

8 *Authoritative Self-Knowledge and Perceptual Individualism*

In ‘Cartesian Error and the Objectivity of Perception’ (Ch. 7 above) I discussed three issues: the nature of individualism, the role of first-person authority in traditional Cartesian individualist views, and the way that considerations of objectivity support a non-individualist view of perception. I treated each of these issues only in a brief and preliminary way. Professor Matthews concentrates on the latter two. Here I hope to clarify some of the points I made on these two issues by responding to his criticisms, and by developing some of my points further.

I

Let us begin with the matter of first-person authority. I centered the discussion on Descartes, attempting to understand a traditional, Cartesian motivation for accepting individualism. I took the notion of first-person authority in an intuitive way. I did not provide an account of the phenomenon since I conceive of that task as requiring very substantial systematic development. But I did make certain commitments regarding it.

Matthews holds that the two confluations I cite are not sufficient by themselves to lead to individualism. The second conflation is (in my words):

conflating the fact that we are authoritative about our actual thoughts and would be authoritative about what our thoughts would be in any (relevant) counterfactual situation, with the claim that we are actually authoritative about certain thoughts that we would be thinking regardless of what actual or counterfactual situation we would be in.

The idea was that in this conflation, the Cartesian moves without argument from what I call a fact in this quotation to what I call a claim. Matthews maintains that this and the first conflation carry us only to the conclusion that we know what thoughts we would think if we were in the imagined counterfactual situation. He thinks that something more is needed if we are to draw the conclusion that

the thoughts we would think in the counterfactual situation are the very same thoughts that we are thinking now.

But this conclusion is already contained in the statement of the second conflation: There are *certain* thoughts that we are actually authoritative about (and, of course, actually thinking since authority applies paradigmatically to actual present thoughts) and would be thinking in the counterfactual situation as well. I think that there is no other way to read the expression 'certain'. It is a 'wide scope' expression *par excellence*. The expression attaches the authority to particular thoughts in the actual situation that are held in relevant counterfactual situations as well. There is no gap in the reasoning.

The confluations are to be understood as leading to individualism in the context of reflection on our authoritative knowledge of some of our present mental events. Descartes was impressed with this sort of knowledge. I think that he was right to be impressed. He was further right in thinking that we have a special, strong, intuitively direct, authoritative (though I think not infallible) knowledge of certain of our present mental events. He was on to something real and profound. The difficult philosophical problem—still unsolved in my opinion—is coming to a deep and accurate understanding of this sort of knowledge. My claim is that the confluations seduced traditional individualists like Descartes into implicitly construing this authority in a way that has no intuitive warrant and that led to stronger epistemic conclusions than it can really support.

Suppose that one thinks that one has a peculiarly direct knowledge of particular thoughts one is thinking. And suppose that one is involved in the relevant confluations. One slides easily between evaluating thoughts counterfactually and determining what thoughts would be thought in counterfactual circumstances. One does not reflect on the difference between, on one hand, the necessity that one *has* the relevant sort of authority (if one is a certain sort of self-conscious being) and, on the other, a putative power to extend one's authority about certain thoughts one actually has to the counterfactual cases—giving one the right to claim that one would have authoritative knowledge of *those same thoughts* even though the counterfactual circumstances in which one would be thinking are entirely different.

Then it is easy to see how one could conclude that the nature of one's thoughts is independent of one's environment. One simply performs a thought experiment. One fixes on some empirical contingent thoughts that one is presently thinking and imagines that causal antecedents of one's thoughts were very different. The causal antecedents of those particular thoughts would seem to be contingently related to those thoughts. This is suggested by the fact that even if they are veridical, they could have been non-veridical. It would appear that one could just fix those thoughts authoritatively and hold them in mind even as the background scenery is changed. The conclusion is that one's authoritative and direct knowledge is supposed to show that no change in background scenery could affect the nature of the thoughts that are under one's authoritative control. My view is that no intuitively plausible conception of first-person authority warrants

so strong a conclusion. Apart from the conflation, even Descartes's conception of authority does not warrant individualism.

Matthews offers an alternative argument that may have led some to embrace individualism. I do not doubt that his argument has had some influence. I do doubt that it has much to do with first-person authority. For purposes of the diagnostic argument, Matthews glosses authority twice. Once our being authoritative about our thoughts is glossed: 'we know what we believe, desire, and so on.' Once it is counted equivalent to our knowing what we believe, desire, intend, and so on, in both actual and counterfactual circumstances.

These characterizations are certainly not Cartesian. They do not suggest anything special about some of our knowledge of our mental events. They apply to all our self-knowledge. Much of the knowledge that we have of our own beliefs, desires, and so on, is not special, and is similar to the knowledge that we have of others' mental states. Matthews's glosses do not speak to traditional intuitions that some of our self-knowledge is fundamentally first-person singular, applies paradigmatically to present occurrent conscious mental events, and is in some sense peculiarly immediate, authoritative, certain, or central to personhood. In short, the glosses ignore the apparently special character of first-person authoritative knowledge. So I think that the argument based on this conception of knowledge is not a serious contender for explaining the Cartesian motivations for individualism.

The argument Matthews offers is as follows. (1) We are 'authoritative' about our thoughts in the senses that Matthews lays down. Hence, (2) we can ascertain by empirical observation the type-stability of our tokened thoughts in the face of actual changes in the environment. (3) When we undertake such observations we discover that our tokened thoughts are type-invariant in the face of changes in the environment. (4) But if our tokened thoughts are thus type-invariant, individualism is true, since individualism is the view that an individual's mental state and event kinds can in principle be individuated in complete independence of that individual's physical and social environments.

In my view, the failure of the argument lies primarily in steps (3) and (4). (1) is defective only in its inadequacy as a conception of first-person authority. We surely know what some of our thoughts are and would know what some of our thoughts were in the relevant counterfactual circumstances. (2) does not *follow* from (1), as the argument claims. (There is nothing in (1) about type-stability or empirical observation.) But apart from the fact that the sort of knowledge described in (2) is more complex than 'empirical observation' suggests (an interesting conjunction of first-person and third-person points of view is involved), (2) seems to me acceptable. (3) is also acceptable if it is clearly understood to apply to an 'observation' of type-stability in the face of (*some*) *actual* changes in the environment—the condition laid down in (2). Of course, our thoughts frequently do shift under actual changes in the environment. We change our minds. But sometimes our thoughts remain stable, and frequently we know this.

As stated, however, (3) does not clearly confine itself to such actual changes. It may be read as a generalization over *any* ‘changes’ in the environment—counterfactual variations as well as actual ones. On this more general reading, (3) directly contradicts the results of the anti-individualist thought experiments that I have set out. But it does so without offering any interesting support for itself. It certainly gains no support from the relatively modest claims about knowledge set out in (1) and (2).

(4) takes up this generalized reading of (3). Unless (4) is applied to all possible variations in the individual’s environment (laying aside again variations that would lead the individual to change his or her mind), it is irrelevant to a defense of individualism. Type-stability of some of our thoughts under some actual and counterfactual changes in the environment is compatible with both individualism and its denial. So either (3) or (4)—depending on where the implicit move from ‘some actual changes’ to ‘all relevant counterfactual changes’ is made—begs the question.

Matthews conjectures at one point that I may accept the view that there can be no empirical warrant for counterfactual conclusions. I do not accept this view. And nothing in my position commits me to it. The problem with the argument he develops and criticizes is that it rests on counterfactual conclusions for which the argument gives no warrant at all—empirical, first-person authoritative, apriori, or otherwise. I see no argument for the transition from some empirical cases to all relevant counterfactual cases. The argument appears to fall into a variant of the second conflation that I cited. Since the conclusions are also incompatible with intuitions on which I rest the non-individualist thought experiments, they beg the question.

Matthews’s own criticism of the argument centers on (1). He thinks we are authoritative about our thoughts, but ‘not in the sense that the above argument requires if it is to go through’. He holds,

We are authoritative about the tokening of thoughts, but not about the types to which tokened thoughts belong. Or, to put it another way, we are authoritative in the sense that we can *express* our beliefs, desires, etc. Thus, I can express what I would describe as my belief that water is wet by saying ‘water is wet.’ Yet the fact that we can so express our thoughts does *not* entail that we know what thoughts we have thereby expressed. (p. 80)

As support for this view, Matthews cites the Twin Earth cases in which the twins do not share certain beliefs. He holds that they could not know that they do not share beliefs. He quotes me with approval: ‘our thoughts are determined to be what they are partly by the nature of our environment. And we are authoritative about neither our environment nor about the nature of that determination.’

Although I share Matthews’s opposition to the argument, I do not accept his mode of criticizing it. I stand by the view that we appear to agree upon: that we are authoritative neither about the environment nor about the principles that govern the individuation of our thoughts. But my formulation of this

view involves the intuitive, relatively pre-theoretic conception of authority that interested Descartes. It is obvious that we do not have special authoritative first-person (-singular) knowledge of the environment. It is nearly as obvious that we do not have such knowledge of the general principles that govern the individuation of thought—or the general principles governing the individuation of anything else. Matthews's explications of 'authority' make it clear that he is not operating with this conception. If I understand it correctly, his criticism of the argument depends on claims that seem to me to be very implausible—certainly stronger than any I would make. This takes some explaining.

I do not know what Matthews means by saying that we are authoritative about our thought tokens, 'in the sense that we can express our beliefs and desires'. But this does not seem to me to be a sense of either authority or knowledge. Perhaps he is getting at the important though rather vague point, found in Wittgenstein, that part of our authority over our thoughts involves some sort of proprietary right to initiate them and express them. If this is what Matthews means, I think that he is touching on a significant *element* in the understanding of first-person authority. But whatever this comes to, it is not all there is to first-person authority. In my view, first-person authority primarily concerns knowledge, not expression. And it does not reduce merely to the knowledge that one has initiated some particular thought token or other.

Matthews's central negative point in his criticism of the argument seems to go beyond a view that I think is already deeply implausible: that we lack any sort of *authoritative knowledge* of what thoughts we think. The further claim seems to be that in view of the twin earth thought experiments we do not even *know* what thoughts we think or express: 'The authoritative knowledge that we lack is precisely the knowledge that would enable us to correctly individuate our thoughts.' This suggests that we do not know our own thoughts because we cannot correctly and knowledgeably individuate them—cannot know which thoughts they are.

I do not accept these claims. I think that we do individuate our thoughts. That is, we know them as the particular types of thoughts that they are. We know which thoughts we think. I think it completely unacceptable to hold that we do not know what our thoughts are. When I occurrently and consciously think that water is wet at a given time, I typically know that I think that water is wet. Denying this would, in my opinion, be a *reductio* of one's own position. Moreover, I hold the further view that this knowledge is authoritative and distinctive in *something like* the way Descartes held that it was, even though it is not infallible, and does not involve the powers of counterfactual discrimination that he attributed to it.

There are, of course, those influenced by Wittgenstein who hold that the proprietary right to avowals is all that first-person authority comes to: no knowledge at all (much less a distinct and interesting sort of knowledge) is involved. I find the reasons given for this view quite unpersuasive. But I have not undertaken to discuss them. The issues involved resist brief treatment. It suffices for my

present purposes to emphasize that this sort of view is not mine, and that the view is not entailed or, as far as I can see, made more plausible by my rejection of individualism.

The point that I emphasized in the paper is that first-person authoritative knowledge does not give one special insight into the principles underlying the individuation of our thoughts. We typically know our current, conscious thoughts. We individuate them in the sense that we know what thoughts we think. But we do not do so by knowing (much less by knowing in the way we know our own occurrent thoughts) general principles and environmental facts that conspire to make the thoughts what they are.

There is, of course, a sense in which we cannot—using phenomenological, explicational, or inferential abilities—discriminate thoughts that we actually have from thoughts that we might have had if the environment were relevantly different. None of our abilities that do not already presuppose the exercise of the relevant actual thoughts suffice to discriminate for us those thoughts from counterfactual alternatives. We cannot discriminate by introspection the actual situation from the various ‘twin’ counterfactual situations. I mean by this that we cannot use our authoritative self-knowledge to pick out some feature of our actual thoughts that distinguishes them from the counterfactual thoughts and that enables us (authoritatively) to give some ground for thinking that our thoughts are not the counterfactual ones but the actual ones. Our authority is over our actual thoughts, not over some comparison between them and non-actual thoughts.

But this state of affairs would undermine knowledge of our own thoughts only if our only means of identifying our own thoughts were to bring to bear phenomenological, explicational, or inferential abilities (specified independently of those thoughts) to distinguish them from every such alternative. Our self-knowledge would be undermined by the anti-individualist point of view only if we could know our actual thoughts only by being uniquely sensitive to their uniquely distinguishing features.

What reason is there to accept this condition on self-knowledge? I see no reason. And there are considerations to the contrary. It is extremely implausible to think that our knowledge of our own thoughts always depends purely on such abilities. We do not have to reason to the identity of our thoughts. We do not base the relevant self-knowledge on phenomenological accessories, or indeed on any sort of recognition.

This is not to say that we have an infallible access to our present conscious mental events. It is just to say that we do not gain the knowledge by exercising the sort of discursive abilities involved in discriminating our actual thoughts from counterfactual alternatives. Nor do we exercise special introspective recognitional abilities. Explicating the nature of the ‘directness’ involved in first-person knowledge is a complex problem. I intend to confront it elsewhere. But it is implausible, from the start and independently of any philosophical theory, to think that self-knowledge depends on our discriminating our

actual thoughts from all counterfactual alternatives that are compatible with those of our powers of discrimination that are independent of those actual thoughts.

I think that the analogous position does not even hold for the knowledge we have of particular observable physical entities. We can know things about certain observables without being able to discriminate them from all possible duplicates (except by seeing them rather than their duplicates). That is, we can have such knowledge even though if we were in a situation in which a duplicate were substituted for the object we actually observe, we could not discriminate the duplicate from the actual entity. I take it that the possibility that we could not discriminate such duplicates is entailed by the objectivity of perception, discussed in the last part of my paper. This objectivity hardly undermines empirical knowledge.

But the requirement that to know what thoughts we are thinking, we must have the ability to discriminate our thoughts from those of a Doppelgänger (in some way that does not presuppose the thinking of our actual thoughts) is, I think, even more implausible than this analogous position regarding perception.

The idea that we can attempt to determine what our thoughts are from a vantage point that is neutral as to which of various alternative thoughts we are thinking seems to me to be not only deeply implausible but incoherent. (I believe it also incoherent to think that we always find out what our thoughts are by purely empirical means—that is, in a way similar to the way we gain knowledge of our own and others' thoughts through observation of our behavior. I cannot, however, argue either of these points here.) These points are related to the special character of first-person authoritative knowledge. I freely concede that these matters are complex and difficult. A deeper explication of first-person authority is needed, and I shall have more to say about the matter elsewhere. But it seems clear from the outset that such an account must not require that one discriminate one's actual thoughts from counterfactual alternatives, from a vantage point that is independent of what thoughts one is actually thinking. One's first-person standpoint is inseparable from the thoughts that one actually thinks.

II

In the last section of 'Cartesian Error and the Objectivity of Perception', I gave a general argument against individualism about perceptual states. Professor Matthews raises some objections which he takes to undermine the argument. I think that these objections are off the mark. They fail to come to grips with the argument as it was presented. I am glad to have the opportunity to make its strategy clearer.

Matthews expounds the argument correctly. But I will repeat its premises for convenience: (i) Our perceptual experience represents or is about objects,

properties, and relations that are objective in a sense that entails the following: for any given person at any given time, there is no necessary function from all of that person's abilities, actions, and presentations up to that time to the natures of those entities that that person perceptually interacts with at that time (and is capable of perceiving at that or some prior time). (ii) We have perceptual representations (or perceptual states with contents) that specify particular objective types of objects, properties, or relations as such—not merely in terms of their relation to the perceiver. (iii) Some perceptual types that specify objective types of objects, properties, and relations as such, do so partly because of relations that hold between the perceiver (or at least members of the perceiver's species) and instances of those objective types. If there were no such relations, a perceiver would lack at least some perceptual intentional types that he or she has.

I provided an example that was supposed to illustrate how the argument worked. A person might have seen instances of certain small shadows and then come to misperceive a similarly sized crack as a shadow. In accord with the first premise, I stipulate that none of the person's representations or abilities could discriminate this particular crack from the sort of shadow that is visually represented. I assumed in accord with the second premise that the person's perceptual state was to be specified as of a shadow. Then I considered a counterfactual situation in which the person's environment never involved shadows of the relevant sort in the etiology of the person's (or his fellows') perceptual states. I imagined that the counterfactual environment has compensating, but different, optical and other laws that enable the perceiver's physical dispositions to be just as adaptive in the counterfactual environment as they are in the actual environment. I imagined that relevantly sized cracks were the source (by different causal processes than are common in the actual situation) of his and his fellows' perceptual states. I stipulated that the person's physical history, described in isolation from the environment, was to be held constant between actual and counterfactual situations. I concluded that whereas it is perfectly possible for the person to have perceptual states as of the relevant shadows in the actual situation, it is not possible for the person to have those same intentional perceptual states in the counterfactual situation. In view of the symmetries that I built into the thought experiment, a further view—unnecessary to the argument—seemed plausible. It seemed (and still seems) to me that the person would, and certainly could, have perceptions as of cracks.

Matthews concentrates on the example instead of the argument. He questions the supposition that the organism in the counterfactual environment perceives cracks as cracks. After considering an example other than the one I discussed, he concludes:

Burge's argument against individualism fails, I believe, not because he has seized on an inappropriate example, but rather because his claim about what perceptual representations represent fails to provide anything like a sufficient condition for individuating an organism's perceptual types. In particular, it fails to preclude the possibility that an organism's perceptual types may properly include more than a

single type of objective entity, so that an organism may represent entities of different objective types as instances of one and the same perceptual type. (p. 83)

The idea is that in my example, cracks and shadows may be instances of one and the same type of entity, and that the organism has perceptions as of this entity alone, in both actual and counterfactual cases. So there is no difference in the organism's intentional perceptual state between actual and counterfactual situations.

As criticism, these remarks come up short. In the first place, there is no discussion of the premises of my argument. There is no discussion of the reasoning that leads from them to my conclusion. It is unclear to me what Matthews questions in the argument I actually gave.

In the second place, my argument in no way depends on stating a sufficient condition for individuating an organism's perceptual types. I never attempted to state a sufficient condition, and I think it a *strength* of the argument that it is independent of any such attempt. I stand by my example. But nothing in the argument depends on attributing any specific perceptual states to the organism in the counterfactual situation. All that is important is that it be plausible that the counterfactual perceptual states are different from those in the actual situation. So the question about whether, in the illustration, the organism perceives cracks as cracks in the counterfactual situation is not directly relevant to the argument.

The argument depends primarily on commitment to a certain *necessary* condition, stated in the third premise, and on a general conception of objectivity, stated in the first. According to the third premise, some intentional perceptual types that specify objective types of entities do so *partly* because of relations between the perceiver, or members of the perceiver's species, and instances of those objective types.

There is no reliance on and no need for a sufficient condition here. The only claim I need and make is that, for some perceptual states, it is necessary that there be some interaction between the perceiver, or other members of the species, and some objective entities in order for those perceptual states to be typed in terms of those objective entities. In the illustrative example, the function of the premise is to prevent one from specifying the perceiver's counterfactual perceptual types in terms of shadows. (Matthews seems to concede this: 'Of course, there is no reason to suppose that in the counterfactual environment the organism perceives cracks as shadows...') More generally, the premise blocks attribution, in the counterfactual situation, of intentional perceptual states that specify the objective entities which the perceiver's actual perceptual states are about. In the counterfactual case, the necessary causal relations are missing.

These points shift the question from the counterfactual to the actual stage of the thought experiment. There remains Matthews's charge that the argument 'fails to preclude the possibility that an organism's perceptual types may properly include more than a single type of objective entity, so that an organism may

represent entities of different objective types as instances of one and the same perceptual type'. In the illustrative example, the perceiver might be thought to perceive both shadows and cracks as instances of the same more inclusive sort of objective entity.

Now it is not my intention to preclude such a possibility. As far as I am concerned, the possibility may obtain in every case to which my argument would apply. What I must preclude is that this possibility *always excludes the possibility that the perceiver also has different intentional perceptual states in the actual and counterfactual cases*. So, in the illustrative example, it is important that if the organism lacks 'shadow' perceptions in the counterfactual case, it be possible that it have them in the actual case. Whether the perceiver has in addition other more inclusive perceptions that are common between actual and counterfactual cases does not really matter.¹

How does my argument insure that the perceiver could have states in the actual situation which—by the third premise—it must lack in the counterfactual situation? And how does it do this without giving sufficient conditions for having particular intentional perceptual states? The argument is not committed to any particular attribution of perceptual states. But the first premise about objectivity sets a boundary on attribution. It prevents one from always adjusting the account of the organism's perceptual states in the actual situation so as to fit what is (by the third premise) possible in the counterfactual case. I will explain in more detail how this works.

The first premise has two functions in the argument. One is to entail that any series of perceptual effects on the body (and any series of non-intentional phenomenological effects, assuming there are such) might have had an entirely different series of objective entities as causal antecedents. This point is especially easy to concede if one considers the possibility of different physical (including, but not restricted to, optical) laws. Thus the same bodily effects could have been occasioned by different sorts of sources. The alternative sources might even have been in the same positions as the objective entities that we actually perceive. This traditional point is entailed by the first premise.

The second function of the first premise is to entail the possibility, in the actual situation, of a certain sort of misperception. As long as perception is objective in our sense, the organism must be capable of a certain sort of misperception. This is a misperception where the organism is unable in the context—using all its bodily, perceptual, and cognitive capacities—to discriminate the thing as it perceives it from the thing as it actually is. Call this '*fundamental misperception*'. I think it clear that the possibility of such misperception is part of our assumption that our perception is objective.

¹ Similarly, it does not matter whether the organism has 'crack' perceptions in the counterfactual case. In my view, it is intuitively clear that it could. If anything, this is more obvious than the perceptual attributions as of shadows in the actual case. But the main point is that the argument does not depend on this aspect of the example. Indeed, it does not rest on the example at all.

Since fundamental misperception is possible, imagine that it is actual at some time t for some organism. (We are assuming throughout, in accord with the second premise, that the perceptual content, or perceptual state, specifies objective entities as such.) Then utilizing the first function of the first premise, imagine counterfactually that the same organism is bodily identical from an individualistic point of view. But we vary the environmental antecedents of all the organism's perceptual states. Imagine that the organism never interacted in the appropriate way with the entities (relevant to the case) that it actually interacts with in acquiring the perceptions it actually acquires. (But imagine that it is reasonably well adapted to the environment anyway.) By the third premise, it must lack the intentional perceptual states that it actually has: In the counterfactual case, it fails to meet a necessary condition for having the same perceptual content it has in the actual situation. This is because, counterfactually, the entities specified in the actual misperception are not only not present at t ; they are not present in the counterfactual 'world' at all. So they never interacted with the organism or any member of the organism's species. (We assume, of course, that perceptual types and entities are chosen so as to meet the condition of the third premise. We need not assume that the third premise holds for all perceptual types.) So whatever perceptual states the organism has in the counterfactual case, it cannot there undergo the same misperception at t that it actually undergoes.

The appeal to the possibility of fundamental misperception in the argument obviates the need to state sufficient conditions for having any particular perceptual content. Whatever the sufficient conditions are, they must allow a loose enough fit between perceptions and the entities perceived, to allow for the objectivity of perception—for fundamental misperception.

The possibility of fundamental misperception precludes one from *always* adjusting the account of the organism's actual perceptions so as to make them veridical in both actual and counterfactual situations. One is precluded from always substituting for the perceptual states needed by the argument some inclusive objective perceptual states that are veridical and invariant between actual and counterfactual situations. The argument forces one to begin with a non-veridical perception. (It can force such a beginning on the mere assumption that fundamental misperception is possible.) Then environmental conditions are varied, without varying the organism's physical equipment. They are varied in ways that go beyond the individual instance and that affect the normal patterns of interaction between organism and environment. The variations make it obvious that the organism has not met a necessary condition, stated in the third premise, for being in the original non-veridical perceptual states. In the counterfactual situation, *that* sort of error is not possible. So the perceptual states differ.

Some arguments in philosophy rest on examples. Others rest primarily on more general principles, utilizing examples in a more supplementary way. Still others appeal to the practices of a science. My earlier arguments against individualism were of the first type.² The examples were primary. They were seen as a source for the development of more general principles. The present argument from visual perception is of the second type. It derives from more general principles.

But the example does play a supplementary role. And considerations of the third type—the practice of science—are also relevant. The example I gave accords not only with common sense but with scientific practice.³ We do attribute visual representations of cracks or shadows, even where—in a given instance—the perceiver is fundamentally unable to discriminate the one from the other.

² I have in mind the argument in ‘Individualism and the Mental’, in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy, Studies in Metaphysics*, ed. Peter A. French *et al.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979); and the argument in ‘Other Bodies’, in Andrew Woodfield (ed.), *Thought and Object*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) (Chs. 5 and 4 in this volume).

³ I discuss how and why the scientific study of vision attributes perceptual states of the relevant sort in ‘Individualism and Psychology’, *The Philosophical Review*, 95 (1986): 3–45 (Ch. 9 in this volume). I take it as fully in accord with common sense that someone could have fundamental misperceptions of the sort I used in the illustrative example.

I shall not discuss all of Matthews’s examples. But I do want to remark on two. I am not deeply concerned exactly how to specify the perceptual states of frogs. I think that this is a complex empirical issue. *If* frogs have objective perceptions and are capable of fundamental misperceptions, then our argument will apply to them. I do think that in a laboratory *some* individual organisms (not necessarily frogs) could be induced to have systematic misperceptions, in such a way that they never come in direct causal relation to the sorts of entities that their perceptions specify. The appeal to other members of the organism’s species in the third premise of my argument was partly motivated by just such considerations. As noted, there are complex problems in specifying perceptual states of particular lower animal species (although I am not at all persuaded by the various attempts to show that these problems are in principle beyond solution). It seems to me very plausible that a reasonable theory for frogs will attribute fundamental mistakes in those cases where the frog gulps down BBs. It is clear that the frog has made some sort of mistake, assuming that it is attributed intentional states at all. Whether it is a mistake of the frog’s visual system, or some higher-level mistake is, for me, an open question. In any case, the example of the BBs does not serve to vary the frog’s intentional states between normal and laboratory conditions. The frog has a constant intentional state that is correct in the wild and mistaken in the laboratory.

In Matthews’s last section there is a misunderstanding of the twin-earth examples regarding water. (Cf. ‘Other Bodies’, note 2 above.) Where water and some other visually similar substance are exchanged between actual and counterfactual cases, it is no essential part of my view that the *perceptual* experiences of the protagonists are different. I take it that there is a perfectly good sense in which water and twater (the other substance on Twin Earth) are perceptually identical for the protagonists. So I can assume that the perceptual experiences in this case are invariant. The differences that interest me, in such a case, are cognitive, not perceptual. (This allows for the view that although we see water, we do not have perceptual states that are distinctively as of water, as opposed to being as of some other relatively clear liquid. Perhaps this is controversial. The main point is that my argument regarding water is independent of any controversy about perceptual states. The argument centers on cognitive states.) The present argument against perceptual individualism is thus different from the earlier argument against (conceptual) individualism that centers on natural kinds.

And scientific theories of vision make similar attributions. Neither the phenomenology of the visual image, nor the individual perceiver's discriminative abilities are decisive, in every case, in determining what perceptual state the perceiver is in. Thus it seems to me that the example I gave has some force in itself, and can be overturned only by appeal to general considerations. But the general considerations in favor of allowing such attributions—those set out in my argument—are, in my view, even stronger than the force of example.