one, offers a possible account in terms of a certain type of perceptual awareness.[37] He draws the distinction between thing-awareness and fact-awareness, where the latter is specifically seeing *that* p is the case (that there is a black K on the page), and the former is simply for the object merely to have a sensory presence in

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[36]Köhler, 1947: p.115

[37]Dretske, 1993. I do not mean to be directly addressing Dretske's various arguments here, but am only conveniently using the general distinction that he makes in his paper.

one's visual field. However, if the figure-ground structure is the simplest form that a perceived object can take, then there is no such thing as a 'mere presence' in the visual field, and so the simple fact that an object has a sensory impact is not sufficient for its being an element in one's awareness.[38] Thus, the point is that the basic 'parts' of what one perceives are organized wholes, and that we do not have awareness of these wholes in virtue of any more basic awareness of their isolated parts. This fact is exemplified by the context-effects in White's and Zöllner's illusions. Of course, we can take a figure, like E, and decompose it into its smaller elements, but then we no longer would have the same figure.

All of this goes, in the end, to make a fairly modest claim. If perception of a figure is had in virtue of the figure-ground structure (both intra-figural organization as well as perceptual expression or suggestion), then Merleau-Ponty's account is able to create a wedge to get in underneath, at a more basic level, both sensorimotor understanding and normative tensions. While figure-ground organization is a feature of very basic perceptual objects, it is nevertheless a structure complex enough to account for the non-sensible visual presence of hidden elements, and account for them as a primitive phenomenon. It is the plausibility of perceptual expression as basic that gets Merleau-Ponty's project off of the ground as an account of all perceptual experience.

PART V: ORGANIZATION IN THE PERCEPTION OF STABLE OBJECTS

Merleau-Ponty writes, "we now discover the core of reality: a thing is a thing because, whatever it imparts to us, is imparted through the very organization of its sensible aspects."[39] How can this be so? To say that an object is 'organized' or is an 'organizational unit' is by itself a trivial claim. For any object, the sides and edges will all be certain distances from each other, the parts might be connected in various ways (by hinges, glue, chemical bonds, electromagnetic attraction). All of these are relations organized into the form of an object. Starting with an analysis of this kind of purely physical organization will not get us very far in understanding how the visual field is arranged for a perceiving subject, however. As train tracks move off into the distance, the spatial

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[38]I am not claiming that one must be *explicitly* aware of something (i.e. paying attention to it) in order to be aware of it.

[39]Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962: p.376.

relation between the two tracks remains constant while, for vision, they look almost to be converging at the horizon. We might think also of the example, from Part I, of looking at sheets of paper through a reduction screen– a change in the larger context alters the appearance of a local region. So, this might be taken as evidence that organizational concepts plausibly shed light on the perception of everyday objects just as they did for two-dimensional figures.

However, there are of course a number of possible disanalogies between the simple drawings and normal objects which would prevent the analysis of the former from being extended to the latter. For one, many of the two-dimensional drawings are variable or ambiguous. Just as we can look at the diamond shape in figure D as sitting on the ground of the square around it, with a little effort (perhaps more than it takes to see the diamond as figure) I can see the square as a figure with a diamond-shaped hole in the middle. It is a bit more difficult to see the spots in figure C as holes, but it is possible. (It is easier to do so if you draw a box around the spots to give an outline to what would be the new figure.) Then, of course, there are the hackneyed Necker cube and duck-rabbit, which are ambiguous *par excellence.* In these ambiguities, there is certainly evidence for the need to explicate organizational coherence, but it is difficult to find anything similar in the realm of everyday objects. Second, the central focus of my analysis of the figure-ground structure (the phenomenon of expression) does not seem relevant to the perception of three-dimensional objects. I look around the room in which I now sit, and it is filled with all sorts of objects which are arranged some on top of others, some right in front of me on my desk and others pressed into the far corner, all variously in and out of my shifting attention and gaze. Which are the figures, which the ground? There is no undifferentiated background as there is with a dot on a page against which the objects present themselves, but only more objects.

As to the first issue, that of perceptual ambiguity, Merleau-Ponty seems to agree, writing, "in a normal visual field, the segregation of planes and outlines is irresistible; for example, when I walk along an avenue, I cannot bring myself to see the spaces between the trees as thing and the trees themselves as background."[40] However, the fact that alternate organizations are not generally possible does not show the absence of organization. Further, cases of non-voluntary perceptual ambiguity are not so uncommon, and, as Strawson points out, are not

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[40]Merleau-Ponty, *Ibid.*, p.307

limited to the duck-rabbit and its two-dimensional relatives:

> "I am looking towards a yellow flowering bush against a stone wall, but I see it as yellow chalk marks scrawled on the wall. Then the aspect changes and I see it normally, that is I see it as a yellow flowering bush against the wall."[41]

Merleau-Ponty relates a similar experience:

> "If I walk along a shore towards a ship which has run aground, and the funnel or masts merge into the forest bordering on the sand dune, there will be a moment when these details suddenly become part of the ship, and indissolubly fused with it to form a continuous picture of the upper part of the ship."[42]

Why, though, should we analyze these two cases in terms of some sort of Gestalt organization? They might just as well be counted as examples of our commonsense notion of 'getting a better look'. Strawson himself describes the case above as two instances of 'seeing as'. Nonetheless, we can still ask, What is it to get a better look at something? What is it to have a look or a view on something at all? There is a plausible route, I claim, in which answering questions about what it is for an object to form a coherent unit will at the same time answer these questions of what it is for a person have an object as the content of her perception, and thus that the examples above are best explainable as cases, not of seeing two 'aspects' of the same thing, but as Gestalt re-organizations. To do this, it must be explained how the apparatus developed in Part IV will lead to an understanding of the everyday perception of real objects.

   The notion of what it is for an object to be organized is now in need of being relieved of its emptiness. As I pointed out above, it is not clear at first sight how to extend the characteristics of the figure-ground structure into object perception for the simple reason that it is not clear that there is anything which obviously fills the role of figure or ground. Merleau-Ponty is, I think, cognizant of this concern but realizes that there is a way to roughly divide a perceived environment. As Gibson puts it, "For any fixed point of observation, the persisting layout of the environment is divided into hidden and unhidden surfaces."[43] This

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[41]Strawson, 1974: pp.57-58.
[42]Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962: p.20
[43]Gibson, 1986: p.193

division should *not* be taken as sharp, but more like a gradual slope
from what is centrally located before us or what our attention is focused
on (though these are not necessarily the same), to objects located at the
margins of the visual field and at the periphery which we see less clearly,
and then to what is totally occluded at the backs of or behind objects.
Nor, moreover, should we think that this is a division that the perceiver
herself makes when looking about, and this is for two reasons. One,
the objects of perception are *objects*, not simply the fronts of objects–
when I see a book, I take myself to see a book, not the facing side of
a book (how precisely this can be so is what we are trying to explain,
but *that* it is so seems clear). Second, a subject does not view his
environment from a 'fixed point', but is constantly looking and moving
around, bringing what was hidden a moment ago into view and putting
out of view what was a moment ago before one's eyes. Merleau-Ponty
writes, "objects form a system in which one cannot show itself without
concealing others. More precisely, the inner horizon of an object cannot
become an object without the surrounding objects' becoming a horizon,
and so vision is an act with two facets."[44] Here, first of all, we have the
introduction of important terminology: 'object' and 'horizon'. These
are the concepts which correspond to the notions, respectively, of figure
and ground. The object*[45] is that which I now have in view and under
my gaze– the sensible and unhidden part of the book which I am free
to inspect in detail without moving the book in relation to me. The
'horizons' of this perception are all the other aspects of the book which
are currently out of my sight, but which nevertheless have a visual
presence. So how do these non-sensible parts have a visual presence?

My claim, following Merleau-Ponty, is that *the other sides of the
book are present to me in precisely the same way that the page is present
underneath the single spot.* The front of the book, the parts of it which
currently hold my gaze, expresses or 'suggests' the book as a whole (its
other sides, its solidity) just as the spot expresses the ground on which
it sits. To finish the quotation with which I started this section, "a
thing is a thing because, whatever it imparts to us, is imparted through
the very organization of its sensible aspects in which *the 'aspects' are
mutually significatory and absolutely equivalent.*"[46] Thus, the front of

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[44]Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962: p.78.

[45]The terminology is misleading. As used here, 'object' does not mean what
it normally means, but is a technical term for an element in the object-horizon
structure. Thus, I will use 'object*' for the technical notion, and 'object' for the
usual term roughly synonymous with 'thing'.

[46]Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962: p.376. (my emphasis).

the book which I now see from this perspective, the object*, is given to me as an aspect of a whole unified object because I am presented with an object all of whose various aspects (its horizons) are situated into an organized system, and this system is expressed visually in what is sensibly visible from my present perspective. Thus, the book from this perspective looks thick and like it has a back. To put it another way, parallel to how it was put in Part IV, *the facing part of an object has a phenomenological character which expresses the indeterminate*[47] *presence of the hidden parts of the object (the horizons) in virtue of the organizational context in which it is situated.* The indeterminate perceptual presence of the other sides of the book are manifested in the appearance of the sensible portion. Merleau-Ponty writes, "the reverse or underneath side of objects is perceived simultaneously with their visible aspect."[48] Again, the notion of expression should be taken as a basic concept, a simple relation irreducible to anything like sensorimotor understanding or felt normative tensions.

The argument that the front, sensible parts of an object can express the presence of the other parts in the same irreducible way that the dot expresses the page is essentially one from plausibility. If we do not need these other notions of tensions or sensorimotor contingencies to explain the visual presence of the paper under the dot, why should they be invoked to explain the presence of the back of my book? Of course, the obvious response is that these other notions *can* explain non-sensory presence of the backs of objects, and my aim is not to show that they irrefutably cannot. The point is to start with a simple case which these other theories seemingly are unable to explain but which is nevertheless a case of non-sensory or amodal perception, and merely show that there is a plausible alternative to these other theories which covers at least one kind of case which they cannot. Now, thinking back to the figure-ground examples, one thing that is demonstrated is that the indeterminate perceptual presence of something can come apart from, and is thus not equivalent to, the knowledge or experience of the possibility or pull of more determinate experiences of that thing. What this shows, which was suggested in Part IV, is that the non-sensory perceptual experience of something which we have when it is occluded is in fact more fundamental than any sense we might have of less- or non-occluded experiences of that thing. This is because I can not have an experience which is constituted by the promise of a more determinate

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[47]The indeterminacy here is, just as described in Part IV, a positive presence of indeterminacy (again, this is following Kelly, 2005).

[48]Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p.394.

experience of an object x (e.g., a sensorimotor understanding) if I do not have an experience of the presence of x; in other words, I could not have a sensorimotor understanding of how the appearance of an object will change when I move around to the back if the back itself is not perceptually present (of course, on Noë's theory, these two are always the same). What the simple figure-ground cases show, however, is that it can be the other way around– I can perceive the presence of something without there being a sensorimotor understanding of how its appearance will change with a closer look (and without a tension to get a more determinate view). And this makes sense if we want to think (as naive or direct realists do) that we experience objects as the ground of all possible experiences of them. As Merleau-Ponty writes, "it is because I perceive the table with its definite shape and size that I presume, for every change of distance or orientation, a corresponding change of shape and size, and not the reverse." [49] Thus, in re-considering the figure-ground structure in terms of the object-horizon structure, we provide not only a theory of non-sensible perception as irreducible (in the sense that I have been using) but will also explain the possibility for anything like sensorimotor understandings or felt tensions toward an optimal view. I have a sense from where I am sitting now that there is a better look at the underside of my desk because the underside is already manifested in the phenomenal character of the sensible top of the desk.

What can be understood now, then, is how the expression of the hidden sides of an object by the sensible parts is part of an organizational or contextual whole. In saying that expression occurs in virtue of organization, the notion of 'organizational context' here is twofold. First, the object itself, as a unit, is understood as a Gestalt whole in the way that a group of spots forms a unit, and so one side of the object appears as part of a larger whole (the object) and visually expresses that whole just as one spot looks to be part of a group, or the hidden zone of the page is part of a larger field of paper (or, perhaps more convincingly, the way a single line in a painting takes on the appearance of a whisker when contextualized properly on a man's lip). Secondly, there is the larger environmental context in which the object is situated which includes surrounding objects and spaces. Thus, differences in either of

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[49] *Ibid.*, p.351. It should be noted that by his use of 'definite' Merleau-Ponty is not contradicting the thesis that we perceive various parts of objects indeterminately. We perceive objects as having determinate shapes (that is, that the shape of an object does not change through my experience of it), but the sense of precisely what that shape is, is indeterminate.

these two levels of context will result in the same 'front' (object*) of an object having a different phenomenological character even when it has the same causal impact on the senses.[50] It has been observed[51] that if I am walking around on a movie set full of facades, these all look thin and 'fake' to me, while the exact same facades, if attached to an actual house, will have a different phenomenological character– they will look thick and real. We can explain why these facades look thick or thin (why they express either a real house or only the back of a scene-piece) by appealing to the two layers of context in which the front, as object*, occurs. In the case in which we see the thickness of a real house, the front expresses the rest of the house (indeterminately) precisely in virtue of the fact that the front appears embedded in a unit with the other elements of the house; and this larger house-unit is such in part because it is situated into an environment with other houses (for, as Kelly points out, if I am walking through a movie set and then unknowingly wander onto a regular street, I will likely continue seeing the fronts of real houses as thin facades).

So, Merleau-Ponty's account requires a reconsideration of how to think of apparent or perspectival contents (i.e., how a coin or house looks 'from here'). The account is, at first sight, somewhat similar to the sensorimotor theory– both make the claim that it is in encountering an object from where I am, that I perceive the other aspects of it. However, instead of claiming that in seeing perspectival shape of the tilted coin I also have implicit knowledge of how a circular coin changes appearance as it is tilted, and so can also see it as circular when it also looks elliptical, I want to say that it is in fact part of the appearance of the tilted coin that it simply looks like a tilted coin– the other parts of it which I might view are indeterminately expressed in the look of the tilted coin. If, however, the hidden parts of the coin in fact influence the phenomenological character of the unhidden portion, this requires rejecting outright Noë's account of our seeing the tilted coin as elliptical. For, if Merleau-Ponty's (or, my version of him) phenomenological claim is true, then there is in fact no way to make sense of the

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[50]This is true even when the lighting context remains fixed. That is, there is an obvious sense in which an object's appearance will change in a different context because the reflected light coming from it will change, and so it will not have the same sensory impact. The claim here, however, is that even when these physical measures of sameness are held fixed, the phenomenology will change.

[51]In Kelly, 2005: p.78. He of course would explain the house looking thick differently, as would Noë. However, the point I am trying to make at this moment is only that context affects appearance; how to best explain that phenomenon is a different argument (which, of course, I am also making in the course of this paper).

'apparent' shape of the tilted coin which is part of our experience and which must be transcended in order to perceive the real constant shape (transcended either through sensorimotor knowledge or a felt tension drawing us toward the view from everywhere). Just as, in discussing the figure-ground structure, there is no such thing as a 'bare' figure without a context, there is no such thing as an apparent shape of an object which can be described as an experience of something independent of the unit and environment into which it is organized.

Independently of my Merleau-Pontian considerations, there is already reason to be suspicious of the claim that we can see something like an apparent shape. Can we see the tilted coin as an ellipse? For one thing, it is much easier to do so if I close one eye and look at it. But, if it looks 'more elliptical' when I concentrate and close one eye, doesn't that mean that it does not quite look like an ellipse in normal binocular vision? Considering Noë and Kelly's[52] claims, Schwitzgebel, staring at a tilted penny, writes that it looks "not elliptical at all, in any sense or by any effort I can muster. I can't manage any Gestalt switch [as Kelly claims]; I discern no elliptical 'apparent shape' ".[53] He thinks that this debate over what a perspectival appearance might be is in fact an intractable confusion, and Merleau-Ponty offers us reason to understand why it should seem so. To say that there is a perspectival apparent shape (over whose description we are supposed to be arguing) assumes that there is in fact something there which can be abstracted from its context and introspected upon, but this is not the case. Insofar as the look of something is intimately bound up with its context, this very act of abstraction or isolation would change the appearance not only of the coin as a whole but of the sensibly visible parts as well. Of course, it is perfectly compatible with this view that it should be possible to enact such an isolation (and, in fact, Merleau-Ponty believes that painters are capable of doing so), as long as the mistake is not made of thinking that what appears in the isolating case is what was there in the perception all along.[54]

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[52]Kelly does not claim that in normally perceiving a tilted coin we see an ellipse. Rather, he claims that it is possible, through a 'gestalt switch' to see the elliptical shape. This is compatible with the position I am defending, as long as the coin as well as its context are *both* seen in this more 'painterly attitude' in order to perceive the ellipse.

[53]Schwitzgebel, 2006: p.4

[54]Additionally, the entire surroundings of the coin would alter in appearance as well in the event of this 'visual abstraction'.

PART VI: EXPLAINING PERCEPTUAL CONSTANCY

Given what has been said so far, extending Merleau-Ponty's theory to an explanation of size and shape constancy is fairly straightforward. How is it that, when an object moves in relation to me, despite changes in perspective it continues to look to be the same shape and size? The general shape and size of the object are *already* perceived in the appearance of the sensible front. Say, for example, a book is held in front of me and is rotated, and as it rotates I take a look at each side and remark to myself, "that's one side of the book and it's yellow, that's another side and it's blue," and on and on. Now, if we say that my ability to see the book itself as a whole unit is based on my ability to see each side singly, and then by an act of induction link them all together into a unit, then we can no longer say that it is experience of the object itself which grounds my knowledge of it, but rather my knowledge which grounds the existence of the object. "The cube with its sides distorted by perspective," Merleau-Ponty states, "nevertheless remains a cube, not because I imagine the successive aspects of the six faces if I turned the cube round in my hand, but because the perspective distortions are not raw data.[55] Each presented side of an object is not 'raw data' (i.e. sense-data or qualia) because they are presented to the perceiver integrated into a system in which the other sides of the object are already expressed in the single perspectival view of it. Thus, just as it is for Noë and Kelly, the explanation of how it is that hidden parts of an object are nonetheless perceptually present is also the explanation of how objects appear to maintain stable sizes and shapes. It may be, as Kelly claims, that I do experience certain perspectives as being worse than others, and I may have knowledge of how the appearance of the object will change as I move around it, as Noë claims, but either of these will only be had in virtue of my more basic perception of a solid object with its stable size and shape which I have in virtue of an organized system.

The case of color constancy is likewise explained as a case of non-sensible perception, and the principles on which it rests are even more straightforwardly extended from the discussion of two-dimensional figures than was shape constancy. As the page which remains present beneath the spot, so the constant surface color remains beneath variations in lighting and shadow. "The real color persists beneath ap-

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[55]Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962: p.350.

pearances as the background persists beneath the figure, that is, not as a seen or thought-of quality, but through a non-sensory presence". [56] This does not mean that there actually is one 'real' color. The real color is present only indeterminately, just as the page beneath the spot, and need not be sensibly experienceable. Now we can explain why it is that a reduction screen breaks up color constancy, as in the example first given in Part I. The shadows which fall across the paper express the surface color, but only in virtue of their integration into the larger context which includes the papers, the desk, and the lighting. What the introduction of the reduction screen does is effectively break up this more general organization, which prevents the expression of the surface color in the phenomenological character of the shadow-crossed papers. Thus, in normal vision, for there to be constancy, there must be "a comprehensive vision, in which our gaze lends itself to the whole spectacle".[57] The shadows look like shadows, they look shadowy, and not like the color of the object because my perception of them implicates a larger visual field, a whole which is not reducible to its parts.

Part VII: A (brief) Conclusion

An interesting phenomenon is revealed when one pays close attention to the contextual relations in what I have been calling the 'simple' cases of two-dimensional figures. The phenomenon of perceptual expression or suggestion brings out a basic way in which seeing the front of something is related to the visual presence of what, in a certain sense, we do not see. Using this notion, I have tried to understand how what is found in the simple cases can extend to explain how we see the full three-dimensional objects that we normally encounter. It is by appealing to the very look of the front of something that we can understand how it is that we perceive more than just the front. The result is an alternative, and perhaps plausible, way of understanding what it is to see an object from a perspective, or what we see in the appearance of the front of something. A number of difficulties and questions still remain. I will end by mentioning only one. Looming over this discussion is the question of why we should be convinced that what is found in the perception of two-dimensional figures is also to be found in that of three-dimensional items. I have addressed this to some extent above– drawing out pertinent continuities between the two types

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[56] *Ibid.*, p.356
[57] *Ibid.*, p.263

of case, and pointing to supportive phenomenological observations, and these make the account at the very least a plausible alternative– but there nevertheless remains, I think, an air of assumption on this point. Although this issue is crucial, I do not know how it could be definitively resolved. Despite this nagging doubt, the important point which I hope to have established is that there is a way to make sense, even if tentative, of amodal or non-sensible perception as the result of Gestalt-organizational phenomena, phenomena which are irreducible to other features of perceptual experience.
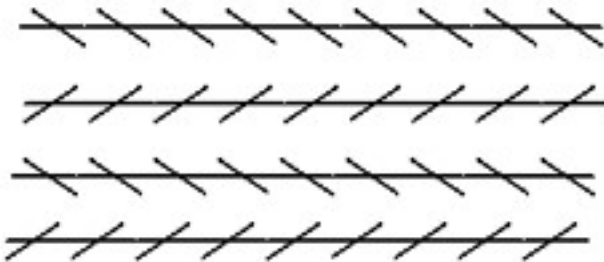
Appendix:

Figure A:
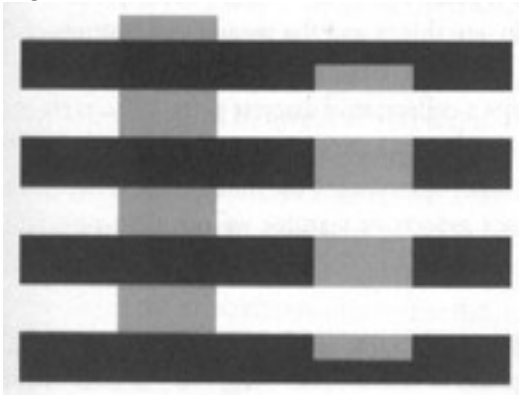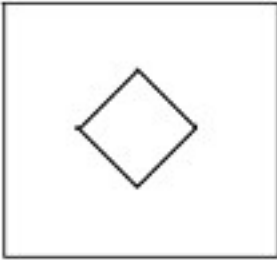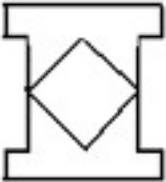

Figure B:

Figure C:

Figure D:

Figure E:

Figure F:

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T.A. GRESHLER is a student of philosophy. The two areas of philosophy she is most concerned with are: the concept war in political philosophy and Kantian metaphysics. In addition to her philosophical ganders, Tiffany is interested in analyzing the way in which music, dance, and theatre contribute to the well being of individuals within a given society. Her main goal in life is to own a 99 seat theatre, in which she can serve red wine and play backgammon with her regular patrons. She wants to thank Hans Sluga for caring.

GARSON LEDER main interests lie in the philosophies of science and mind. He will be serving in Mauritania as a Peace Corps volunteer and plans to further his studies upon his return.

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RICHARD SANDLIN was a Philosophy Major who graduated from UC Berkeley in the not so distant past. He is a recovering Political Science major who came to the field with a keen interest in Political and Continental Philosophy. His current interests include Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science, Philosophy of Language, Epistemology and Aesthetics. He hopes to study these, and perhaps some more Political Philosophy, at the graduate level in the not so distant future. Richard would like to thank his parents for not discouraging, and for even encouraging, his study of philosophy.