The Persistence of the Unperceived: How Can We Acquire a Notion of Mind-Independence?

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I, Edward Makin confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract:

This thesis explores how we acquire a notion of mind-independence. It focuses on Berkeley's Puzzle (Campbell and Cassam, 2014), which presents an inconsistent triad of propositions:

i) Experientialism

ii) Sensationism

iii) Metaphysical Realism

I critically examine two strategies for resolving the puzzle: rejecting experientialism or rejecting sensationism. First, I assess the plausibility of experientialism. I argue that neither concept empiricism nor Campbell's essential role reading successfully establish experientialism. I then consider an argument for experientialism which can be found in Evans (1980). For Evans, objective thought requires grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts, and grasp of such concepts depends essentially on sensory experience. I apply pressure to this view by challenging the claim that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts requires the capacity to apply such concepts directly in experience.

Second, I examine the conceptual connection between the idea of space and the notion of an objective world. I argue against the Kantian thesis that grasp of the idea of space is necessary for objective thought.

Third, I evaluate anti-sensationist responses to Berkeley's Puzzle. Drawing on recent empirical work (Munton, 2025), I argue that Cassam's sensationist representationalism is undermined, notably, by the objection that sensory experience cannot represent modal properties. I then discuss how the relational view can account for hallucinations. I suggest that a negative disjunctivist account of hallucinations is most promising.

This thesis suggests that there is no decisive solution to Berkeley's Puzzle. Nevertheless, the discussion informs future debate by presenting new observations and suggesting alternative avenues for inquiry. For example, I present a revised version of Strawson's auditory world which plausibly allows for objective thought in a No-Space World. Additionally, I argue that considerations adduced from Strawson (1980) suggest that Campbell's commitment to underlying mechanisms is redundant, and I offer a revised view.

Impact Statement:

This thesis explores how we acquire a notion of mind-independence. It contributes to the philosophical literature by: drawing connections between the existing literature, offering novel objections to noteworthy arguments from the literature, and proposing new avenues for inquiry. Outside of philosophy, this thesis will help to inform research in other disciplines such as the natural sciences, cognitive science, and psychology. More generally, it will contribute towards our understanding of ourselves, our world, and our relation to it.

Contents

Chapter One: Berkeley's Puzzle

§1. Introduction

We think and reason about objects in our environment as if they are independent of our minds. For many, the world around us is populated by a wide array of material objects which existed prior to our arrival, continue to exist unperceived, and will go on existing long after we are gone – we exist within this "mind-independent" world, as temporary inhabitants and observers. Berkeley's Puzzle presents a problem for this common-sense view of the world: how can minded entities such as ourselves acquire knowledge of the world as it might exist independently of the mind? The puzzle is presented by Campbell and Cassam (2014) as comprising the following two claims:

1) 'Our knowledge of our surroundings is grounded in sensory experience' (*experientialism about knowledge*)[1]

And,

2) Sensory experience can provide us with knowledge only of sensory experience itself.

This is a puzzle for the metaphysical realist, who holds that we can acquire knowledge of a class of (material) objects that do not depend for their existence or properties on the mind, or minds. If one holds that sensory experience does provide us with knowledge of mind-independent ordinary objects and their properties, Berkeley's challenge is this: in what way does sensory experience provide us with such knowledge?

This first puzzle, which concerns the *epistemic* role of sensory experience, is grounded in a more fundamental problem concerning the *cognitive* role of sensory experience:

[1] From Cassam, 2014, p.118.

3) ‘Our understanding of concepts of ordinary objects and their properties is grounded in sensory experience’ (*experientialism about understanding*)[2]

And,

4) Sensory experience can provide us with understanding only of sensory experience itself.

If premisses 3) and 4) are plausible, then it becomes unclear how we could even *think* about mind-independent objects, let alone acquire *knowledge* of them.

For Berkeley, sensory experience can neither ground our conception of objects as mind-independent, nor provide us with knowledge of mind-independent objects and properties. Berkeley’s negative answer is motivated by his belief that experientialism about knowledge and experientialism about understanding are both *incompatible* with realism: in Berkeley’s view, sensory experience consists in the relation between the individual and *sensations*, which ‘themselves do not exist without the mind’ (Berkeley, 1710/2009, p.27). This sensationist view of sensory experience is inherited from John Locke, and it is committed to the following three principles (Cassam, 2014, p.101):

S1) Sensory experience is made up of sensations,

S2) Sensations cannot exist without a mind,

And,

S3) Sensations have no representational content.

For Berkeley, experientialism and sensationism are unassailable. Thus, since he holds that experientialism and sensationism are jointly incompatible with realism, he draws the idealist

[2] Also from Cassam, 2014, p.118.

conclusion: all our knowledge of our surroundings, and our understanding of concepts of ordinary objects and properties, is knowledge and understanding of mind-dependent phenomena. This being the case, one way of understanding Berkeley's Puzzle is as presenting an inconsistent triad of propositions:

i) Experientialism (about knowledge and understanding),

ii) Sensationism (about sensory experience),

And,

iii) (Metaphysical) Realism

If we choose to understand the problem in this way, then we can see that there are two ways in which the realist might respond to Berkeley's Puzzle. The realist can resolve Berkeley's Puzzle by rejecting his claim that experientialism, sensationism and realism are incompatible: if there are good reasons to think that sensationism, experientialism and realism can be reconciled, then there is no puzzle. Alternatively, the realist can resolve Berkeley's Puzzle by rejecting sensationism, experientialism, or both: if there are independently plausible reasons to reject either experientialism or sensationism, then there is not yet any reason to abandon realism in favour of Berkeley's idealism.

In this first chapter I will provide an overview of the origins of Berkeley's Puzzle and introduce some different strategies for resolving it. I will begin by providing some important historical context (§2). Specifically, I will explain how our common-sense view of the world, and our sensory relation to it, was seemingly undermined, in the seventeenth century, by the corpuscularian theory of Newton and Boyle. I will then discuss Locke's attempt to reconcile realism, experientialism and sensationism (§3). I will argue that it fails and that the realist should favour responses to Berkeley's Puzzle which challenge experientialism, sensationism,

or both. Lastly, I will introduce anti-sensationist and anti-experientialist responses to Berkeley's Puzzle (§4).

§2. Perception and Common Sense:

In the introduction to the *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Berkeley says this:

> Yet so it is we see the illiterate bulk of mankind that walk the high-road of plain, common sense, and are governed by the dictates of Nature, for the most part easy and undisturbed. To them nothing that's familiar appears unaccountable or difficult to comprehend. They complain not of any want of evidence in their senses, and are out of all danger of becoming sceptics.
>
> (Berkeley, 1710/2009, p.7)

The problem which Berkeley is raising, with some frustration, is that the philosophical enrichment of the mind, the pursuit of stability in knowledge and understanding, only serves to inhibit the 'calm and serenity of mind' (Berkeley, 1710/2009, p.7) which it is the philosopher's wish to attain. This reality runs contrary, Berkeley believes, to the very reasonable expectation that the dedicated 'study of wisdom and truth' (p.7) might leave one feeling *less* confused than if one had neglected to study entirely. Whilst this frustration may seem naïve by the standards of today (we are all too aware of the dangers of excessive thinking!) it serves to highlight an important conflict in the study of philosophy: the conflict between (post-theoretical) *philosophical scepticism* and (pre-theoretical) *common-sense*.

This conflict is most evident in the case of perception. For many of us, it is natural to assume that we are related *directly* to the external world in sensory experience. That is, it is natural to assume that the 'qualitative character of sensory experience is…constituted by the qualitative character of the world' (Campbell, 2014, p.2). When I open my eyes and I see that in my garden there is a tall tree, that the tree is adorned with green leaves and has roots which burrow into the ground, it is natural to believe that my experience has the qualitative character that it has because the tree *is* tall, and *is* adorned with green leaves, and *does* have roots which burrow into the ground. To suggest otherwise is contrary to common-sense. Likewise, it is

natural to hold that the tree which I perceive does not depend for its existence or properties on my continued perception of it. When I close my eyes, or when my vision is obscured by some opaque object, it is natural to assume that the tree remains in my garden, standing tall with its crown of green leaves and roots which burrow into the ground. This is the natural, pre-theoretical view of the external world and our sensory relation to it, and it is committed to two principles:

a) In sensory experience, we are related *directly* to the objects in our surroundings.

And,

b) The objects in our surroundings exist independently of our perception of them.

For the proponent of this common-sense view, the question of how we can acquire knowledge and understanding of the mind-independent world is answered simply: sensory experience can provide us with knowledge of the objects in our environment, as well as an understanding of the concepts of such objects and properties, because external objects and their properties are actual constituents of our sensory experience. Thus, I know that there is a tree in my garden because I have a visual experience of there being a tree in my garden. Likewise, I know that the tree has certain properties because I can inquire into the nature of the tree with my senses: I can touch it and feel the texture of the bark, I can listen attentively and hear the leaves rustling in the wind. On the common-sense view, I could not have experienced the tree as being in my environment, or as having certain properties, if the tree was not *actually* in my environment and did not *actually* have the properties which I perceived it to have. Similarly, I can reflect upon my sensory experience of the tree in my garden and acquire an understanding of what kind of thing a tree is: a tree is tall, it stands upright, it has roots which burrow into the ground, and it is, most of the year, adorned with leaves. This is all possible because, on the common-

sense view, sensory experience provides us with unmediated epistemic and cognitive access to the objects in our environment.

Importantly, this is not to say that sensory experience is *infallible*. The appearance of objects is subject to the limitations of our perspective, as well as to the limitations of each individual's sensory capacities. For example, the way the tree in the garden appears to one person might be more reflective of the way the tree actually is if they are closer to it and can thereby see it in more detail. Likewise, if two people occupy the same point of view, the young woman with better eyesight might be able to perceive the reality of the tree more accurately than the older woman with deteriorated eyesight. Nevertheless, on the common-sense view of sensory experience, the objects in our environment are thought to be (more or less) as they sensibly appear.

The problem is that this pre-theoretical, common-sense view of the external world and our sensory relation is seemingly undermined by our post-theoretical understanding of sensory experience and the qualitative character of the external world. This was particularly evident in the seventeenth century, with the emergence of the corpuscularian theory of Newton and Boyle. The picture provided by corpuscularian theory was both 'compelling' and 'quite alien' (Campbell, 2014, p.2) to the common-sense view. It was compelling, because it had a firm basis in empirical observation. It was alien, because it appeared to show the world which we encounter in perceptual experience to be rather unlike the world as it "actually is". As Koyré notes:

> Not only are the heavenly spaces empty and void, but even the so-called "solid bodies" are full of void. The particles that compose them are by no means closely packed together, but are separated from one another by void space. The Newtonians, from Bentley on, took an enormous pride and pleasure in pointing out that "matter" proper occupies a practically infinitesimal part of space.
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> (1965, p.14, cited in Campbell, 2014, p.2)

This problem is particularly plain to see in the case of colour. In sensory experience, we are confronted with a vibrant, coloured world; however, colour as we understand it is absent from the world described by corpuscularian theory. For the corpuscularian, colour experience is merely a curious byproduct of the interaction between light (photons), material objects and our visual system. This raises the following question: if the world which we perceive is so unlike the world described by physics, how can it be the case that sensory experience is providing us with knowledge and understanding of our physical surroundings? One way of framing the problem is provided by Campbell. For Campbell, 'physics seems to push sensory experience inside the head' and the problem for those who choose not to resist this internalisation of sensory experience is 'explaining how this stuff inside the head can be playing any…role in generating our knowledge of the world around us' (2014, p.2).

At the very least, if we adopt an internalist view of sensory experience, it seems like it is no longer possible to cling on to both our common-sense metaphysics and our common-sense epistemology. On the one hand, if we hold that sensory experience provides us with direct epistemic and cognitive access to the objects and properties in our surroundings (common-sense epistemology), then it seems that we must sacrifice the belief that such objects and properties are mind-independent (common-sense metaphysics). On the other hand, if we choose to hold that the objects and properties in our environment are mind-independent (common-sense metaphysics), then it seems that we must abandon the belief that sensory experience provides us with direct cognitive and epistemic access to such objects and properties (common-sense epistemology). For the corpuscularians, it was necessary to abandon common-sense epistemology in order to preserve common-sense metaphysics, and they proposed a form of indirect realism according to which we perceive mind-independent objects and their properties indirectly 'by the mediating perception of ideas' (Foster and Robinson, 1985, p.2).

We can find the clearest expression of the principles of corpuscularian theory in Boyle's *The Origins of Forms and Qualities*. At the fundamental level, the corpuscularian was committed to the Epicurean view that 'the World is made up of an innumerable multitude of singly insensible Corpuscles, endow'd with their own Sizes, Shapes and Motions' (Boyle, 1666-67/1999-2000, p.264), and it is the arrangement, properties and interaction(s) of these corpuscles which determine the arrangement, properties and interaction(s) of those more complex objects of which they are a part. According to corpuscularianism, when we observe an object, we are only *directly* aware of the *secondary* qualities of that object, e.g., the qualities of colour, of odour, of temperature, etc. These secondary qualities *do not actually inhere* in the object of observation, they are ideas (sensations) induced in us by excitations in the brain, excitations which are the result of individual 'corpuscles' impinging upon our sensory organs. The only properties which *actually inhere* in material objects are the *primary* qualities of size, shape, motion and bulk, and we do not directly perceive these primary qualities in sensory experience.

For Berkeley, the conclusions of corpuscularian theory were to be resisted at all costs. The charge was twofold: corpuscularian theory was not only *dangerous* but it was also *incoherent*. It was dangerous because, by abandoning common-sense epistemology in favour of a form of indirect realism, it 'threatened to undermine the foundations of knowledge altogether' (Foster and Robinson, 1985, p.2). It was incoherent, Berkeley argued, because 'the very notion of what is called *matter* or *corporeal substance*, involves a contradiction in it' (Berkeley, 1710/2009, p.27).

Exactly what Berkeley took this contradiction in our common-sense metaphysics to be remains a subject of debate. However, it most likely has to with the corpuscularian's conception of 'matter' as the *non-mental* bearer of *sensible qualities* (shape, odour, colour, etc.). In Berkeley's view, sensible qualities are *sensations*, and sensations cannot inhere in something

non-mental. Thus, Berkeley concludes that the corpuscularian conception of 'matter' is absurd, and self-contradictory. For Berkeley, the objects in our environment are mind-dependent bundles of sensations, which have no existence independent of the mind, or minds. The very idea of a mind-independent object – an object which is capable of existing unperceived – is, for Berkeley, inconceivable.

The obvious objection to Berkeley's challenge is simply to deny that sensible qualities are sensations. Berkeley does provide several arguments in support of his identification of sensations and sensible qualities; however, these arguments are – at least provisionally – not convincing[3]. At least in this regard, Berkeley's criticism of corpuscularianism appears to be grounded in premisses which the corpuscularian need not accept. According to them, whilst the immediate objects of my sensory experience are mind-dependent, non-representational sensations, the objects in our environment are not themselves bundles of sensations, but rather the *causes* of corresponding sensations in us. This causal sensationist view of sensory experience is not a straightforwardly incoherent position, as Cassam (2014, p.100) notes: 'we can think of matter as a non-mental substance in which *sensible qualities* inhere without thinking of it as a non-mental substance in which *sensations* inhere.'

This is not to say that Berkeley's opposition to corpuscularianism is wholly unjustified. Of more interest is Berkeley's claim that indirect realism threatens to undermine the foundations of knowledge altogether – Berkeley's *epistemological challenge*. In this case, the worry is that if we accept the corpuscularian's account of sensory experience as consisting of sensations, then it does not seem like sensory experience can provide us with knowledge of anything other than sensory experience itself. Thus, in specifying that "what there is" exists independently of sensory experience, the corpuscularian leaves the door open for radical forms of scepticism which argue for an unbridgeable gap between mind-dependent "appearance" and

[3] For a more detailed discussion see: (Pitcher, 1977, pp.96-109; Grayling, 1986, pp.67-81).

mind-independent "reality". In addition to this purely epistemological worry, there is a further conceptual concern: if we accept a sensationist view of sensory experience, it is unclear whether thought about an imperceptible, "mind-independent" world is even possible. For Berkeley, it is this latter concern – the *conceptual challenge* – which damns the realist: what grounds does the realist have for claiming that there exists an imperceptible, "mind-independent" world which is the causal origin of all our sensations, if we lack the ability even to *conceive* of such a world?

Berkeley's objection to realism is most fundamentally an objection to the claim that we can form a conception of a mind-independent reality. The challenge for the realist is to explain why Berkeley is wrong. That is, to explain how we can acquire a conception of mind-independent reality. This being the case, in this thesis I will be focusing primarily on the Berkeley's conceptual challenge to metaphysical realism. I will touch upon experientialism about knowledge only when it is unavoidable, or beneficial for expository purposes.

§3. Denying the Inconsistency

I mentioned earlier that there are, broadly speaking, two ways in which the realist might respond to Berkeley's Puzzle. The first involves denying the inconsistency, the second involves accepting the inconsistency and rejecting sensationism, or experientialism. Let us begin by considering the former. I will discuss this first response to Berkeley's Puzzle only briefly, since it is not particularly promising.

The conclusions of corpuscularian theory led many philosophers, most notably John Locke, to abandon the common-sense view in favour of a form of indirect realism. For Locke, the strategy was to accept the common-sense principle that the objects in our environment are mind-independent, but to reject the common-sense principle that we perceive such objects directly in sensory experience. Locke borrowed from Newton and Boyle a distinction between the mind-independent, primary qualities of objects and the mind-dependent, secondary

qualities of objects, as well as a sensationist view of sensory experience. For Locke, the primary qualities of a body are the properties of 'solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number' (*Essay*, II/viii/9); more generally, they are those properties which are 'utterly inseparable from the body' (II/viii/9). In contrast, the secondary qualities of objects are nothing over and above the 'powers to produce various sensations in us' (II/viii/10). In regard to perception, Locke held that we are related directly only to sensations in sensory experience. Furthermore, he held that these sensations had no inherent representational content, they were mere 'blank effects in us' (Ayers, 1991, p.54).

Nevertheless, Locke held that it is our acquaintance with these sensations which grounds our knowledge of external objects and their properties. The way in which sensations provide us with epistemic access to our environment depends on the sensation: those sensations which are of an object's *secondary qualities* (e.g., sensations of taste, colour, odour etc.) function merely as *signs of their regular causes* – they bear no resemblance to the object itself; contrastingly, those sensations which are of an object's primary qualities (e.g., shape, size, motion, number and weight) are actual *resemblances* of external bodies '…and their Patterns do really exist in the Bodies themselves' (II/viii/15). Thus, for Locke, there is nothing in the external, mind-independent world, which is like the sensation of blue, or the sensation of bitterness; however, such sensations can still provide us with limited epistemic access to the external world insofar as they have *characteristic causes*. In the case of sensations of primary qualities of objects, Locke believes that such sensations literally resemble the properties of ordinary objects in our environment: in Locke's own words, 'A Circle or Square are the same, whether in *Idea* or Existence' (II/viii/18). If Locke's position is sound, then we have *two* potential ways in which experientialism, sensationism and realism might be reconciled. Let us consider each in turn.

§3.1. Sensations as Signs of Their Regular Causes

One way in which Locke attempts to reconcile sensationism, experientialism and realism, takes the following form:

i) In sensory experience the individual is related directly to sensations.

ii) Sensations stand in causal relations to the external world, insofar as they have characteristic causes.

Therefore,

iii) Sensory experience can provide us with knowledge of the external world insofar as it relates us to sensations, which function as signs of their regular causes.

This is a view which, on the surface, makes a lot of sense. However, there are two significant drawbacks.

First, Campbell (2014) objects, and I agree, that it fails to provide a distinctive epistemic role for sensory experience. In short, it is not clear why the same epistemic role which Locke supposes is played by conscious sensations could not be played by non-conscious neural activity. It appears that we could plausibly acquire the same knowledge of our surroundings in the absence of sensory experience; we need only possess a means of acquiring information (sensory organs), and a way of processing and responding to that information (a brain), and there is no reason why this process of sensing and responding to our environment needs to be accompanied by conscious sensation. At this juncture, one might object: it is indeed plausible that one could attain equivalent knowledge of one's external environment in the absence of conscious sensation. However, the issue under contention concerns whether sensationism, experientialism and realism are fundamentally *incompatible*. If that is so, then surely the mere possibility that sensations *might* serve this epistemic function in our case presents a substantive challenge to the Berkeleyan claim that these three positions cannot be reconciled.

This is a valid objection, but there is a second, more significant problem. It might be true that sensations stand in causal relations to external phenomena, however, even granting this, it is not clear that sensations thereby provide the subject with knowledge of the external phenomena to which they stand in external relations. This is what is commonly referred to as Berkeley's argument from the *causation of perception*[4], and it can be found in the *Three Dialogues*. The problem is that it is surely only the *intrinsic* characteristics of sensations to which the individual has epistemic and cognitive access in sensory experience, and the external causes of a sensation are not intrinsic characteristics of the sensation itself. Thus, regardless of the causal relations which may or may not exist between sensations and external phenomena, it is hard to believe that – on a sensationist view of sensory experience – sensory experience could provide us with knowledge of anything other than what it is like to have a particular sense experience. This first way of reconciling sensationism, experientialism and realism falls short.

§3.2. Sensations as Resemblances

The second way in which Locke attempts to reconcile experientialism, sensationism and realism can be expressed as follows:

i) In sensory experience the individual is related directly to sensations.

ii) Some sensations bear a resemblance to objects in the external world.

Therefore,

iii) Sensory experience can provide us with knowledge and understanding of the external world insofar as it relates us to sensations, some of which resemble objects in the external world.

[4] See: (Pitcher, 1977, p.106).

Those sensations which resemble objects in the external world are sensations of the primary qualities of objects. For Locke, when I have a circular sensation, my sensation is circular in the same way in which the objects in my external environment are circular. Therefore, my experience of a circular sensation provides me with knowledge and understanding of a genuine property of mind-independent objects, and it does so in virtue of its intrinsic characteristics. In this way, this attempt at reconciling experientialism, sensationism and realism avoids the problem which undermined the first: the epistemic role which Locke attributes to sensations of primary qualities is not one which could plausibly be fulfilled by non-conscious neural activity. This being the case, one question remains: is it plausible that sensations of primary qualities of objects *literally resemble* objects in our external environment? Berkeley thinks that it is not:

> But say you, though the ideas themselves do not exist without the mind, yet there may be things like them whereof they are copies or resemblances, which things exist without the mind, in an unthinking substance. I answer, an idea can be like nothing but another idea; a colour or figure can be like nothing but another colour or figure
>
> (Berkeley, 1710/2009, p.27)

The problem which Berkeley is identifying is this: Locke is suggesting that sensations of primary qualities *literally share properties* with material objects, such that 'the F-ness of your idea is what provides you with knowledge of what it is for a material object to be F' (Campbell, 2014, p.14). However, it is far from clear that there could exist such properties, properties which can be shared by both sensations in the mind, and material mind-independent objects. At the very least, it certainly seems counterintuitive to suggest that, for example, the sensation of a large, rectangular object is large and rectangular in the same way in which a material object might be large and rectangular. This is a significant obstacle for Lockean resemblance, but there remains a more damning objection.

Suppose we concede the point and accept that there are properties which can literally be shared by both sensations and material objects, Locke still needs to account for the way in which this resemblance explains our epistemic and cognitive access to external phenomena.

The problem is that Locke's sensationism requires that our knowledge of the intrinsic characteristics of our sensations occurs prior to any understanding of the resemblance between such sensations and the external world. This raises the following question: if we are acquainted in the first instance only with the sensations themselves, then what explains our ability to understand that these sensations resemble external phenomena? At the very least, our capacity to understand that there is a resemblance between sensations and external phenomena requires that we possess some basic understanding of those external phenomena. However, it is not easy to see how an understanding of external phenomena – which are mind-independent and capable of existing unperceived – could be grounded in our knowledge of sensations – which are mind-dependent and not capable of existing unperceived. It would certainly be counterintuitive to claim that one could acquire an understanding of what a Dog is purely by examining Cats; to claim that one could acquire an understanding of the unperceived, mind-independent world purely through one's experience of the perceived, mind-dependent world, is arguably no less implausible.

One way in which the Lockean might respond to the preceding objection is to claim that we can acquire an understanding of mind-independent objects and their properties 'by the exercise of sensory imagination' (Campbell, 2014, p.16). That is to say, one can draw upon the understanding one acquires of an object from one's sensory experience and acquire an understanding of the object's existence independent of one's sensory experience. Regarding this claim, Berkeley says the following:

> But, say you, surely there is nothing easier than to imagine trees, for instance, in a park, or books existing in a closet, and nobody by to perceive them. I answer, you may say so, there is no difficulty in it: but what is all this, beseech you, more than you framing in your mind certain ideas which you call books and trees, and at the same time omitting to frame the idea of anyone that may perceive them? But do you not yourself perceive or think of them all the while?
>
> (Berkeley, 1710/2009, p.33)

This is Berkeley's infamous *master argument*, and it forms the basis of Berkeley's conceptual challenge. To understand the problem Berkeley is raising, suppose you were to imagine a world unperceived. You might hold in my mind's eye an image of a planet or a rock floating in the void of space, you might imbue this image with feelings of desolation, isolation and loneliness – you would certainly not include in the image any entity which might be perceiving the scene which you have imagined. However, it is plausibly the case that, in imagining this scene, you become the perceiver that you have sought to omit. Most importantly, this imagined scene will be viewed from a certain perspective; you might have refrained from attributing this perspective to a subject, but the imagined scene remains perspectival. Thus, Berkeley contends, to imagine a world unperceived is merely to imagine a world perceived, but neglect to attribute the perception to a subject. This is possible, because in ordinary sensory experience, as well as in sensory imagination, we are able to confront a perceptual sensation without thereby confronting a sensation of the subject of that perceptual sensation (Campbell, 2014, p.17). However, the mere fact that this is possible is not evidence of our capacity to conceive of the unperceived.

This criticism of Berkeley's is often challenged on the basis that it confuses the content of the representation, with the act of representing. It is true that, in representing (say) a planet unperceived, one must do the representing; however, this does not suggest that there is anything problematic *per se* about the representation itself. Unfortunately, this is a tame objection, and one which does not do justice to the force of Berkeley's complaint. As Campbell (2014) puts it, the problem which Berkeley is raising is that, if we accept a sensationist view of sensory experience (as he thinks we should), then it is not clear that sensory imagination can contribute anything to our understanding of concepts of ordinary objects and their properties which was not accessible in sensory experience itself . Berkeley is not suggesting that the fact that the act of representing, or imagining, or conceiving, needs to be performed by a subject is a problem.

The problem is that, in representing, or imagining, or conceiving, the subject can only work with the concepts which they already possess. Thus, if it is true, as Locke believes, that we acquire our knowledge of the world through sensory experience *and* it is true that our sensory experience is of non-representational sensations, then it is unclear how we could derive from experience concepts of anything other than those mind-dependent sensations. Thus, it is hard to see how we could represent, or imagine, or conceive of mind-independent objects, given that our capacity to represent, or imagine, or conceive is limited by the concepts of objects which we already possess. When Berkeley's objection is presented in this way, it is thoroughly compelling.

On a sensationist view of sensory experience there are substantial difficulties in explaining how sensory experience can provide us with knowledge of mind-independent objects and properties. The problem is that it is unclear how sensory experience can ground our grasp of concepts of mind-independent objects and properties. Here, we can see the force of Berkeley's initial complaint: what grounds does the realist have for holding that sensory experience can provide us with knowledge of a "mind-independent" world which is the causal origin of all our sensations if we lack the ability even to *conceive* of such a world? In pursuing a solution to Berkeley's Puzzle, it is clear that the realist should opt for a response of the second kind: one which accepts the inconsistency, instead taking aim at sensationism and/or experientialism.

§4. Accepting the Inconsistency

If the realist chooses to accept the inconsistency, then they have two options: reject the sensationist view of sensory experience or reject experientialism about understanding. Anti-experientialist responses to Berkeley's Puzzle are, notably, less popular than anti-sensationist responses to Berkeley's Puzzle. This has a lot to do with the intuitive plausibility of experientialism, and the relative unattractiveness of sensationism. Regarding experientialism,

it certainly appears to be the case that our understanding of concepts of ordinary objects and their properties is grounded in sensory experience. Regarding sensationism, the understanding that we acquire from sensory experience appears to be understanding of mind-independent objects and properties and not merely understanding of a certain restricted range of mind-dependent sensible phenomena. Nevertheless, anti-experientialism remains a live option.

4.1. Anti-Sensationism

For those who choose to resolve Berkeley's puzzle by rejecting the sensationist view of sensory experience, there is one caveat. It is not sufficient merely to undermine sensationism. As we have seen, Berkeley's claim that sensationism, experientialism and realism are incompatible is grounded in his claim that on a sensationist view of sensory experience, sensory experience cannot ground our conception of objects as mind-independent. Thus, it is necessary to provide an alternative view of sensory experience which can account for the cognitive role of sensory experience. In this thesis I will discuss two such views: Campbell's *relational view* and Cassam's *sensationist representationalism*.

The relational view challenges the first claim (S1) of sensationism – that sensory experience consists of sensations. For Campbell, sensory experience consists in the relation between the individual and the mind-independent external world. More specifically, it consists of a three-place relation between:

> i) The observer,
>
> ii) The point of view from which the scene is observed, and
>
> iii) The scene observed.
>
> (Campbell, 2014, p.27)

In this way, the relational view is comparable to the aforementioned *common-sense* view. What is distinctive about the relational view is that it resists the way corpuscularian theory 'pushed

sensory experience inside the head' (Campbell, 2014, p.5). Whilst both Locke and Berkeley thought it necessary – in light of the observations of corpuscularian theory – to abandon either common-sense metaphysics or common-sense epistemology, Campbell maintains that sensory experience relates us *directly* to *mind-independent* objects and properties in our surroundings. On this view, our possession of a concept of mind-independence is explained by the fact that our sensory experience of ordinary objects reveals those objects to be *internally causally connected*, and it does this by revealing to us the mechanisms by which causal influence is transmitted from place to place.

Campbell's view represents an interesting departure from typical post-theoretical theories of sensory perception insofar as it retains both our common-sense epistemology and our common-sense metaphysics. Cassam's view, on the other hand, is more typical of contemporary theories of sense perception. For Cassam, sensory experience consists in the relation between the individual and sensations which have representational content, and the mind-independence of objects is 'built into the representational content of at least some sensory experiences' (Cassam, 2014, p.158). Sensationist representationalism challenges the third claim (S3) of sensationism – that sensations have no representational content. What it means for a sensory experience to have representational content is for that sensory experience to represent the world as being a certain way. That is, a sensory experience has representational content if it can be judged as correct or incorrect.

The relational view and the representational view are two examples of anti-sensationist solutions to Berkeley's Puzzle. However, if the realist is not convinced by anti-sensationist responses to Berkeley's Puzzle, then there remains the possibility of rejecting experientialism.

4.2. Anti-Experientialism

Anti-experientialism is flirted with briefly by Cassam and his observation is simple: it is not clear that we need to have encountered an object, or property, in sensory experience in order to

understand the concept that object or property (Cassam, 2014, p.125). Whilst Cassam does not explicitly endorse anti-experientialism, he does make a good case for challenging certain experientialist claims. Most significantly, Cassam challenges the claim that to deny experientialism about knowledge and understanding is to endorse *cognitive epiphenomenalism*, the view that sensory experience plays *no role* in our knowledge and understanding of our surroundings. Importantly, Cassam notes that the anti-experientialist need not deny that sensory experience plausibly plays an essential role in, say, our acquisition of colour concepts, or that it plays an essential role in our knowledge of what colour properties are. The anti-experientialist can put pressure on experientialism merely by challenging the claim that sensory experience plays an *essential role* in our acquisition of *concepts of mind-independent objects and properties*.

§5. Moving Forward

With the above in mind, here is the plan for the rest of the thesis. In Chapter Two, I will consider the case for experientialism. If experientialism isn't plausible, then Berkeley's Puzzle collapses. Following Cassam (2014, p.119), I will distinguish between two readings of experientialism about understanding: *the empiricist reading* and Campbell's *essential role reading*. I will argue that the former is undermined by the increasing evidence for nativism about concept acquisition, and thus that the latter reading is preferable.

Regarding the essential role reading, I will defend Campbell's against Cassam's objection that we can achieve a wholly theoretical grasp of objects as internally causally connected. Nevertheless, I will conclude that Campbell's argument for experientialism about understanding falls short, since grasp of objects as internally causally connected is, arguably, neither necessary nor sufficient for grasp of objects as mind-independent.

I will then turn to a more promising argument for experientialism about understanding found in Gareth Evans (1980): the Simultaneity Argument for Experientialism (SE). Evans

contends that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is necessary for objective thought, and that grasp of such concepts depends essentially on sensory experience. I will suggest that our grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts can plausibly be explained without recourse to sensory experience, for instance by appeal to conceptual combination.

In Chapter Three, I will shift my focus to the claim underlying Evans's argument: that grasp of the idea of space is necessary for objective thought. If this claim isn't defensible, then SE collapses. I will focus on the debate between Strawson (1959; 1980) – who argues for objective thought in a No-Space world – and Evans (1980), who criticises this view. I will conclude in favour of Strawson, arguing that objective thought is possible in a No-Space world if simultaneous quasi-spatial experience is possible in such a world. This conclusion challenges experientialism insofar as it undermines the core claim of Evans's argument, viz., that grasp of the idea of space is necessary for objective thought. However, my conclusion will not prove decisive, since SE can plausibly be re-framed in terms of simultaneous quasi-spatial concepts.

Given that I cannot draw a strong conclusion regarding experientialism, I will turn to consider anti-sensationist responses to Berkeley's Puzzle. I will focus primarily on sensationist representationalism, since the Relational View is discussed in Chapter Two and again, briefly, in Chapter Three. I will consider two objections to the relational view which can be adduced from reflection on hallucinations. Regarding sensationist representationalism, I will first examine an objection advanced by Campbell, which I will argue is unpersuasive. I will then consider a stronger objection that Campbell overlooks: that the range of properties represented by sensory experience is plausibly too limited to support Cassam's claim that sensory experience can represent objects as mind-independent.

I will summarise my conclusions at the end, in Chapter Five.

Chapter Two: The Defensibility of Experientialism

§1. Introduction

In the first chapter I introduced two versions of Berkeley's Puzzle. The first concerns the *epistemic role* of sensory experience:

1) Our knowledge of ordinary objects and their properties is grounded in sensory experience (experientialism about knowledge).

And,

2) Sensory experience can provide us with knowledge only of sensory experience itself.

The second is more fundamental, and it concerns the *cognitive role* of sensory experience. Corresponding to 1) and 2), we have:

3) Our understanding of concepts of ordinary objects and properties is grounded in sensory experience (experientialism about understanding).

And,

4) Sensory experience can provide us with understanding only of sensory experience itself.

Berkeley endorses both forms of experientialism and holds that sensory experience relates us directly to non-representational sensations in the mind. Thus, for Berkeley, all our knowledge and understanding is knowledge and understanding of *mind-dependent* objects and properties. The challenge for the realist is to explain how Berkeley's idealist picture is mistaken. One way of resolving Berkeley's Puzzle is to deny that experientialism, sensationism and realism are incompatible, and this is Locke's strategy: Locke endorses both forms of experientialism as well as a sensationist view of sensory experience yet maintains that we have knowledge and

understanding of mind-independent objects and properties. Whilst interesting, this first strategy proved unpromising: crucially, the sensationist view of sensory experience has trouble accounting for how sensory experience can ground our conception of objects as mind-independent. This being the case, the most sensible realist approach appears to involve accepting that experientialism, sensationism and realism are incompatible, instead taking aim at experientialism, sensationism, or both. In this chapter, I will focus on whether experientialism is a defensible doctrine. Importantly, Berkeley's Puzzle requires one to accept experientialism; if experientialism turns out not be independently plausible then, as Cassam (2014, p.119) notes, '[Berkeley's] puzzle doesn't even get off the ground'.

I will begin by distinguishing experientialism about understanding from experientialism about knowledge (§2). The rest of the chapter will focus on the defensibility of experientialism about understanding. First, I will evaluate concept empiricism (§2.1.) which, it will emerge, is particularly vulnerable to the increasing evidence for nativism about concept acquisition. This being so, I will turn to Campbell's *essential role* reading of experientialism about understanding (§2.2.). I will trace Cassam's critical discussion of the essential role reading and add some thoughts of my own. I will argue that Campbell's position is ultimately undermined by his characterisation of mind-independence. I will conclude by considering an alternative argument for experientialism about understanding which can be found in Gareth Evans (§3.).

§2. Experientialism About Understanding

In order to assess the plausibility of experientialism, it is necessary to acquire a clearer understanding of what it means to say that our knowledge, or understanding of concepts, are *grounded* in sensory experience. Beginning with experientialism about understanding, we can distinguish between the *empiricist* reading and the *essential role* reading (Cassam, 2014), p.119). Regarding the former, to say that our understanding of concepts of ordinary objects and

their properties is grounded in sensory experience is to say that our concepts are *acquired* from experience, and it thus reduces to a form of concept empiricism. The empiricist reading can be contrasted with rationalist views according to which at least some of our concepts are acquired via purely intellectual means, as well as nativist views, according to which at least some of our concepts are innate. On the essential role reading, to say that our understanding of concepts of ordinary objects and their properties is grounded in sensory experience is to say that sensory experience is *essential* in explaining our grasp of such concepts. This view is agnostic as regards the ultimate origin of our concepts, and it is thus compatible with nativism, rationalism or empiricism about concept acquisition.

Moving on to experientialism about knowledge, we can distinguish between the *foundationalist* reading and the *essential role* reading (Cassam, 2014, p.119). On the foundationalist reading of experientialism about knowledge, to say that our knowledge of ordinary objects and their properties is grounded in sensory experience is to say that sensory experience is the *foundation* of all such knowledge. This claim can be interpreted in two ways: there are those who claim that sensory experience is *independently epistemically authoritative*; that is, the knowledge with which it provides us needn't be corroborated by anything else (Cassam, 2014, p.130). Alternatively, there are those who claim that sensory experience is foundational in the sense that it is the most 'fundamental way in which we acquire knowledge of our surroundings' (Campbell, 2014, p.77). On the essential role reading, to say that our knowledge of ordinary objects and their properties is grounded in sensory experience is to say that our acquisition of propositional and non-propositional knowledge depends essentially on sensory experience.

It is perhaps most natural, having acquired a clearer understanding of what experientialism amounts to, to consider the alternatives to experientialism. Campbell contrasts

experientialism with cognitive epiphenomenalism, and he characterises the debate in terms of the following two questions:

(a) 'Does sensory awareness play *any* role in our knowing that things are thus and so?' and,

(b) 'Does sensory awareness play *any* role in our understanding of concepts of the world around us?'

(Campbell, 2014, p.77)

In both cases, cognitive epiphenomenalism answers in the negative: sensory experience plays *no* role in our knowledge of our surroundings, and *no* role in our grasp of concepts. According to cognitive epiphenomenalism, sensory properties are mere *epiphenomena* – that is, they are the causally inefficacious by-products of brain processes. This is a radical position, and it is very quickly undermined by considering a simple case, that of colour experience. We usually take it that our knowledge of what colour properties are depends in some important way upon our capacity for colour experience. That is, the capacity to reliably respond to the colour characteristics of objects in our environment, in the absence of colour experience, does not appear to constitute *knowledge* of what colour properties are: as Campbell (2014, p.78) notes, 'a capacity for correct, blindsight-style guessing as to the colours of things would not be enough for knowledge of what colours are'. Likewise, the ability to distinguish between the colour red and the colour blue on the basis of a purely formal description of each does not appear to amount to knowledge of what red and blue are. In the case of colour properties, knowledge appears to depend in some important way on sensory experience[5]. The same points plausibly apply in the case of other secondary qualities, like odour, temperature, and sound. Additionally, in the case of concepts of secondary qualities, sensory experience appears to play an equally indispensable role: a purely theoretical description of colour properties appears insufficient for

[5] For example, see (Jackson, 1998).

grasp of colour concepts. For these reasons, cognitive epiphenomenalism is widely considered to be 'very hard to swallow' and it seems that '[i]f the choice is between cognitive epiphenomenalism and experientialism then the latter wins by default' (Cassam, 2014, p.120). This being the case, it would not be unreasonable to accuse Campbell of unfairly stacking the cards in his own favour: it seems that a more plausible alternative to experientialism ought to be considered.

According to Cassam (2014), more serious opposition to experientialism comes in the form of *anti-experientialism*, and the two questions which most appropriately define the debate are:

(c) Does sensory experience play an *essential* role in our grasp of concepts of *mind-independent objects and properties*?

And,

(d) Does sensory awareness play an *essential* role in our knowledge of *mind-independent objects and properties*?

Anti-experientialism about understanding is the view that the answer to the first question is *no*. Anti-experientialism about knowledge is the view that the answer to the second question is *no*. Importantly, the anti-experientialist need not deny that sensory experience plays an important role in our understanding of *some* concepts, or that there is *some* knowledge which depends in some significant way on sensory experience (Cassam, 2014). Thus, it cannot be undermined by the simple observation that knowledge of colour properties, or grasp of colour concepts, is plausibly grounded in sensory experience. We can interpret anti-experientialism as occupying the "middle-ground" between experientialism and cognitive epiphenomenalism. It holds that sensory experience plausibly grounds *some* knowledge, or our grasp of *some* concepts, yet it denies that sensory experience grounds *all* knowledge, or our grasp of *all* concepts. Crucially,

with respect to the concepts of mind-independent objects and properties, anti-experientialism about understanding maintains that sensory experience does not play an indispensable role. Likewise, anti-experientialism about knowledge maintains that knowledge of mind-independent objects and properties can plausibly be acquired through non-sensory means. Thus, in order to cast doubt on the plausibility of experientialism – at least within the context of Berkeley's Puzzle – one need only make a plausible case for Cassam's *anti-experientialism*.

I will now turn to the question of whether experientialism is a defensible doctrine. However, moving forward, I will be restricting my focus to experientialism about understanding, since Berkeley's objection to realism is most fundamentally an objection to the claim that we can form a conception of a mind-independent reality.

§2.1. Concept Empiricism

In the previous section I distinguished – following Cassam (2014) – between two readings of experientialism about understanding (hereafter, just experientialism): the *empiricist* reading and the *essential role* reading. The former, *empiricist* reading is endorsed by Berkeley, and other classical empiricists. The latter, *essential role* reading is endorsed by Campbell. It is worth mentioning at the outset that the empiricist reading, according to which all our concepts are *derived* from experience, is widely considered to be implausible. In fact, some have gone so far as to characterise Berkeley's idealism as a 'superb *reductio*' (Rey, 2005, p.140 cited in Cassam, 2014, p.119) of concept empiricism, i.e., to reject concept empiricism on the grounds that it leads to idealism. Whilst I do not agree that concept empiricism should be rejected on the basis that it leads to idealism, I do think that there are good reasons for abandoning the empiricist reading.

Perhaps the strongest evidence against concept empiricism is the increasingly strong evidence for nativism, the view that at least some of our concepts are innate. Whilst nativism can be traced back as far as Plato it is more commonly associated – in recent times – with Noam

Chomsky (1959; 1975), who built upon the work of early modern rationalists like Descartes (1641) and Leibniz (1765). Chomsky (1975, p. 123) held that the human mind possessed an 'innate faculty of language' and that this innate faculty of mind could explain the ability of children to so quickly learn a human language, which is 'a system of remarkable complexity' (1975, p.4). Chomsky's view avoided two problems which had, up until that point, plagued nativism. First, Chomsky did not ground innate ideas in God, as did Descartes and Leibniz, and his nativism was thus admirably compatible with the scientific view of the world: for Chomsky, our innate faculty of language was a natural by-product of our evolved, biological nature. The fact that Chomsky's nativism integrated so neatly with the Darwinian picture of the world had a second benefit: it avoided the charge, levelled at early modern nativists, that the empiricist view of the world was more parsimonious. Indeed, prior to the advent of Darwinism, concept empiricism did offer a simpler explanation of the origin of concepts: whilst nativism posited the existence of mysterious, innate notions of supernatural origin, the empiricists promised to explain our possession of concepts simply by appeal to sensory experience and an associationist theory of learning. However, in our post-Darwinian world, it is quite natural to posit the existence of innate concepts, or faculties: the idea that the human mind is *pre-programmed* to respond in certain ways to the environment follows naturally, maybe even inevitably, from the idea that human beings have evolved over millions of years to exploit a particular trophic niche.

Whilst Chomsky's nativism initially provided only a theoretically plausible alternative to concept empiricism, it subsequently found much empirical support[6]. For example, several studies have shown that young children often adhere to seemingly innate constraints on grammar (Crain and Nakayama, 1987; Crain and Thornton, 1991). Additionally, there is empirical evidence for the presence of innate constraints on children's comprehension (Crain and McKee, 1986; Crain et al., 1990).

[6] For an overview see (Crain and Lillo-Martin, 1999).

Importantly, the empirical support for nativism is not limited to Chomsky's particular brand of "linguistic nativism". Famously, Leibniz held that *necessary truths*, like those found in geometry and arithmetic, 'should be regarded as innate, and contained within us' (Leibniz, 1765/1996, p. 77): such truths can be found within our own minds, and do not depend for their discovery on knowledge acquired from other people or through sense experience. This view has recently found support in a study by Silberstein and Spelke (1992, cited in Spelke, 1994) which showed that 'young children appreciate that two lines can intersect such that both occupy the same point at the same time' (Spelke, 1994, p.435). Additionally, a study by Gallistel (1990) suggests that spatial reasoning in young children is underpinned by Euclidean geometric principles. In regard to arithmetic, two studies by Gelman and Gallistel (1978; 1992) demonstrate that the principle of succession, as well as the principle of one-to-one correspondence, figure prominently in the reasoning of young children.

With all this being said, it is important to note that the studies mentioned so far have no direct application to the question of whether our conception of objects as being mind-independent is innate or derived from experience. The studies discussed strongly tell against "full-fat" concept empiricism according to which *all* concepts are derived from experience. Is an attenuated form of concept empiricism – according to which our conception of objects as mind-independent is derived from experience – more tenable? At first glance, it seems not. There is increasing evidence to suggest that infants possess an innate understanding of continued existence unperceived. For example, a study by Van de Walle, Woodward, and Phillips (1993, cited in Spelke, 1994) shows that infants make inferences about the motion of objects even when those objects move out of view; these findings have been substantiated, with the same behaviours having been observed in children as young as three months (Leslie, 1988; Spelke and Van de Walle, 1993). Of particular interest, is the observation that the principle of continuity appears to guide such inferences: infants recognise that moving objects follow a

continuous path, even behind occlusion (Spelke et al., 1992). Now, it has been suggested that grasp of the notion of continuity, 'as it occurs in the thought that it may continue to rain after one falls asleep' (Evans, 1980, p.257) and, presumably, as it occurs in the thought that an object may remain in motion beyond occlusion, is plausibly sufficient for grasp of the concept of existence unperceived. If this thought has merit, then we have the basis of an empirical argument for the concept of mind-independence being *innate*.

All this is not to say that concept empiricism is unsalvageable. It has been suggested that empiricism might be buttressed by shifting the emphasis from the experience of the *individual*, to what we might call *ancestral* experience (Samet and Zaitchik, 2012). This would enable the concept empiricist to maintain that certain concepts are derived from experience even if there is empirical evidence to suggest that those concepts are innate in modern humans. On this view, concept empiricism would ground our understanding of concepts – by appeal to evolutionary processes – in the sensory experience of the entire human species, not just the experience of the individual. This is an interesting suggestion, and one noting. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to address it in detail. Crucially, experientialism about understanding is not committed to concept empiricism, and the essential role reading avoids the challenges posed by nativism about concept acquisition. This being the case, and in lieu of a stellar argument for "ancestral concept empiricism", it appears most sensible to abandon concept empiricism in favour of the essential role reading.

§2.2. The Essential Role Reading

According to Campbell, the essential role reading of experientialism is the position of common-sense: in ordinary experience, we take it as granted that sensory experience plays a significant role in our understanding of concepts, whether those concepts are innate, or acquired via other means. This is most evident if we consider the case of colour concepts. For Campbell, to ask whether sensory experience plays an essential role in our grasp of colour concepts is to ask

whether sensory experience plays an essential role in our knowledge of colour properties, since a sufficient grasp of the colour concept "blue" (say) *requires* knowledge of the colour property "blue". This much is relatively uncontroversial. Thus, since it is reasonable to suppose that sensory experience *does* play an essential role in our knowledge of colour properties, it is reasonable to suppose that sensory experience plays an equally essential role in our grasp of colour concepts. However, as was mentioned previously, this is not something which the anti-experientialist need deny: the anti-experientialist can plausibly maintain that there are *some* concepts the grasp of which depends essentially on sensory experience. This being so, the question which appears to define the debate between experientialism and anti-experientialism is the following:

(a) Is what is true of colour concepts true of concepts in general?

For the experientialist, the answer is *yes*: sensory experience doesn't only play an essential role in our grasp of colour concepts, but it is also essential for our grasp of other concepts, e.g., shape and sortal concepts. For the anti-experientialist, the answer is *no*: it is plausible to hold that sensory experience plays an essential role in our grasp of some concepts, like colour concepts, but it does not play an essential role in our grasp of other concepts, e.g., shape and sortal concepts. For Campbell, what is true of colour concepts is plausibly true of concepts in general:

> Mere subliminal exposure to any quantity of apples, for example, would not provide you with any insight into what apples are. Similarly, knowledge of what…shape properties are seems to depend on experiencing them. It isn't enough that you have a perceptual system that allows you to respond differentially to this shape or to that.
>
> (Campbell, 2014, p.78)

On Campbell's view, knowledge of shape and sortal properties, and grasp of shape and sortal concepts, depends essentially on sensory experience. However, as Cassam notes, it is not obvious why one couldn't have a purely *intellectual* or *theoretical* grasp of concepts like

'hexagon' and 'apple' (2014, p.125). It appears that one could understand that a hexagon is a 'plane figure with six straight sides and angles' (p.125), without having encountered a hexagonal object in sensory experience. Likewise, it seems that one needn't have 'seen or eaten an apple in order to know what an apple is' (p.125). In both cases there is arguably no *essential* role for sensory experience. Cassam's contention is that what is true of the hexagon (and apple) case is plausibly also true of our grasp of the concept of mind-independence: we can have a purely theoretical grasp of the concept of mind-independence.

Is this all there is to be said? Not quite. Consider again the example provided by Cassam, that of the hexagon. Importantly, the concept 'hexagon' is not itself irreducible; that is, proper grasp of the concept 'hexagon' depends upon the grasp of more basic concepts, e.g., the concept of a side, or the concept of an angle. Thus, it might be the case that sensory experience plays an essential role in our grasp of those more basic concepts and, by proxy, plays an essential role in our grasp of more complex concepts, like hexagon. If we bring the discussion back to our conception of mind-independence, the idea would be that sensory experience is essential for our grasp of certain basic concepts which underpin our conception of mind-independence. Cassam anticipates this objection to anti-experientialism and attempts to deflect it by appeal to the idea 'that the grasp of a concept is a matter of degree' (2014, p.126). Cassam concedes that '[i]n the case of many concepts, sensory experience undoubtedly enriches one's understanding' (p.126) whilst maintaining that 'this is not to say that experience plays an essential role in grasp of the concept if the implication is that without sensory experience one would lack any understanding of the concept' (p.126). For Cassam, the important question is *how well* one can grasp a particular concept in the absence of sensory experience. It might be the case that, in the absence of sensory experience, there are certain concepts which can be grasped to a greater extent than others. For example, one might be able to achieve only a very poor grasp of colour concepts yet achieve a very solid grasp of shape

concepts. This view certainly has merit. At the very least, there are plausibly *some* concepts the grasp of which is a matter of degree: the question is whether our concept of mind-independence is one such concept, or whether grasp of it depends essentially on sensory experience.

Before we approach this question, we must first understand what grasp of a conception mind-independence amounts to: what is it for one to have the conception of an object as mind-independent? Any answer to this question will have two stages: it must first be established *what it means* to conceive of an object as mind-independent; next, it must be established what the necessary conditions are for the possession of this concept. Once clarity has been achieved in both regards, we can turn to the question of whether sensory experience is essential for grasp of a notion of mind-independence.

According to Campbell, to have the conception of an object as mind-independent is to 'conceive of the unity of an object without conceiving of its relation to a mind' (2014, p.29), and this can only be achieved if we conceive of objects as *internally causally connected*. That is, if we have 'some understanding of [an object's] identity conditions; and those identity conditions have to do with the causal dependence of the way the object is later on the way the object was earlier' (p.29). So, it is necessary – in order to conceive of an object as unified without conceiving of its relation to a mind – to conceive of the object as *causally unified*. What does it mean to conceive of an object as causally unified?

Campbell (2014, p.30) distinguishes between two ways of understanding causal connections. We can say that two variables, Y and X, are causally connected if they are counterfactually connected, where Y is counterfactually dependent on X if the value of Y is determined, in part, by the value of X. Alternatively, we can understand causal connections in terms of the mechanisms by means of which counterfactual connections exist. According to Campbell, being possessed of the understanding that object Y is counterfactually dependent on object X is insufficient, in the absence of an understanding of mechanism, to ground a

conception of object Y as causally unified since it is through our understanding of objects as mechanisms for the transmission of causal influence from place to place that we acquire an understanding of objects 'as having a unity that has nothing to do with [their] relation to any mind' (Campbell, 2014, p.32). On Campbell's view, our conception of objects as the mechanisms for transmitting causal influence *underpins* our conception of objects as mind-independent: grasp of the conception of objects as mind-independent requires grasp of the conception of objects as mechanisms.

Let us now turn to the question of whether sensory experience is essential for grasp of this notion of mind-independence. In Campbell's view, it is essential. Sensory experience is what confronts us with the mechanism for transmitting causal influence, and it does so by bringing objects into view: in sensory experience we directly encounter ordinary objects in our environment, and we see that they are the 'prototypical mechanisms by which causal influence is transmitted' (Campbell, 2014, p.31). In the absence of sensory experience of objects, Campbell's contention is that we would lack the conception of objects as mechanisms for transmitting causal influence and thus would lack the conception of objects as mind-independent.

The success of Campbell's argument for experientialism hinges on two claims. The first is that our conception of objects as mind-independent *requires* the conception of objects as internally causally connected – as mechanisms for transmitting causal influence from place to place. The second is that grasp of objects as mechanisms depends essentially on sensory experience. Let us begin by considering the former claim.

This first claim of Campbell's is reminiscent of Gareth Evans's (1980) thought that grasp of the conception of objects as mind-independent requires grasp of such objects having an abiding causal ground. I will discuss Evans's *causal ground argument*[7] in Chapter 3. At this

[7] This expression is borrowed from Strawson's Reply to Evans (1980).

point, I will simply note that, on the face of it, this first claim is controversial. Consider, for example, *numbers*. It is commonly held that numbers are mind-independent, abstract objects, but it would be absurd to suggest that they are internally causally connected, or that they are mechanisms for transmitting causal influence place to place. So, it seems that grasp of object's as mechanisms is not required for grasp of object's as mechanisms; there is plausibly a more basic notion of mind-independence at play. In Campbell's defence, his characterisation of mind-independence is not intended to extend to our understanding of abstract objects, and it is plausible that the necessary conditions for grasp of perceptible phenomena as mind-independent differ from the necessary conditions for grasp of abstract objects as mind-independent. However, we can derive the same objection from consideration of *shadows*, which are not abstract, but are perceptible phenomena. Shadows can exist independently of the mind, and this is something which we can come to understand. However, just like numbers, shadows aren't internally causally connected and, presumably, do not transmit causal influence from place to place. Consideration of abstract objects, and physical phenomena like shadows, shows that grasp of objects as mechanisms is not *necessary* for grasp of objects as mind-independent, at least not in any straightforward sense.

Now, that grasp of objects as mechanisms is plausibly not *necessary* for grasp of objects as mind-independent is no problem for Campbell. Importantly, to resolve Berkeley's Puzzle, it need only be established that the conception of objects as mechanisms can be grasped through sensory experience, and that grasp of this notion is *sufficient* for grasp of objects as mind-independent. However, as Cassam observes, the idea that ordinary objects are the prototypical mechanisms by means of which causal influence is transmitted from place to place 'is something which an idealist can accept' (2014, p.128). This much appears uncontroversial: the fact that we can have some grasp of the identity conditions of an object without bringing in that object's relation to a mind does not appear to bear sufficiently weightily on the question of

whether that object *remains in existence* beyond the course of perception. Crucially, there is no reason why objects – conceived of as mind-dependent sensations – could not be causally efficacious, or responsive to changes in their environment. The mere fact that an object exhibits a degree of causal unity and interacts causally with other objects in its environment is insufficient to establish that it is capable of existing unperceived. In other words, it does not follow from the fact that experience brings the object itself into view that it thereby brings into view the *kind of thing* that object is – that it reveals to us whether the object is a mind-independent, material object or merely a sensation in the mind. A mind-independent object is, most essentially, an object that *can exist unperceived*, and Campbell's characterisation of mind-independence does not appear to capture this. This being so, there is strong reason to suppose that internal causal connectedness is insufficient for mind-independence.

So, we can apply pressure to Campbell's claim that grasp of objects as mechanisms is sufficient for mind-independence. However, even if we choose to concede the point, there are significant objections to his second claim, viz., that grasp of objects as mechanisms *depends essentially* on sensory experience. Most significantly, as Cassam (2014, p.128) observes, in many instances the underlying mechanisms which purportedly ground the counterfactual connections between objects are often *hypothesised*, they are not always encounterable in ordinary perception. Consider, for example, gravity. If I were to throw a rock over a cliff I might be inclined to ask why the object falls towards the earth and does not fly up into the sky. As it happens, we have an explanation for why this is so: put simply, there is a force – which we call gravity – by means of which objects of greater mass draw in objects of lesser mass. Gravity is the mechanism which explains the causal connection between my releasing the rock, and its subsequent trajectory. However, gravity is not something which we *observe* in ordinary perception. We might observe its *effects*, but we never observe gravity itself: gravity is, strictly speaking, a theoretical postulate. So, it appears untrue that we are *always* confronted, in

ordinary perception, with the mechanisms that link cause and effect. There are many cases in which our understanding of mechanism is purely theoretical.

The natural response, for Campbell, is to suggest that those instances in which we are confronted in ordinary perception with the mechanisms that link cause and effect are the basic cases, and that non-sensory cases are parasitic on these more basic cases. This is how Cassam thinks Campbell would respond, and Campbell appears to defend a similar view: 'our intuitive picture of what a "mechanism" is, is provided by our understanding of simple contact phenomena among medium-sized objects' (2014, p.71). However, this is not a response which Cassam finds convincing, since '[s]uch claims are…extremely difficult to make out' and it is unclear why there couldn't 'be a thinker for whom mechanisms are *always* below the surface rather than visible, one whose grasp of the concept of a mechanism is purely theoretical' (2014, p.128).

In one respect, Cassam's criticism is justifiable. Campbell provides little by way of support for his claim that grasp of objects as mind-independent depends upon grasp of objects as mechanisms beyond noting that '[i]n the absence of experience of objects, it is difficult to see how we could have [a conception of objects as mind-independent]' (2014, p.32). However, in my view, the mere possibility of a thinker who has a purely theoretical grasp of the concept of a mechanism is insufficient to dismiss Campbell's claim outright. There are ways in which Campbell might respond which Cassam does not consider. Importantly, Campbell need only establish that the conception of objects as mechanisms depends essentially on sensory experience *in our own case*, and there is significant empirical support for the view that concepts acquired from perceptual experience are co-opted for use in abstract reasoning. For example, Lawrence Barsalou (1999) defends a theory of 'perceptual symbol systems', according to which symbols (mental representations) are *modal* (sensory-based) and are 'analogically

related to the perceptual states that produced them' (1999, p.578). Barsalou provides the following description of the basic idea behind perceptual symbol systems:

> Once a perceptual state arises, a subset of it is extracted via selective attention and stored permanently in long-term memory. On later retrievals, this perceptual memory can function symbolically, standing for referents in the world, and entering into symbol manipulation.
>
> (Barsalou, 1999, pp.577-578).

Additionally, we might look to the (related) Embodied Cognition movement. First popularised by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Embodied Cognition emphasises 'the role that the perceptual and motor systems play in shaping particular kinds of concepts' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p.16). Lakoff and Johnson contend that the traditional view – that we have a 'fully autonomous faculty of reason' – is undermined by contemporary cognitive science, which favours the view that 'reason uses and grows out of [our bodily capacities]' (1999, p.26). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999), colour concepts (red, green, blue, etc.), spatial concepts (on, left of, behind, etc.) and our basic-level categories (boy, running, water, etc,) are all dependent on our perceptual and bodily interaction with the environment. This being the case, it is not such a stretch to suppose that our conception of objects as mechanisms might also depend essentially on our experience of the world. It might depend upon our perception of simple mechanisms in our environment, or else it might depend upon bodily interactions with the environment in which our own body functions as the mechanism linking cause and effect. It appears that Cassam is ultimately too dismissive of the idea that, at least in our own case, understanding of object's as mechanisms depends essentially on perceptual experience.

§3. Experientialism and The Idea of Space

In the preceding section I discussed Campbell's argument for experientialism about understanding. I concluded that Cassam is too quick to reject the possibility that grasp of objects as mechanisms depends essentially upon sensory experience. Crucially, Campbell's experientialist claim finds support in the empirical literature. However, his picture is

undermined by his notion of mind-independence: consideration of abstract objects like numbers, or more commonplace, perceptible phenomena like shadows, shows that grasp of objects as mechanisms is not straightforwardly necessary for objective thought. What's more, there is reason to suppose that such a grasp is not even sufficient for objective thought, since one can be an idealist and still hold that the objects of experience are causally efficacious, or responsive to changes in their environment. This being so, I will assume, from this point onwards, that to have a conception of an object as mind-independent is to have a conception of that object as capable of being perceived, and existing unperceived. With this in mind, we can re-state experientialism as the view that sensory experience plays an *essential role* in explaining our grasp of the notion of *existence unperceived*.

In search of a more promising argument for experientialism we might consider Gareth Evans' claim that 'the idea of existence now perceived, now unperceived, is not an idea that can stand on its own, stand without any surrounding theory' (1980, p.261). According to Evans, grasp of the notion of mind-independence requires grasp of the *idea* of space. On this view, to say that sensory experience plays an essential role in our grasp of the notion of mind-independence is to say that it plays an essential role in our grasp of certain spatial concepts.

There are two claims which need examining. The first is that objective thought requires grasp of the idea of space. The second is that grasp of the idea of space *depends essentially* on sensory experience. The former claim will be addressed directly in the next chapter. It warrants its own chapter, and it is most sensible to approach it outside of the context of experientialism. For the moment, let us just consider the latter claim, and assume that grasp of the idea of space *is* necessary for objective thought.

§3.1. The Simultaneity Argument for Experientialism

Why suppose that grasp of the idea of space depends essentially on sensory experience? I would like to focus on one argument which can be extracted from Evans's 'Things Without the Mind': *The Simultaneity Argument for Experientialism*.

The simultaneity argument turns on a distinction between two kinds of spatial concepts, viz., *simultaneous* spatial concepts and *serial* spatial concepts. Evans illustrates this distinction by contrasting the experience of a blind individual – who explores the relations between objects in their environment via touch – with the experience of a sighted individual. The sighted individual can tell that three objects are in a straight line by looking at them, whereas the blind individual must discover this by tracing a path from one object to another (Evans, 1980). In the former case the spatial relations between the three objects are experienced simultaneously, in the latter case they are experienced serially. For Evans, grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is necessary for objective thought, and this is one important sense in which grasp of the idea of space is necessary for such thought. In this case, to hold that grasp of the idea of space depends essentially on sensory experience is to hold that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts depends essentially on sensory experience.

Why suppose that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts depends essentially on sensory experience? The basic idea is that grasp of such concepts requires that one be in the position to make a 'direct application' of them in sensory experience. According to Evans, those situations in which simultaneous spatial concepts are most directly applicable are those 'in which the elements related by them are simultaneously presented or perceived' (Evans, 1980, p.284). So, the thought is that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts requires a subject to be presented in sensory experience with simultaneously spatially related elements, as in visual experience. This is amounts to an argument for experientialism because it restricts grasp of

simultaneous spatial concepts and, in turn, grasp of the concept of mind-independence, to those who have a particular kind of sensory experience.

The most natural response to this idea is to question *why* grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts requires the ability to make a direct application of such concepts in sensory experience. Regarding this claim, Evans is quite vague:

> [I]t seems fairly clear that we can identify, in these different ways of detecting spatial facts, the application of different kinds of spatial concepts, which have different presuppositions and which sustain different kinds of reasoning. Someone who had information given in, or stored with the use of, concepts of one kind, or in a form to which concepts of one kind would be directly applicable, would find certain problems easier, and certain problems harder, to solve than one who relied on concepts of the other kind.
>
> (1980, p.284)

Now, it is quite hard to make out exactly what Evans's point is. The thought appears to be that individuals whose spatial experience is primarily serial are less able – when confronted with a situation in which simultaneous spatial concepts are more directly applicable than serial spatial concepts – to make sense of certain things, or solve certain problems, than individuals whose spatial experience is primarily simultaneous. We can suppose that this observation is intended to support the claim that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts requires the ability to apply such concepts directly in sensory experience. However, it is not entirely clear that it does. The mere fact that individuals hypothesised to be incapable of applying simultaneous concepts directly in sensory experience find some tasks easier – and others more difficult – than those who are thought to be capable of doing so does not, in itself, support the claim that the former lack a proper grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts, or that they are incapable of objective thought. Evans provides no compelling reason to think otherwise[8].

Evans offers minimal support for his 'direct application' claim, but are there *positive* reasons to hold that one could achieve a wholly theoretical grasp of simultaneous spatial

[8] There is a suggestion that this distinction is implicit in the literature, but this observation does not support the claim that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts requires direct application.

concepts? At this point, we might note that – in part three of 'Things Without the Mind' – Evans appears to suggest that our grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts *is* theoretical:

> To grasp these primary properties, one must master a set of interconnected principles which make up an elementary theory – of primitive mechanics – into which these properties fit, and which alone gives them sense. One must grasp the idea of a *unitary spatial framework* in which both oneself and the bodies of which one has experience have a place, and through which they move continuously.
>
> (Evans, 1980, p.269, my emphasis)

For Evans, primary properties are *theoretical.* That is, they are 'neither directly nor exclusively…woven out of materials given in experience' (1980, p.271) – our grasp of primary properties instead depends upon grasp of a *theory*. An important element of this theory is the idea of a *unitary spatial framework*, and Evans is quite explicit – in the following excerpt from his discussion of Strawson's 'Hero' – that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is *necessary* and *sufficient* for grasp of this framework:

> It is just this idea of the simultaneous existence of the perceived and the unperceived that we illegitimately import into the auditory universe by misinterpreting Hero's serial propositions as simultaneous, for example, by crediting him with something like a *map* of the world in which the information about succession and sequence is synthesised into a unitary framework.
>
> (Evans, 1980, p.287)

It would appear that there is a tension here, but it is not clear. Evans is explicit that theoretical properties are properties which are 'neither directly nor exclusively…woven out of materials given in experience'. That is, they are not *derived* from experience. This leaves open the possibility that grasp of such properties nevertheless *depends essentially* on sensory experience. That Evans implicitly endorses a form of concept nativism[9] is no objection since – as was noted in §2 – the essential role reading of experientialism is compatible with nativism about concept acquisition. With this in mind, it would be a mistake to think that Evans rejects experientialism generally – his opposition to experientialism is confined to *concept empiricism*.

[9] Evans (1980, p.271), quotes Daniels (1974, p.xiv) who speaks in favour of a 'natively given primitive mechanics'.

This is not to say there is no hope for the anti-experientialist: if a plausible account can be given of how simultaneous spatial concepts may be grasped without direct application, the force of the simultaneity argument is at least partly diminished. In this regard, a natural suggestion is that one could grasp simultaneous spatial concepts, and, in turn, the notion of a unitary spatial framework, by combining two or more concepts together. For example, the concept of a spatial object (an object which has certain *primary properties*) and the notion of the simultaneous existence of distinct particulars (henceforth, the notion of *simultaneity*). For Evans, grasp of concepts of the primary properties of objects depends upon grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts, but this is an open question. Beyond asserting that grasp of primary properties requires an understanding of a unitary spatial framework — which itself depends upon grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts — he offers little justification for his view. Thus, it remains possible that grasp of concepts of primary properties, far from requiring grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts, could in fact *yield* a grasp of such concepts.

We can begin to see how grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts might be achieved independently of direct application by considering the case of a blind individual. Crucially, this is not an individual who lacks *all* spatial concepts, even if we assume that their spatial experience is entirely serial. At the very least, it seems reasonable to suppose the blind capable of grasping the spatial notion of *location*, as well as the related notions of *impenetrability*, *extension* and *shape*, and *density*, since all these concepts can plausibly be grasped through the haptic investigation of the world. The location of an object can be determined simply by encountering it in perception. The density of an object can be ascertained by determining how resistant it is to pressure and attempts at deformation. The impenetrability of objects is evidenced in the fact that two objects cannot occupy the same space. If an object is only lightly extended, it can be held in the palm of the hand, and its shape easily determined. If an object

is larger, the degree of its extension, as well as its shape, can be determined serially, through more extensive haptic investigation.

Even if we concede that grasp of the above is *insufficient* for the *direct* grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts, it certainly appears *sufficient* for grasp of the more basic notion of a spatial object. With this in mind, it need only be established that an individual whose experience is entirely serial could grasp the notion of simultaneity. In this regard, little elaboration is required: a blind individual need only acknowledge that they exist simultaneously with the object they are perceiving in order to grasp the notion of simultaneously existing distinct particulars.

At this point, two questions remain. The first is whether one could plausibly grasp simultaneous spatial concepts by simply combining the notion of a spatial object with the notion of simultaneity. The second is whether grasp of the notion of a spatial object, or grasp of the notion of simultaneity, themselves depend essentially upon sensory experience.

In regard to the first question, the combining of two simpler concepts into one more complex concept is a widely accepted cognitive process known as *conceptual combination.* That we can, and do, combine concepts together is uncontroversial. However, this does not mean that we can be sure about which concepts combine to form certain other concepts. Additionally, it does not follow from the fact that some concepts can be acquired through conceptual combination that all concepts can be so derived. There are limitations to conceptual combination, and it is important to bear that in mind. This being said, it is not clear that the obvious limitations of conceptual combination are cause for concern in this case. Consider again the concept of a *spatial object* which our blind individual plausibly possesses. This is the concept of an object which is located, extended and shaped, dense or soft, and impenetrable. Combined with the notion of simultaneity this notion would – most notably – yield grasp of the notion of simultaneously existing *located* objects and, since these objects are *impenetrable*,

this would be a notion of simultaneously existing *differently located* objects. So, combining the notion of a spatial object with the notion of simultaneity would yield an understanding of differently located simultaneously existing objects, each of determinate extension and density. Now, mere grasp of this concept would not yield knowledge of the precise spatial relations which exist between a collection of objects. However, it would plausibly be sufficient for grasp of the idea of a 'unitary spatial framework in which both oneself and the bodies of which one has experience have a place'.

The second question is more troubling, and I have time to address it only briefly in what remains of this chapter. I will begin by stating the obvious: it is plausible that grasp of the concept of a spatial object depends essentially upon sensory experience. More specifically, it is plausible that grasp of concepts of primary properties – concepts like location, extension, density etc. – depends essentially upon sensory experience. Now, this does not undermine the account just given, insofar as that account was meant to show that simultaneous spatial concepts can be grasped without direct application. It does, however, weaken the account if it is taken as a way of explaining how one might achieve a purely theoretical grasp of the concept of mind-independence. It is possible, in principle, that grasp of a spatial object might be achieved independently of sensory experience via the process of conceptual combination. However, even if this could be established, it would not resolve, but would simply shift, the problem: are the concepts combined to yield grasp of a spatial object (for example) themselves grounded in sensory experience? It is possible that this regress stops at a set of innate concepts grasped independently of sensory experience, but this suggestion borders on the conjectural.

Ultimately, whilst there are good reasons to be sceptical of Evans's 'direct application' claim, it is unclear that undermining this claim is sufficient to justify rejecting experientialism about understanding. Therefore, a more definitive refutation of Evans's argument for experientialism is needed. As I mentioned earlier, Evans's argument for experientialism hinges

on the (Kantian) thesis that grasp of the idea of space is necessary for objective thought, and it is to the plausibility of this thesis that I now turn. If it emerges that such a grasp is plausibly *not* necessary for objective thought, then we will have stronger grounds for rejecting experientialism about understanding.

Chapter Three: Objective Thought and The Idea of Space

§1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed the plausibility of experientialism about understanding. I discussed concept empiricism which – it emerged – was particularly vulnerable to the increasing evidence for nativism about concept acquisition. In subsequent sections I focused on Campbell's essential role reading of experientialism about understanding. Whilst aspects of Campbell's picture find support in experimental cognitive science – notably, the claim that grasp of objects as mechanisms depends, in some important sense, upon sensory experience – his characterisation of mind-independence was vulnerable to some serious objections. Not only was it unclear that grasp of objects as mechanisms is sufficient for objective thought – it is possible to be an idealist and think that objects transmit causal influence from place to place – but it was also unclear that it is necessary for objective thought – we can think of abstract objects like numbers, and perceptible phenomena like shadows, as existing independently of experience, but we don't think of them as mechanisms for transmitting causal influence.

A more promising defence of the essential role reading was found in Gareth Evans. I suggested that Evans's claim that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts depends essentially on sensory experience is poorly motivated, and I provided one way in which an individual whose spatial experience was entirely serial might nevertheless grasp simultaneous spatial concepts, viz., through the process of conceptual combination. However, I concluded that whilst there are good reasons to be sceptical of Evans's 'direct application' claim, a more definitive refutation of Evans's argument for experientialism was required.

In this chapter, I will explore the Kantian thesis that grasp of the idea of space is necessary for objective thought. More precisely, I will argue that grasp of the idea of space is *not* necessary for objective thought. This negative thesis has two immediate implications for

Berkeley's Puzzle: firstly, it shows that a successful solution to the puzzle need not account for our grasp of the idea of space; secondly, it indirectly supports anti-experientialist solutions by undermining the first premise of the simultaneity argument for experientialism, viz., that grasp of the idea of space is necessary for objective thought.

I will begin by outlining the position to which the Kantian thesis is opposed, viz., that grasp of the idea of space is *not* necessary for objective thought (the No-Space Thesis, NST). I will focus on Strawson's detailed treatment of NST from the second chapter of 'Individuals' (§2.1.). I will then introduce two arguments from Evans against Strawson's claim that objective thought is possible in a No-Space World (§2.2.): the causal ground argument and the simultaneity argument. Next, I will consider Strawson's reply to Evans (Strawson, 1980, pp.273-282). I will argue that Strawson successfully undermines the causal ground argument but is too lenient in his treatment of the simultaneity argument (§2.3.). This being the case, the remainder of the chapter will be dedicated to analysis of the simultaneity argument. I will begin by providing two reasons to be sceptical of the claim that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is necessary for objective thought (§3.). Following this, I will make a positive case for objective thought in a No-Space World. In particular, I will suggest that Hero could grasp existence unperceived if it can be demonstrated that simultaneous quasi-spatial experience is possible in such a world (§4.).

§2. The No-Space Thesis

§2.1. Strawson's No-Space World

For an elaboration and defence of NST we can look to the second chapter of Strawson's 'Individuals' (1959, pp.59-86), in which he highlights – by means of a powerful and inventive argument – the distinction between the notion of an objective world and the notion of a spatially external world. Strawson's argument centres on an imagined subject, our 'Hero', who occupies a world which is wholly auditory. This wholly auditory world is referred to by Strawson as a

'No-Space world' since '[sounds] have no intrinsic spatial characteristics' (Strawson, 1959, p.65). Now, it has been suggested that this characterisation is potentially misleading. Importantly, as Evans notes, Strawson is not unsympathetic to the 'Kantian thesis that space is a necessary condition for objective experience' and he interprets the second chapter of 'Individuals' as presenting an argument for a 'slightly weakened version of [the Kantian thesis]' (Evans, 1980, p.250). For Strawson, unless the wholly auditory experience of Hero can be shown to provide him with at least some analogue of space, we ought to conclude that he would lack the conceptual resources to distinguish between himself and his experiences on the one hand, and the objects of his experiences on the other. It is, however, reasonable to interpret Strawson as arguing for the stronger thesis that objectivity does not require spatiality[10]. Importantly, to hold that objective thought requires grasp of concepts which are functionally analogous to certain spatial concepts is *not* to say that it requires grasp of spatial concepts.

For Strawson, objective particulars are those which continue to exist 'through an interval during which they were not being observed' (Strawson, 1959, p.72), and to have a conceptual scheme which admits of the possibility of such particulars is to have a scheme in which the existence of such particulars is not *logically tied* to the perception of those particulars. More precisely, it is to have a conceptual scheme which admits of the possibility of *re-identifiable particulars* – that is, the possibility of a particular being identified, after an interval, as the same encountered at an earlier time. Importantly, it is not sufficient to understand that a particular encountered at time t_2 is *qualitatively* identical to a particular encountered at time t_1, it is necessary to understand that it is *numerically* identical. Thus, the possibility of objective thought in a No-Space World depends upon the possibility of a purely auditory criteria for the numerical re-identification of particulars.

[10] This is how Paul Snowdon (2019) reads it.

Crucially, as was mentioned previously, Strawson believes that it is necessary 'to introduce, in auditory terms, an *analogue* of space in order to make room for the idea of re-identifiable particulars' (Strawson, 1959, p.118). Why think that the intelligibility of the idea of re-identifiable particulars requires 'an analogue of space'?

One potential answer to this question is provided by Evans (1980, p.253), and the thought goes as follows. If Hero is to possess a notion of objectivity, he must be able to distinguish among qualitatively identical phenomena those which are, and those which are not, later stages of the same phenomenon experienced at an earlier time. However, since the phenomena in question do not differ in terms of their intrinsic, non-relational properties (they are qualitatively identical), any distinction which is to be drawn between the two must be grounded in properties which are not intrinsic, i.e., it must be grounded in the *relational* properties of the phenomena in question. So, Hero needs to be possessed of a conceptual scheme which allows for a distinction between the relational and the non-relational properties of phenomena; Evans' thought is that to be possessed of such a scheme is, plausibly, to be possessed of a scheme which incorporates some concepts which are functionally analogous to our own spatial concepts (henceforth, *quasi*-spatial concepts).

So, for Strawson, we can take seriously the hypothesis that Hero possesses a notion of objectivity if 'criteria for re-identification of particulars can be framed or devised in purely auditory terms' (Strawson, 1959, p.72), and this is only possible if Hero inhabits a quasi-spatial universe. How might a purely auditory world support an understanding of quasi-space which is appropriately analogous to our own?

Strawson's suggestion is that a wholly auditory experience could provide Hero with an analogue for the spatial notions of location and change of location if Hero's experience of sound-particulars was accompanied by an experience of a constant 'master-sound'. This master-sound would have a distinctive timbre, and would be heard at a constant loudness, but

would vary in pitch as Hero traversed the sound-world. The master-sound would be an "absolute space", with different pitch-levels of the master-sound corresponding to different "locations" in the sound-world, and changes in the pitch-level of the master-sound corresponding to changes of location in the sound-world. Hero would thus be able to conceive of there being other "locations" (other pitch-levels of the master-sound) at which sound-particulars not currently being perceived could be heard. Hero would also be able to distinguish – with the aid of the master-sound – among qualitatively identical sound-particulars those which are, and those which are not, later stages of the same sound-particular previously experienced. For example, if Hero experienced a sound-particular S_P accompanied by pitch P_1 of the master-sound, he would be able to ascertain – upon hearing the sound-particular S_P for a second time – whether it was the self-same instantiation of the sound universal S_U by determining whether it was also accompanied by pitch P_1 of the master-sound.

§2.2. Gareth Evans's Objections

How plausible is Strawson's auditory picture? For Evans, the answer is 'not very', and he provides two arguments against the claim that 'a subject whose experience was wholly auditory could be regarded as having a conception of an independent reality' (Evans, 1980, p.251).

The first argument (the *Causal Ground Argument*) is quite complex, but the general thought goes as follows: If a subject is to conceive of the world as composed of objects of which they have experience, and which have an existence independent of their perception by an observer, then they must attribute sensory properties to the objects in their environment (Strawson, 1980). However, sensory properties are *dispositional properties*. That is, they consist in dispositions to induce, in the appropriate circumstances, particular experiences in an observer. This being so, sensory properties – conceived of as objective – require an abiding, non-sensory causal ground. In our own case, we can make sense of such properties having an abiding, non-sensory causal ground because we have concepts of the primary (spatial)

properties of objects. However, Hero – in his wholly auditory universe – cannot grasp concepts of primary properties. Thus, it is not clear how Hero could make sense of sound-particulars continuing to exist beyond the course of perception.

The second argument (the *Simultaneity Argument*) was touched upon in the previous chapter. Let us recap briefly. According to Evans, grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is necessary for objective thought. Moreover, proper grasp of such concepts requires that one be in a position to apply them directly in experience. That is, a subject must be simultaneously aware of different things existing in spatial relations, as in visual experience. Evans argues that Hero can only make an indirect application of simultaneous spatial (or quasi-spatial) concepts, since he can become aware of the spatial relations in his environment only *sequentially*. Thus, he concludes that Hero fails to meet this necessary condition for objective thought.

If either the causal ground argument or the simultaneity argument succeeds in undermining the possibility of objective thought in a No-Space World, then the Kantian thesis is vindicated. If neither succeed, and it can be shown that objective thought *is* possible in a No-Space World, then the Kantian thesis is undermined. In what follows, I will argue that neither argument is successful. I will begin by considering Strawson's reply to Evans; in my view, he successfully undermines the causal ground argument.

§2.3. Strawson's Reply to Evans

Strawson's reply to Evans begins with the Simultaneity Argument, which he characterises as 'a kind of supplement to the Causal Ground Argument' (Strawson, 1980, p.276). Strawson agrees with Evans's claim that grasp of simultaneous spatial (or quasi-spatial) concepts is *necessary* for objective thought. However, he is less convinced that grasp of such concepts is *sufficient* for objective thought. Evans's position is less clear, and at one point he appears to suggest that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is sufficient for objective thought:

‘Certainly any theory using simultaneous spatial concepts does genuinely embody the idea of an independently existing reality’ (Evans, 1980, p.287).

In order to apply pressure to this claim, Strawson introduces ‘Seer’ – a subject whose experience is purely visual. For Strawson, it is clear that Evans would consider ‘the conception of an objective spatial world consisting of mere *visibilia* to be no more a possible conception than the conception of an objective spatial (or quasi-spatial) world consisting of mere *audibilia*’ (1980, p.277). However, Seer is in a position to make a direct application of simultaneous spatial concepts and so – by Evans’s own lights – must be granted possession of such concepts. This being the case, Evans could not object – on the basis of the Simultaneity Argument alone – to Seer’s possession of a conception of an objective world. Thus, Strawson concludes that any objection must be grounded ‘in considerations adduced in the Causal Ground Argument’ (1980, p.277). At this point, Strawson moves on to the Causal Ground Argument, which he evidently considers more consequential than the Simultaneity Argument. The question, then, is whether the supposition that objective thought is possible in Seer’s case can withstand the Causal Ground Argument. I will return to the Simultaneity Argument shortly, but for now let us see what Strawson has to say about the Causal Ground Argument.

Strawson opens by challenging Evans’s claim that it is necessary to conceive of sensory properties as dispositions of primary propertied objects in order to make sense of such properties being objective. In our own case, it is natural to suppose that sensory properties just are dispositions of such objects to induce certain sensations in us. However, this is plausibly a consequence of the fact that we inhabit a world in which sensory properties *are in fact* grounded in the non-sensory, spatial properties of matter, and, further, that we have come to know that this is true of our world. In other words, material bodies are the basic particulars of our own conceptual scheme, and it is thus natural to understand sensory properties by reference to material bodies. In a conceptual scheme such as Seer’s – where material bodies are not the

basic particulars of the system – it is not clear that such a conception 'would be either necessary or possible' (Strawson, 1980, p.278). The suggestion here is that Seer could conceive of himself as inhabiting an objective world composed of *mere visibilia* (colour particulars) located in visual space. In this case, the sensory objects in Seer's environment would be thought of as dispositional but *not* grounded in something more basic[11].

How might Evans respond? Strawson anticipates an appeal to the thought that concepts of mind-independent things cannot be 'directly and exclusively…woven out of materials given in experience'. That is, concepts of mind-independent things need to be *theoretical*. The challenge is that grasp of such concepts is not possible in a world of mere visibilia, the kind of world which Seer occupies. However, for Strawson, this objection is not compelling, and I agree.

The first problem emerges if we consider our own case. Strawson notes that we are 'subjects of sense-experience' who take ourselves to encounter in sense-experience 'independently existing things in an objective, spatial world' (1980, p.279). This being so – if we accept that concepts of the genuinely objective need to be theoretical – then we have to suppose that we possess an innate capacity to form and apply concepts 'which are not simply concepts of sense-experiences but which belong to the range of objective-spatial concepts' (1980, p.279). Now, this is not, *in itself,* a problematic supposition. However, there is no reason why Seer (or Hero) could not be equally disposed to form and apply objective, spatial (or quasi-spatial) concepts in response to his purely visual experience. Crucially, Evans could not object to Seer being so disposed on the grounds that our sensory experience occurs across several sensory modalities since 'the mere multiplication of types of sense-experiences brings us no nearer to the conception of the objective' (Strawson, 1980, p.279). Additionally, Evans cannot

[11] Snowdon (2019, p.26) makes the same point: 'it really is not obvious that dispositions cannot be basic features in an environment'

argue that one can only make sense of visual properties being objective if one can make sense of such properties having an abiding, non-sensory causal ground since this would be '[to] let the natural tenor of our thinking in the world as we know it prejudice our sense of other possibilities' (Strawson, 1980, p.278).

The second problem is a kind of reductio of the claim that sensory properties – thought of as objective – need to be understood as dispositional, and as having an abiding, non-sensory causal ground. The thought is that it's unclear – in our own case – what the abiding, non-sensory properties which purportedly ground the sensory properties of objects are. We could not include in this category such properties as "hardness-as-felt" or "shape-as-seen", since these are properties of sense-experiences. Thus, Evans must be thinking of 'the undeniably theoretical properties which physics assigns to the ultimate constituents of matter – perhaps force, mass, impenetrability, electric charge' (Strawson, 1980, p.280). However, these properties are just as dispositional as sensory properties. The only difference is that sensory properties pick out dispositions of objects to induce certain experiences in certain observers, whereas properties such as force, and mass, pick out dispositions to react to certain objects in certain ways. Crucially, as Strawson notes, '[p]roperties do not become less dispositional simply by becoming more theoretical' (1980, p.280). The upshot of this observation is absurd: 'If it seems true of the sensory properties in general that they all dissolve together, under reflective pressure, into dispositions, this seems even more certainly true of the 'physical' properties which are held to constitute their categorical base' (Strawson, 1980, p.280). So, it seems that if we accept Evans's argument 'from dispositional properties conceived of as objective to the need for a [theoretical] categorical base' (Strawson, 1980, p.280), then we are led to the undesirable conclusion that sensory properties cannot be conceived of as objective in our conceptual scheme.

In my view, Strawson is right to challenge Evans's claim that grasp of concepts of primary properties is necessary for objective thought, and I find his reasoning compelling. That said, Strawson's objection to Evans – however successful – is primarily an objection to the claim that grasp of concepts of primary properties is necessary for objective thought in *every conceivable case*. It seems that, for Strawson, grasp of such concepts is nevertheless necessary for objective thought *in our own case*. According to Strawson, it is not simply difficult for us to imagine Seer's conceptual scheme; it is, as he puts it, 'impossible for us to embrace it as our own' (1980, p.278). That is, it is impossible for us to embrace a conceptual scheme on which the objective world is populated by 'things *constituted* of colour variously disposed in space' which are understood as 'simply causing, in a suitably positioned subject, the experience of seeing them' (p.278).

It is perhaps unclear which aspect of this conceptual scheme prevents us from embracing it. The difficulty may lie in the conception of sensory properties as categorical *and* dispositional. However, this seems unlikely, since there is no obvious reason why we could not incorporate such a conception into our own scheme. Indeed, the view of sensory properties as dispositional and categorical is an important aspect of Campbell's relational theory of perception. What's more, it is a view which Strawson appears to endorse: 'If we do retain our hold on [a direct realist theory of perception], then we are released from the grip of the belief that sensory properties, conceived of as objective, must therefore be conceived of as merely dispositional, as requiring a categorical base of a different character from themselves' (1980, p.280). More likely, then, the difficulty lies in the conception of a *purely visual world*. Such a conception would certainly be difficult for us to embrace, given that our sensory experience is multi-modal. It may be that Strawson meant nothing stronger than this when he suggested that we could not embrace Seer's conceptual scheme as our own. However, I think that Strawson most likely envisaged the difficulty lying in the fact that primary propertied objects (what

Strawson calls 'material bodies') are not the basic particulars of Seer's conceptual scheme, whereas they are basic in our own scheme[12]. That is, the problem is that Seer's conceptual scheme does not incorporate concepts of primary properties.

Personally, I am sceptical of the claim that grasp of concepts of primary properties is necessary for objective thought, even if just in our own case. If, as Strawson seems to think, we can conceive of alternative conceptual schemes (like Seer's, or Hero's), why suppose it impossible for us to adopt one as our own? Nothing Strawson says rules this out as a possibility. What's more, with some minor adjustments to Campbell's relational view, we arrive at what looks like a multi-modal account of Seer's conceptual scheme. For Campbell, colours – and, presumably, *all* sensory properties – conceived of as objective, are 'to be thought of as the grounds of the dispositions of objects to produce experiences of colour' (1993, p.258). However, they are also transparent to us in experience: sensory properties of the kind we encounter in sensory experience are the grounds of the dispositions of objects to produce experiences of colour. The relational view differs from Seer's conceptual scheme insofar as Campbell incorporates concepts of primary properties into his scheme. For Campbell, objective thought requires grasp of objects as *internally causally connected*, as *mechanisms* for transmitting causal influence; on Seer's scheme, by contrast, such an 'elaborate theory of the mechanism of perception' (Strawson, 1980, p.278) is neither necessary nor possible.

In my view, consideration of Seer's case reveals a tension in the relational view: it is unclear why Campbell could not do away with underlying mechanisms and hold simply that we are related directly in sensory experience to the categorical grounds of the dispositions of objects to produce sensations in us. If no further commitment to mechanisms is necessary for objective thought in Seer's case, why suppose that such a commitment is necessary in our own

[12] That material bodies are the basic particulars of our conceptual scheme is the conclusion of Chapter One of 'Individuals' (1959, pp.15-58)

case? What's more, as we saw earlier in Chapter Two, Campbell's conception of mind-independent objects as causal mechanisms is vulnerable to significant objections; abandoning this commitment would have the benefit of side-stepping these objections.

To conclude, Strawson provides two compelling arguments against Evans's claim that grasp of concepts of primary properties is, in the strict sense, necessary for objective thought. Nevertheless, he appears sympathetic to the claim that grasp of such concepts is necessary for objective thought in our own case. I remain unconvinced. It seems plausible that we could adopt a multi-modal version of Seer's conceptual scheme which could ground thought about an independent world without incorporating concepts of primary properties. Thus, the Causal Ground Argument for the Kantian thesis appears to fall short.

In what follows, I will turn my attention to the simultaneity argument for the Kantian thesis. For Strawson, the case for objective thought in Hero's auditory universe is, in the end, 'rather weak' (1980, p.282). The problem is that 'Hero cannot…make a direct application of simultaneous spatial [or quasi-spatial] concepts' (Strawson, 1980, p.281). However, in my view, Strawson's conclusion is too quick. I will begin by providing two reasons to be sceptical of the claim that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is necessary for objective thought. I will then argue that, with some adjustments to Strawson's auditory picture, a case can be made for simultaneous quasi-spatial experience in an auditory world.

§3. The Necessity of Simultaneous Spatial Concepts

Why suppose that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is necessary for objective thought? In search of an answer, we can turn to Strawson's initial framing of the simultaneity argument from the second chapter of 'Individuals':

> But surely the idea of simultaneous existence of the perceived and the unperceived is linked with this idea of the simultaneous presentation of elements, each of a definite character, but simultaneously exhibiting a system of relations over and above those which arise from the definite character of each. Surely the former idea is a necessary extension of the latter, is just the idea of such a system of relations extending beyond the limits of observation.

> (1959, p.80)

So, the thought is that grasp of the 'idea of the simultaneous existence of the perceived and the unperceived' requires grasp of the more basic idea of simultaneously existing, spatially related *perceived* objects. This is an attractive idea, and one which Strawson accepts: for Strawson, grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is necessary for objective thought, even if it is unclear that it is sufficient. However, it is not straightforwardly the case and so requires further interrogation.

In this regard, it is most natural to question whether the notion of existence unperceived is equivalent to that of the simultaneous existence of the perceived and the unperceived. The general idea is that the former notion is plausibly distinct from, and prior to, the latter notion. If it turns out that the two notions come apart, then the case for simultaneous spatial concepts being necessary for objective thought appears to dissolve. We can call this the non-equivalence objection to the simultaneity argument for experientialism, and it can be interpreted in two ways.

On one interpretation, the idea is that there are instances in which grasp of the simultaneous existence of the perceived and the unperceived is not necessary for objective thought. In such instances, grasp of existence unperceived would be sufficient. In my view, there are at least two cases in which such an understanding is plausibly sufficient: first, when a subject is not having, or does not have, perceptual experiences; and second, when – despite existing unperceived – the unperceived cannot be said to exist *literally simultaneously* with the perceived.

Let us begin by considering the former instance. It appears possible, at least in principle, for an individual to be deprived of all sensory experience. In this case, the crude suggestion is that thought about an objective, unperceived world would not be thought about a world of unperceived objects which exist simultaneously with perceived objects, since there would be

no perceived objects. Objective thought would require, simply, that one finds intelligible the notion of existence unperceived. This option appears to have merit; it is, however, quite difficult to evaluate. It is unclear that complete sensory deprivation is possible. What's more, it is unclear to what extent the sensorially deprived subject would borrow, conceptually, from previous sensory experiences. This being so, let us consider the second instance.

For an example of an instance of the second kind, we might consider thought about the past and the future. Some hold that all points in time have the same kind of existence (eternalism about time). However, the past and the future are, by definition, unperceived. Therefore, to think about the past and the future as having the same kind of existence as the present is to think about the past and the future as existing unperceived. However, to think about the past and the future as existing unperceived is not to think about the past and the future as existing *literally simultaneously* with the present. In this case, we appear to have an example of thought about an entity which exists independently of perception but does not plausibly exist *simultaneously* with the perceived.

The obvious rejoinder to this thought is that the eternalist conception of time is one which conceives of time on the model of space. That is, it conceives of moments in time as analogous to points in space – as being perceptible only from a certain location and as existing simultaneously. It is a mistake, however, to interpret the claim that points in space exist *simultaneously* as a claim about the existence of objects *in* time. It is, instead, to be interpreted as a claim about *the kind of existence* spatial objects have. Spatial objects have the same kind of existence, and their existence does not depend upon perception by an observer. This is the sense in one moment in time can be said to exist *simultaneously* with another. No two moments in time are *temporally simultaneous*. However, two moments in time can be thought to have the same kind of existence – the kind of existence which is independent of perception by an observer.

It is not my intention to delve into this interesting discussion. What is important is that there are plausibly instances in which the notion of existence unperceived is more applicable than is the notion of the simultaneous existence of the perceived and the unperceived. This being so, it is unclear that it follows from grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts being necessary for grasp of the simultaneous existence of the perceived and the unperceived that it is thereby necessary for grasp of existence unperceived and, in turn, objective thought.

There is a second interpretation of the non-equivalence objection which is more tractable. On this interpretation, the claim is that objective thought does not require that one can think of unperceived objects *as* existing simultaneously with perceived objects. This interpretation borrows from an idea found in Snowdon's (2019) discussion of Strawson and Evans. For Snowdon, objective thought does not require that one can think about objects *as* objective, it requires merely that one can think about objects which *are in fact objective*. Snowdon 'sketches an alternative analysis' in which objective thought can be achieved by a subject who 'thinks of [objects] as possessing features which *imply* that [they] are [mind-independent]' (2019, p.14). Applied to the present case, the idea is that objective thought requires that one can think about objects as possessing properties which *imply* that they can, and do, exist simultaneously with perceived objects when they aren't perceived. What might these properties be? Presumably, they would be properties which justify thought about an object as capable of *existing unperceived*. To conceive of an object as possessing such properties, is to conceive of that object as possessing properties which *imply* that it exists simultaneously with the perceived when it is unperceived.

Now, there is a wide range of properties which could plausibly justify thought about an object as capable of existing unperceived. One possibility is *primary* properties – such as extension, density, impenetrability, and location. Whilst I am unconvinced that grasp of concepts of primary properties is *necessary* for grasp of existence unperceived, I am open to

the possibility that they are nevertheless *sufficient* for such a grasp. There is certainly a strong connection, in our conceptual framework, between primary properties and mind-independence: we tend to regard primary propertied things as mind-independent. Because of this, primary properties seem well-suited to serve as candidates for those features of objects that imply their simultaneous, unperceived existence with the perceived. What's more, although grasp of concepts of primary properties presupposes *some* grasp of the idea of space – primary propertied objects are spatially located objects – it is not clear that it requires grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts. Evans would deny that grasp of primary properties could be achieved independently of grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts; however, this is an open question. As I discussed in the previous chapter, it is entirely possible that grasp of concepts of primary properties, far from *requiring* a grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts, in fact *yields* a grasp of such concepts.

If one finds unconvincing the suggestion that grasp of concepts of primary properties is plausibly sufficient for grasp of existence unperceived, then there are alternatives. For example, it might not be necessary to attribute primary properties to objects, it may be sufficient to think as an object as simply *being abiding* or, to use an example of Snowdon's, as *having come from elsewhere* (2019). What is important, is that there are plausibly properties which *imply* that an object exists simultaneously with the perceived when it is unperceived. Objective thought does not obviously require that one can think of unperceived objects *as* existing simultaneously with perceived objects, it is sufficient that one can make sense of objects existing unperceived.

It appears that there are reasons to be sceptical of the claim that grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is necessary for objective thought. However, even if we accept that grasp of such concepts is necessary for objective thought, it is unclear that Hero could not achieve a grasp of concepts analogous to our own simultaneous spatial concepts in his auditory world,

e.g., simultaneous *quasi-spatial* concepts. For Evans, Hero has no opportunity to make a direct application of simultaneous spatial (or quasi-spatial) concepts, and this ultimately sinks Strawson's auditory picture. Interestingly, Strawson agrees, conceding that Evans's objection cannot be met if the purely auditory picture is to be maintained. However, in my view, a case can be made for simultaneous quasi-spatial experience in an auditory universe with only some minor adjustments to Strawson's auditory picture. On this revised picture, there is reason to think that objective thought would be possible.

§4. The Revised Auditory World

I would like to begin by considering again the case of the blind individual. Interestingly, Evans does not want to deny that the congenitally blind have a conception of mind-independence, but why is this? One possibility is that blind individuals can make a direct application of simultaneous spatial concepts: they can reach out and touch two objects simultaneously, one with their left hand and one with their right hand. Strawson alludes to this possibility when he notes that 'the supposition that the blind subject has *only* sequential awareness of the spatial distribution of matter…is a highly dubious supposition' (1980, p.281). So, it seems that the blind individual is plausibly able to experience *two* different points in space simultaneously. What's more, they can judge accurately which object is located at which point in space and they can acquire some understanding of the spatial relations between the two objects. If this thought has merit – as it appears to – then we may be able to make a case for objective thought in a No-Space world if it can be established that Hero could experience two different pitch-levels of the master-sound simultaneously.

Now, upon first reflection, there is no reason why Hero could not experience two pitch-levels of the master-sound. At the very least, it is reasonable to suppose Hero capable of encountering complex auditory scenes, which are composed of various intricately related auditory elements, all of which can be experienced simultaneously. These auditory scenes

would presumably incorporate auditory elements of different volume and timbre – why could they not also incorporate elements of varying pitch? Unfortunately, matters are not so clear cut. Crucially, if Hero is to give substance to the thought that a pitch-level of the master-sound is a point in quasi-space – a point at which a sound-particular could be located – then, when presented with several pitch-levels of the master-sound and several sound-particulars, Hero needs to be in a position to understand which sound-particular is located at which pitch-level of the master-sound. What is required is some account of how this is possible. We can call this the problem of object-location.

Besides the problem of object-location there is a second concern, viz., that the introduction of a second pitch-level obscures Hero's understanding of his own location in auditory space. In Strawson's original picture, Hero can understand that he is located at a certain pitch-level of the master-sound by determining which pitch-level he is currently experiencing. However, if we introduce a second pitch-level, not only do we have to explain how Hero can determine which sound-particular is located at which pitch-level, but we also need to explain how Hero can determine at which pitch-level he is located. The problem is that Strawson's pitch-levels are heard 'at a constant loudness' (1959, p.76), and so neither pitch-level would stand out from the auditory melange as being the pitch-level at which Hero is located. We can call this the problem of subject-location. Let us consider each problem in turn, beginning with the problem of object-location.

§4.1. The Problem of Object-Location

In search of a solution to the problem of object-location, it is worth considering what Hero's experience would be like if he was presented simultaneously with more than one pitch-level of the master-sound, as well as the sound-particulars which were located at each pitch-level. Let us suppose that Hero can hear two pitch-levels of the master-sound. Let us also suppose that Hero can hear two sound-particulars, one for each pitch-level of the master-sound, all of which

are composed of several auditory elements which vary in timbre, and volume. I think it's reasonable to assume, at the outset, that Hero is capable of hearing all four sounds simultaneously, and that he can distinguish the two pitch-levels of the master-sound from the two sound-particulars. So, we can imagine Hero's experience being off two pitch-levels, heard concurrently with the two sound-particulars which would form a kind of auditory melange distinguishable from the continuous droning of the master-sounds. At this point, Hero is being presented with several (auditory) objects which have particular locations in auditory quasi-space. However, he is unable to determine with any accuracy which of the (auditory) objects occupy which of the observed points in auditory quasi-space. What we need is some account of how Hero can achieve clarity as regards the location of the observed sound-particulars.

One natural solution presents itself: why not suppose that the sounds present as *coming from a certain direction*? If this was possible, then Hero could determine which sound-particular was located at which pitch-level by determining whether a given sound-particular is *coming from the same direction* as a given pitch-level. However – intuitive as it is – this kind of an account will not work. As Strawson notes, '[Sounds] have no intrinsic spatial characteristics' (1959, p.65). In our own case, sounds come from a certain direction because we are physical beings in a spatial world, and it is not clear that we could account for the directionality of sound in an auditory universe without compromising our auditory picture.

A more promising solution can be derived from consideration of the experience of a passenger on a high-speed train (Passenger). When Passenger looks out of the window, all they see is a blur. This blur is a visual melange of points in space and the particulars which occupy those points. In this case, it is plausible to say both that Passenger is experiencing multiple points in space simultaneously, but also that they are unable to determine with accuracy which particular is located at which point in space. Now, if the train were to slow down, then Passenger would be able to determine with greater accuracy which particular is located at

which point in space. What's more, if Passenger were to step off the train, walk up to, and inspect a specific point in space, then they would be able to determine with the greatest degree of accuracy which particular in fact occupies that point in space. In this case, when Passenger is directing his attention towards a specific point in space, the surrounding points in space as well as the particulars which occupy them – whilst still present to Passenger in experience – fade somewhat into the background. In attending to a point in space, Passenger becomes increasingly unable to accurately determine which particulars occupy those points that consequently fade into the periphery. Nevertheless, and despite fading into the periphery, these other points in space and the objects which occupy them are still present to Passenger in experience, and they are experienced simultaneously with the object on which Passenger is focusing.

In my view, the most promising solution to the problem of object-location is one which incorporates this idea of *attention*. Applied to Hero's case, the thought is that he can determine which sound-particular is located at which pitch-level of the master-sound by *directing his attention* towards a single pitch-level, at which point the chosen pitch-level would become "clearer", and be heard more explicitly in conjunction with the associated sound-particular. To employ a comparison of Strawson's (1959), we can think of Hero as "tuning in" to a particular pitch-level, as one might tune in to a radio station. The other pitch-level would not cease to be audible but would rather fade into the periphery, along with the associated sound-particulars – they would fade in *clarity* but would still be experienced simultaneously with the other pitch-level and associated sound-particular. This process could be repeated for the remaining pitch-level, enabling Hero to determine, with accuracy, the location in auditory quasi-space of both simultaneously experienced sound-particulars.

Now, the picture just elaborated is not without its issues. One might reasonably question whether the experience just described is *simultaneous* quasi-spatial experience. Hero is

experiencing two sound-particulars which are in fact quasi-spatially related – he can come to understand this by directing his attention towards each sound-particular in turn – and he is experiencing them simultaneously. However, Hero is still discerning the precise quasi-spatial location of each sound-particular *sequentially*. This being so, Hero arguably cannot be said to be experiencing more than one sound-particular as being at such-and-such an auditory distance from another sound-particular at any one time. However, in my view, this objection is not convincing. Crucially, it is not clear that simultaneous quasi-spatial experience requires that Hero be able to experience two *sound-particulars* as being at a certain auditory distance from one another at any one time. It is plausibly sufficient that Hero can experience two pitch-levels at a certain auditory distance from one another and that he can understand that these pitch-levels are points in auditory space at which sound-particulars are located. The former can be achieved directly in experience: Hero can hear two pitch-levels, and the ordered nature of the master-sound allows him to understand the quasi-spatial relations between the pitch-levels. The latter can be achieved by selectively attending to each pitch-level.

§4.2. The Problem of Subject-Location

It seems that we have a potential solution to the problem of object-location. However, we still need a solution to the problem of subject-location – we need an additional account of how it is possible for Hero to determine his own location.

In this case, the problem can be resolved simply: we can suppose that Hero is able to think of himself as located across *both* pitch-levels of the master-sound. This might appear – at least initially – to be a problematic assumption. One might object that we cannot make sense of Hero being located across two pitch-levels unless we credit him with something like a quasi-extended "body", and to do this would be to compromise Strawson's auditory picture. However, this objection is misguided. The alternative picture adds nothing which was not already present in Strawson's original picture. For Strawson, Hero can understand his location

in auditory space by discerning which pitch-level of the master-sound is currently audible. The same is true in the alternative auditory picture, it just so happens that Hero experiences *two* pitch-levels of the master-sound.

That an individual can be located across multiple points in space is not, in itself, a problematic assumption. This much is obvious from consideration of our own case: we are located across several points in space at any given time, why suppose that the same could not be true in Hero's case? It can be no objection that we are located across multiple points in space because we are material and extended, because all occupants of three-dimensional space are material and extended regardless of how many points in space they occupy. In short, there is no reason why a material and extended object could not be located at a single point in three-dimensional space, and there is no reason why a wholly auditory being needs to be material and extended in order to be located at more than one point in auditory quasi-space.

§4.3. Objective Thought in The Revised Auditory World

The last point to consider is whether objective thought is possible in the revised auditory world. The issues raised by this question are great. However, I am broadly optimistic about Hero's prospects.

Firstly, there is the simple observation that simultaneous quasi-spatial experience plausibly facilitates grasp of simultaneous quasi-spatial concepts, in much the same way as simultaneous spatial experience facilitates grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts. What's more, simultaneous quasi-spatial concepts presumably play an analogous conceptual role to that played by their spatial counterparts: grasp of such concepts plausibly facilitates thought about simultaneously existing particulars. Additionally, just as grasp of simultaneous spatial concepts is sufficient for grasp of a unitary spatial framework, we might suppose that grasp of simultaneous quasi-spatial concepts is sufficient for grasp of a unitary quasi-spatial framework in which oneself and the objects of which one has experience are located. This, in turn, would

yield grasp of the enabling conditions of perception. It would allow Hero to understand why sound-particulars are sometimes perceived and sometimes not perceived: any given sound-particular is perceived when Hero is located at a certain point in auditory space and not perceived otherwise.

Perhaps more significantly, in the alternative auditory world, Hero is able to draw a conceptual distinction between his experience of the auditory world on the one hand, and the auditory world itself on the other. That is, Hero can understand that the qualitative character of his experience at a time is determined partly by the qualitative character of his auditory surrounds, and partly by the distribution of his attentional resources. We can illustrate this point with an example. Imagine that Hero is confronted with an auditory melange of sound-particulars and pitch-levels of the master-sound. Next, imagine that Hero chooses to direct his attention towards a particular pitch-level. In this case, Hero is in a position to recognise that the subsequent change in the character of his experience is not due to any change in the sound-particular – the sound-particular was always located at the associated pitch-level, and it always had the determinate character which he now perceives it to have – but rather is due to an intentional change on the part of Hero in the allocation of his attentional resources. Likewise, when confronted again with the auditory melange, Hero is in a position to recognise that the now cacophonous character of his experience reflects the limitations of his own perceptual apparatus when not mediated by the careful allocation of attentional resources.

§5. Conclusion

In the introduction I identified two 'immediate implications' of my negative thesis – that grasp of the idea of space is *not* a necessary condition of objective thought – for our pursuit of a solution to Berkeley's Puzzle. The first was that 'a successful solution to the puzzle need not account for our grasp of the idea of space'. The second was that 'it indirectly supports anti-experientialist solutions by undermining the first premise of the Simultaneity Argument for

Experientialism'. I would like to conclude by re-visiting these claims in light of the chapter's conclusions and by highlighting some additional conclusions.

Is there reason to suppose that a successful solution to Berkeley's Puzzle need not account for our grasp of the idea of space? In my view, there is. Strawson provides a very compelling reductio of the causal ground argument and, although he is sympathetic to the thought that grasp of primary property concepts is necessary for objective thought in our own case, this remains contestable. I suggested that a revised version of Campbell's relational view could potentially explain our grasp of existence unperceived without invoking concepts of primary properties. This would be a *multi-modal* version of Seer's conceptual scheme. On the revised relational view, sensory properties would be conceived of simply as categorical and dispositional, there would be no further commitment to underlying physical mechanisms which explain the counterfactual dispositions of objects to produce sensations in us.

There is also reason to be sceptical of the Simultaneity Argument. Strawson's original framing of the objection appears to conflate the notion of existence unperceived with that of the simultaneous existence of the perceived and the unperceived. I suggested that these two notions come apart, and that grasp of the former is plausibly sufficient – in certain instances – for objective thought.

Lastly, I argued that, even if grasp of simultaneous spatial (or quasi-spatial) concepts is plausibly necessary for objective thought, there is reason to suppose that such concepts are available to Hero in his auditory world. This being the case, I argued that grasp of a unitary quasi-spatial framework and, in turn, grasp of the enabling conditions of perception could be achieved in a No-Space World. Additionally, on my alternative picture, Hero has the conceptual resources to distinction between changes to his experience which are due to changes in the world, and changes to his experience which are due to his own actions.

The second claim – that my negative thesis indirectly supports anti-experientialist solutions to Berkeley's Puzzle – is more dubious. It is true that the Simultaneity Argument for Experientialism rests on the claim that grasp of the idea of space is necessary for objective thought. Thus, in undermining the Kantian thesis, I have thereby undermined the Simultaneity Argument for Experientialism. However, there is no reason why the Simultaneity Argument for Experientialism could not be re-framed in terms of quasi-spatial concepts – that is, as the claim that grasp of simultaneous quasi-spatial concepts is necessary for objective thought, and that grasp of such concepts depends essentially on sensory experience. Whilst the revised auditory scenario avoids the original Simultaneity Argument for Experientialism, it is plausibly susceptible to this reformulated version. The strength of this reformulated argument remains dependent on the plausibility of the claim that simultaneous spatial (or quasi-spatial) experience is necessary for objective thought, and I have provided some reasons to be sceptical of this claim. However, the fact that objective thought is possible in a No-Space world does not, *by itself*, undermine experientialism.

Chapter Four: The Cognitive Role of Sensory Experience

§1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued against the Kantian thesis that grasp of the idea of space is necessary for objective thought. In my view, grasp of the idea of space is not necessary for objective thought. However, it was not clear that undermining the first premise of Evans's Simultaneity Argument for Experientialism was enough to dismiss experientialism outright. This being the case, in this chapter I will discuss two realist responses to Berkeley's Puzzle which reject the claim that sensory experience can provide us with understanding only of sensory experience itself. They are Campbell's Relational View and Cassam's Sensationist Representationalism. I addressed the Relational View in Chapter Two, and again briefly in Chapter Three, so my discussion of it in the present chapter will be brief. I will focus on two objections which can be adduced from consideration of hallucinations. The bulk of the chapter will be dedicated to Sensationist Representationalism.

I will begin by outlining Cassam's position (§2.). Next, I will consider an objection to it presented by Campbell, I will argue that it is not compelling (§3.). Following this, I will present an objection to Cassam's picture which Campbell does not discuss, viz., that sensory experience can only represent a restricted range of properties purely in virtue of its phenomenology (§4.). I will conclude by considering how the relational view can account for hallucinatory experience (§5.).

§2. Sensationist Representationalism

One way in which the realist can resolve Berkeley's Puzzle is by providing an account of how – on an internalist conception of sensory experience – sensory experience can ground our conception of objects as mind-independent, and this is Cassam's strategy. For Cassam, sensory experience *represents* objects as mind-independent, and this is why it can ground our

conception of objects as mind-independent. There are two claims here which need unpacking. The first is that sensory *represents* objects as mind-independent. The second is that sensory experience can ground our conception of objects as mind-independent because it represents them as mind-independent. Let us begin by considering the former claim: what does it mean for sensory experience to represent an object as mind-independent?

For Cassam, to say that a sensory experience has representational content is to say that it represents 'the perceiver's environment as being a certain way' – that is, it 'can be evaluated as correct or incorrect' (2014, p.160). Peacocke defines representational content in a similar way – as 'content that is evaluable as correct or incorrect' (2001, p.240). This much is uncontroversial. However, what is more controversial is whether the representational content of sensory experience is *conceptual* or *non-conceptual*. Cassam rejects conceptual representational views according to which the representational content of sensory experience is *conceptual*. Such views are problematic for three reasons. First, in holding that sensory experiences represent the world as mind-independent in virtue of their conceptual content, conceptual representational views make it hard to see how the sensory experiences of non-human animals could represent their environment as being mind-independent. Second, where conceptual representational views presuppose a concept of mind-independence, they are faced with the problem of accounting for our initial acquisition of that concept. Lastly, on conceptual representationalism, it appears that non-conscious sensory experience can yield comparable cognitive access to our environment as can conscious sensory experience.

For these reasons, Cassam favours a kind of non-conceptual representationalism that he calls *sensationist representationalism*. On this view, the representational content of sensory experience is grounded in the sensational features of sensory experience. In explaining how this is possible, Cassam appeals to the phenomenal intentionality research programme, which holds that 'intentional states, including sensory experiences, have their representational or

intentional contents "by virtue of their phenomenology"' (Horgan and Tienson, 2002, p.520 quoted in Cassam, 2014, p.172). On the face of it, then, sensationist representationalism does not presuppose our grasp of a notion of mind-independence, and it can account for objective experience in non-human animals. What's more it avoids the charge, often levelled at conceptual representationalism, that such views render the phenomenal content of sensory experience redundant.

Let us move on to the second claim. How does sensory experience *ground* our conception of objects as mind-independent in virtue of its representational content? Although Cassam is broadly sceptical of the essential role reading of experientialism, he nevertheless holds that – on a sensationist representational theory of perception – sensory experience grounds our conception of objects as mind-independent because it plays an *essential role* in our grasp of the notion of mind-independence. On Cassam's view, what it means for an object to be mind-independent is for that object to be *persistent* and *constant,* and this is precisely how sensory experience represents objects as being. When I walk over a hill, the objects which I thereby encounter are represented as 'coming into view' and not as 'coming into existence' (Cassam, 2014, p.162). Similarly, when I move away from an object, it is represented as fading from view, and not as fading out of existence; this is the sense in which sensory experience represents objects as *persistent*. Sensory experience represents objects as *constant* by representing them as unchanging through variations in our perception of them. For example, as I move towards an object, I do not experience it as getting bigger despite it taking up more of my visual field. My perception of the object's size is *constant* despite my changing perspective. In short, sensory experience *grounds* our conception of objects as mind-independent because it plays an essential role in our grasp of objects as persistent and constant.

§3. Objection: Campbell's Reductio

Campbell's objection is a kind of reductio of what he calls 'Cassam's "persistence and constancy" criteria' (2014, p.181) – the view that objects that are represented as persistent and constant are thereby represented as capable of existing unperceived. The problem emerges when we consider, for example, something like a particularly persistent odour. As you move towards the epicentre of the odour it gets stronger, and it gets weaker as you move away. On Cassam's account, the smell is not represented as coming into and out of existence; rather it is represented as becoming more, and then less, present to perception. Thus, it seems that if we accept Cassam's criteria, we are led to the undesirable conclusion that such things as particularly persistent odours are represented, in sensory experience, as mind-independent in exactly the same sense as are things like rocks and trees: they are represented as persistent and constant. For Campbell, this tells against Cassam's view.

There appear to be two reasons why this conclusion is potentially undesirable. First, it is debatable whether such things as odours are mind-independent. Thus, the fact that sensationist representationalism implies that odours *are* mind-independent can be seen as a challenge to the view. Second, even if we allow for mind-independent odours, there appears to be an important distinction between the way in which odours are mind-independent and the way in which such things as rocks and trees are mind-independent, one which cannot be captured by talk of persistence and constancy. I will offer some of my own thoughts shortly; first, let us consider how Cassam responds.

Cassam (2014, pp. 194-195) presents three observations about Campbell's argument, two of which constitute a direct response to the objection. The first is that Campbell's objection is not an objection to representationalism as such, but rather an objection to Cassam's characterisation of mind-independence. At best, then, it shows that an alternative account of mind-independence is needed. The second is that sensory experience does not represent odours,

for example, as *fully* objective – as objective in the same sense in which such things as rocks and trees are objective. It represents them as mind-independent in a particular sense: as capable of being perceived and existing unperceived (Cassam, 2014). For Cassam, an object that is represented as mind-independent in this sense is not necessarily represented as fully objective. A fully objective object is one which is not only persistent and constant but is also a *material space-occupier*: 'rocks and smells are both mind-independent in virtue of being persistent and constant, but the primary qualities of rocks make them more full-bloodedly mind-independent than smells' (Cassam, 2014, p.194).

I agree with the first observation of Cassam's: if Campbell's argument is successful, it is successful only as an objection to Cassam's characterisation of mind-independence. Cassam's second observation, however, appears to create a tension in his position. The difficulty is that it is unclear why an object that is represented as material, persistent and constant is thereby represented as more 'full-bloodedly mind-independent' than an object that is represented simply as persistent and constant. Presumably, such an object is represented as mind-independent in more than one sense: in the sense of being perceptible and capable of existing unperceived, and at least one further sense. However, this has a counterintuitive implication, viz., that an object represented in sensory experience as *simply* material would be represented as at least partly objective. This is counterintuitive because, for Cassam, sensory experience represents objects as capable of being perceived and existing unperceived by representing them as persistent and constant. Thus, an object that is represented as simply material is not represented as mind-independent in this sense. This raises the question: in what sense can an object that is represented as simply material be said to be represented as mind-independent?

Although Cassam does not state this explicitly, I expect he would argue that such an object is represented as mind-independent in the sense of being causally efficacious and not

merely epiphenomenal – that is, it is represented as causally explaining the secondary properties of objects. However, there are two problems with this response. First, it is far from clear that the 'primary qualities which make an object a material object' (Cassam, 2014, p.194) are represented, in sensory experience, as causally explaining the secondary properties of that object. The causal relation between the primary qualities of an object and the secondary qualities of that object seems to be something we come to understand *through grasp of a theory*, it is not something that 'shows up in, or is registered by, sensory experience' (Cassam, 2014, p.158). Second, even if we accept that material objects *are* represented as causally explained secondary qualities of objects, if they are not also represented capable of being perceived and existing unperceived, can they really be said to be represented as mind-independent in any substantive sense?

It appears that Cassam's response to Campbell complicates his picture. However, I do not think that Campbell's objection is successful, even if just as an objection to Cassam's characterisation of mind-independence. In my view, Cassam should simply "bite the bullet" and accept that, on his account, particularly persistent odours are represented as mind-independent in exactly the same sense as such things as trees and rocks. It may seem counterintuitive to suggest that relatively fleeting phenomena like odours are mind-independent in exactly the same sense as more enduring phenomena like rocks and trees. However, a mind-independent object is not defined in terms of its longevity, or in terms of the likelihood of its being encountered again: a mind-independent object is, most essentially, an object that can be perceived and can exist unperceived. Some mind-independent objects, like odours, may be relatively transient, while others, like rocks and trees, may be more enduring. Crucially, there is plausibly no connection between degree of objectivity and degree of longevity. At this point, one might object that Campbell's concern is not merely about temporally fleeting objects being represented as mind-independent but rather is about non-

material objects being represented as equally objective as material ones. For Campbell, material objects are mind-independent in a sense in which persistent odours are not because they are internally causally connected, and not simply because they are more temporally persistent. I am, however, sceptical of Campbell's characterisation of mind-independence in terms of the internal causal connectedness of objects[13]. If this scepticism is justified, then the fact that Cassam's view cannot account for our grasp of objects as internally causally connected does not present a significant challenge to his view.

§4. Objection: The Restricted Range of Represented Properties

As noted previously, Cassam holds that sensory experience can ground our conception of objects as mind-independent because it can represent them as such, and it can represent them as such because the phenomenal content of sensory experience is *intrinsically representational*. This appeal to PIT is central to Cassam's position. However, an important question remains: does PIT restrict the range of things which can be represented purely in virtue of a sensory experience's phenomenology? It seems plausible that a sensory experience can represent an object as, say, *red* purely in virtue of its phenomenology. However, to say that a sensory experience can represent an object as *mind-independent* purely in virtue of its phenomenology appears to be an altogether different claim. In what follows, I will highlight two different reasons to doubt the claim that sensory experience can represent objects as mind-independent purely in virtue of its phenomenology.

First, there are questions about whether sensory experience can represent temporally extended events. Cassam's framework assumes that it can: sensory experience can represent objects as persistent and constant. Indeed, for Cassam, sensory experience can represent objects as mind-independent *precisely because* it can represent them as persistent and constant. If there are reasons to doubt this, then, assuming Cassam's characterisation of mind-independence in

[13] See: Ch.2, Section 2.2.

terms of persistency and constancy, there are also reasons to doubt that the mind-independence of objects 'shows up in, or is registered by, sensory experience'.

Second, the property of being mind-independent is a *modal* property: to say that an object is mind-independent is to say that it would necessarily – or at least possibly – exist independent of perception. By contrast, the property of being red, say, is a non-modal property – it describes how an object *actually* is, not how it *necessarily*, or *possibly* is. This introduces a difficulty for sensationist representationalism: can sensory experience represent an object as possessing modal properties – like the property of being mind-independent – purely in virtue of its phenomenology?

§4.1. The Representation of Temporally Extended Properties

To see this first challenge, it is important to note that – since *persistency* and *constancy* are both temporally extended properties – the claim that sensory experience can represent objects as being persistent or constant depends upon the plausibility of the claim that sensory experience can represent temporally extended properties. The plausibility of this claim depends, in turn, upon the plausibility of the following hypothesis, found in Chuard (2011):

Temporally Extended Experience (TE): Sensory experience can represent temporally extended events because it is, in some sense, temporally extended.

According to Chuard (2011), there are two different versions of TE: *state temporal extension* (STE) and *content temporal extension* (CTE). Of primary relevance here is STE, according to which sensory experience can have a 'genuine temporal dimension' (Dainton, 2000, p.115, quoted in Chuard, 2011, p.4). That is, sensory experiences can represent temporally extended events because they are themselves temporally extended. On STE, 'there's a structural isomorphy between the arrangement of an extended experiences temporal parts and the succession of worldly event(s) that the experience represents' (Chuard, 2011, p.6). The

extentional approach has been defended, recently, by Dainton (2000), and Phillips (2010). However, whilst intuitive, STE is not incontestable and it is, notably, rejected by proponents of *temporal atomism* (TA). The following characterisation of TA can be found in Chuard (2011):

Temporal Atomism (TA): Sensory experiences cannot represent temporally extended events because they are *not* temporally extended.

Proponents of TA hold that our experience of the world is just a 'succession of short-lived or instantaneous sensory experiences: the subject has a sensory experience of an event, and then another, and another' (Chuard, 2011, p.9). Historically, TA has been associated with Broad (1923) and Husserl (1893-1917). More recently, it has been defended by Chuard (2011) and Grube (2014). So-called "hybrid approaches", which incorporate elements of TE and TA have also been defended. For example, Gerardo Viera (2019, p.22) argues, by appeal to contemporary neuroscience, that both atomism and extentionalism are 'false as general theories of temporal experience.'

What are we to make of the above? First, it is important to note that advocates of TA do not deny that we experience temporal relations, or that we can make judgements about them. However, crucially, they deny that the temporal relations between events are *represented by* sensory experience. Instead, they explain our experience of temporal relations by appeal to memory: temporally extended whole experiences consist of a presently experienced instantaneous state together with retained memories of earlier such states. If this is right, then Cassam's position faces a difficulty. For Cassam, features such as persistence and constancy show up in, or are registered by, sensory experience; that is, sensory experience represents objects as persistent and constant purely in virtue of its phenomenology. But if TA is correct, this cannot be the case. On TA, experience of temporal relations cannot be explained by appeal to phenomenology alone, it rests upon an appeal to our faculty of memory, or some alternative inferential process.

Should we prefer TA over STE? Unfortunately, I do not have the time to delve into the debate in detail. This being so, I will consider one argument from Chuard which I believe is particularly compelling. Although my discussion will be brief, the point remains: Cassam's account hinges upon a claim which he has not substantiated, and which is itself debatable.

For Chuard (2011, p.12), the problem is that proponents of STE have no good reason to hold that 'whole experiences…[are anything]…over and above successions of their parts'. In support of this claim, he offers the following mereological argument (pp.14-15):

1) According to STE, 'temporally extended whole experiences are mereologically composed by their temporal parts arranged successively.'
2) 'Temporally extended whole experiences don't supervene on mere successions of their temporal parts'
3) If 2), then 'there must be some property F…that whole experiences instantiate but mere successions of their parts lack, the having of which doesn't supervene on properties of these temporal parts arrange successively.'
4) 'There is no such property F'

For the sake of brevity, I will not examine each premise in detail. It is worth noting, however, that premisses 1) through 3) are relatively uncontroversial, making premise 4) the most natural target. Crucially, the claim of premise 4) is not that there are *no* candidates for what F might be; rather, the challenge is that none of the candidates fulfil the requirements set by premise 3). Chuard identifies three possible candidates for F: a phenomenal, mereological, or modal property (or set of properties). I will focus on the former, both because it is the most widely endorsed approach and arguably the most promising for the extentionalist. What's more, it aims to explain how sensory experience can represent temporally extended events in virtue of its phenomenology. I will briefly consider one example and raise some objections.

Chuard cites Barry Dainton (2008) as a paradigmatic example of this approach. Dainton suggests that, in a temporally extended whole experience successive temporal experiences are 'connected by the relation of diachronic co-consciousness' (Dainton, 2008, p.370), and that this relation can account for the phenomenology of temporally extended whole experiences, in particular their unified phenomenology. For Dainton, the relation of co-consciousness is *basic* (2000, p.84) and, without it, a mere succession of instantaneous temporal experiences would not feel phenomenally unified or bound together.

What is the problem with this approach? For Chuard, the difficulty is that the phenomenal features which the relation of diachronic co-consciousness is supposed to account for plausibly supervene on mere successions of instantaneous temporal experiences (Chuard, ref, p.17). Prosser has also criticised Dainton's notion of co-consciousness on the basis that it is 'quite mysterious':

> I can only say that in my own case I am not at all certain what it should be like for two of my experiences to be co-conscious and yet not occur at the same time, without this simply being a case of the earlier experience being retained in a short-term memory.
>
> (Prosser, 2016, p.147)

Further objections can be found in Hurley, who argues against subjectivist accounts of co-consciousness on the basis that it is unclear 'how…anything internal to content determine unity, given that content presupposes unity' (1998, pp.70-71). Similarly, Bayne argues that 'there cannot be a total state of consciousness: take any state of consciousness with parts, one can construct a more complex experience by combining it with one or more of its parts' (2001, p.84).

Although the preceding discussion was brief, I hope to have shown that there is some debate about whether sensory experience can represent temporally extended properties. This being so, it is far from clear that sensory experience can represent temporally extended properties like persistence and constancy purely in virtue of its phenomenology.

§4.2. The Representation of Modal Properties

The second objection to Cassam's claim that sensory experience can represent objects as mind-independent purely in virtue of its phenomenology is not an objection his persistency and constancy criteria. Rather, it is an objection to the more general claim that sensory experience can *represent* an object as mind-independent *in any sense*. Why might we doubt this? The problem is that sensory experience appears to reveal only the actual properties of objects:

> [Y]ou do not sense modalities with your sense modalities. You do not see what would obtain in certain counterfactual situation; you see only what actually obtains…Your eyes do not respond to woulds and might have beens.
>
> (McGinn, 1996, p.540, quoted in Munton, 2025, p.3)

Whilst it may be true that sensory experience represents objects as 'gradually disappearing from view' and not 'gradually ceasing to exist' (Cassam, 2014, p.162), or 'the same despite variations in experience' (p. 193), these properties – of persistency and constancy – appear to be *actual* properties of the object. It is far from clear that sensory experience can represent what *would* obtain were one to cease observing the object in question – it is far from clear that sensory experience can represent *modal* properties of objects.

There is relatively little literature that directly addresses whether sensory experience can represent modal properties of objects. However, there has been much debate about the possible contents of perception more generally, particularly regarding whether sensory experience can represent *high-level* properties. High-level properties include, amongst others, kind properties, aesthetic properties, moral properties, and the property of being mind-independent. Advocates of the view that sensory experience is limited to representing low-level properties – such as colour, shape, size, orientation, etc. – include Dretske (1995), Price (2009) and Tye (1995). Those who have defended the view that sensory experience is not so limited include Peacocke (1992), Bayne (2009), and Masrour (2011). Despite fierce debate, a consensus appears to have emerged. As Jessie Munton notes, 'it is generally accepted that our

sense perception is restricted to the representation of how things actually are…how the world actually is, not how it could be' (2025, p.2). I do not have the space to engage fully with this debate here. Instead, I will focus on a recent empirical argument from Munton, who contends that this prevailing consensus is mistaken: for Munton, at least some modal properties are 'represented in our experience and contribute to its phenomenology' (2025, p.3).

Munton begins by highlighting the inadequacy of phenomenological and epistemic arguments for the claim that sensory experience can represent modal properties. Regarding the former, Munton introduces the example of a 'Jenga tower just one brick away from collapsing'. In this case, the Jenga tower '*looks* unstable' and this is 'an integral part of the experience of looking at it, which alters the sensory feel of the experience' (2025, p.7-8). The problem with phenomenological arguments of this kind, however, is that they are 'vulnerable to difficulties in navigating differences in opinion about the nature of the underlying phenomenology itself'. Regarding the latter, Munton notes that 'modal content seems to feature in the *accuracy conditions* of visual experience' (Munton, 2025, p.8). For example, if an object looks as though it can be easily kicked, but turns out to be difficult to kick, then it seems that the initial experience was inaccurate. However, similarly to phenomenological arguments, it is hard to defend epistemic arguments from competing intuitions; as Munton notes, it might be held that 'modal information merely *accompanies* visual perception' (2025, p.9).

According to Munton, an empirical argument can help to break the deadlock. Munton's empirical argument has two stages: first, she outlines a set of criteria for distinguishing between 'properties which feature in experience and those which are extracted *from* visual experience but do not feature among its contents' (2025, p.9); second, she argues that 'several modal properties meet these criteria' (p.10).

The criteria are sourced from a recent work by Hafri and Firestone (2021, p.480), and they are as follows:

1) ‘Speed’
2) ‘Automaticity’
3) ‘Stubborn Phenomenology’
4) ‘Effects on Other Visual Processes’
5) ‘Sensitivity to Subtle Visual Parameters’

Armed with this set of criteria, Munton proceeds by arguing that ‘recent empirical work suggests that several modal properties meet these criteria’ (Munton, 2025, p.10). For example, a study by Firestone and Scholl (2016) found that when participants were shown an image of a stable tower of blocks and a second image of a tower that was either identical or slightly altered, they were better able to determine whether the tower was altered if the alteration affected the tower’s stability. For Munton, this shows that *stability*, which is a modal property, meets the second and fifth criteria. Participants’ performance improved even though the task did not explicitly focus on stability, suggesting that participants registered changes in stability automatically and that these changes affected participant’s ‘ability to visually detect change in the towers by influencing the direction of their attention’ (Munton, 2025, p.10). A second study, also by Firestone and Scholl (2017), found that when participants were presented with an image of a block tower only briefly – between 100 and 1000ms – their judgements of the tower’s stability were comparable to those made without any time pressure. What’s more, judgements were accurate to physical simulations (Firestone and Scholl, 2017). This was repeated hundreds of times, achieving the same results. For Munton, this shows that ‘that information about stability is extracted very rapidly – longer exposures do not make much difference’ (Munton, 2025, p.10.).

What are we to make of Munton’s empirical case? In my view there are two main problems. First, there is the fact that, as Firestone and Scholl note, ‘other mental processes may exhibit some subset of these features (e.g., fast motor reflexes, or even automatic stereotyping)’

(2021, pp.480-481). They acknowledge that the likelihood of a false-positive can be alleviated if it can be shown that 'visual process driven by visual input has most or all of these signatures' (2021, p.481). However, even if this can be shown, it only suggests that it is *likely* that the property of experience features among its contents.

This is, arguably, a minor nitpick. More worrying is the fact that stability is not a straightforwardly modal property of an object. When I say that a building is unstable, I am describing an *actual* property of that object, its potential to fall over is a modal property which *arises* from the *actual* property of its being unstable. In the studies discussed above, however, participants are asked to judge the *actual* stability of the tower blocks, and *not* the likelihood that the block tower in question will fall over. Now, I suspect that if participants were asked in Firestone and Scholl (2016), for example, to determine instead the likelihood of each block tower collapsing under certain conditions, that the accuracy of participant's judgements would increase with additional time. Of course, this is not something which I am in a position to establish empirically. The crucial point, however, is that it remains unclear whether the empirical work truly supports the hypothesis that the modal property – being prone to fall under certain conditions, which arises from *actual* instability – is represented in sensory experience.

§5. The Relational View and Hallucinatory Experiences

I would like to conclude this chapter by briefly considering hallucinatory experiences, since they pose a particular problem to the externalist theory of perception defended by Campbell. For Campbell, sensory experience relates the subject directly to mind-independent ordinary objects in their environment, and the qualitative character of those objects is what determines the qualitative character of sensory experience. This is an intuitive view, and arguably the position of common-sense. However, we know that an individual can have a sensory experience of a tree, or of a chair, say, even when there is no corresponding object in their environment. What's more, hallucinatory experiences can be multi-modal and are often subjectively

indistinguishable from genuine perceptual experiences. Such experiences are often cited as favouring the view that we are directly related to *the same kind of thing* in hallucinatory, illusory and genuine perceptual experience – the so-called *common kind claim*. Direct realists tend to reject the common kind claim, instead favouring a *disjunctive* theory of perception according to which hallucinatory, illusory and genuine perceptual experiences are *not* the same kind of conscious perceptual experience, and this is Campbell's position:

> On the Relational View…there is nothing intrinsic in common between the cases in which there is a dagger to which you are consciously attending, and the case in which you are just having a hallucination. In the case in which there is a dagger, the object itself is a constituent of your experience. The experience is quite different in the case of the hallucination, since there is no object to be a constituent of your experience.
>
> (2002, p.117)

For proponents of a disjunctive theory of perception, that hallucinations are sometimes subjectively indistinguishable from genuine perceptual experiences is insufficient to establish that they are the same kind of conscious perceptual experience: at the most, subjective indistinguishability establishes that some hallucinations are qualitatively identical to some genuine perceptual experiences. This defence of disjunctivism is attributed to J. L. Austin (1962). For Austin, there is no reason to suppose that two things which are *metaphysically* distinct could not be *qualitatively* indistinguishable.

In my view, what Austin says is uncontroversial. However, it does not completely vindicate disjunctivism. Importantly, the objection to the disjunctivism amounts to more than an argument from the qualitative identity of hallucinatory and genuine perceptual experiences to the metaphysical identity of such experiences.

In this section I will consider two objections to disjunctivism, both of which support favouring common kind accounts of delusive experiences over disjunctivist ones. The first is a *causal argument* which can be adduced from consideration of a causally matching hallucination, i.e., a hallucination that is caused by the same brain state as a genuine perceptual

experience. This argument, it is suggested, poses 'a specific difficulty for those disjunctivists who endorse a naïve realist account of the phenomenal character of veridical perception' (Soteriou, 2016, p.169). The second is that the common kind view can better account for hallucinatory phenomena than can the disjunctivist view.

§5.1. A Causal Argument

An outline of the first objection can be found in Matthew Soteriou (2016, p.158). Imagine that there is a subject (S) who is visually perceiving an object (O). The perception of O by S depends upon O having some 'psychological effect' (p.158) (E) on S. The sequence of events which leads to E being produced in S begins at the some more distal cause (D) of E, something like light reflecting off O. The light is reflected off O and enters the eye of S, stimulating her optic nerves; this is the proximate cause (P). Finally, let T be the 'complete physical and psychological condition' immediately preceding the perception of O by S. Of this case, we can say the following:

1) 'When S perceives O, the cause P of E on S is preceded by [D]'. However, an event like P could occur in the absence of O, e.g., through the intentional stimulation of a part of the brain.
2) Additionally, '[T can also obtain] in the absence of O'. Indeed, it is possible, in principle, that T *and* P could obtain. In this case, 'the occurrence of P won't be causally sufficient for S to be perceptually aware of a mind-independent material object in her environment.'
3) If T obtains in the absence of O, then P is sufficient to produce in S 'a perceptual event/state of the kind that occurs when one has a hallucination that is subjectively indistinguishable from a genuine perception of an O.'
4) The presence of O does not prevent P from producing such a perceptual event/state in S.

5) Therefore, when S veridically perceives O, the same perceptual event that obtains when S has a hallucination that is subjectively indistinguishable from a veridical perception of O also obtains.

Soteriou's argument appears to establish that the same perceptual event which obtains in the event of a causally matching hallucination of an O will also obtain in the case of a veridical perception of an O (Soteriou, 2016). How ought the disjunctivist reply? One option is to reject certain empirical assumptions made, most notably, in premisses 3) and 4). In premise 3), an assumption is made about 'the effect that will be produced on S when P occurs and T obtains [in the absence of O]'; in premise 4), it is assumed that 'the absence of a distal cause involving O' is not required 'for P to have the effect of producing in S a perceptual event/state of the same kind' (Soteriou, 2016, p.160). However, as Soteriou notes, not only are these empirical assumptions widely regarded as plausible, it is also not clear that the disjunctivist needs to reject the arguments conclusion. For the disjunctivist, the psychological states that occur with a veridical perception of an O are not the same as those that occur with a hallucinatory experience of an O: there are psychological states which obtain in the former case, which do not obtain in the latter case. It is not clear that the conclusion of the preceding argument necessarily contradicts this view since it does not establish that *all and only* those psychological states that obtain in the case of a causally matching hallucination of an O also obtain in the case of a veridical perception of an O.

Does this mean that disjunctivism is off the hook? Not quite. For Soteriou, there is a second implication of the preceding argument which poses a particular problem for disjunctivists who are also naïve realists. The problem is that the causal argument implies that the psychological effect shared by veridical perceptions and causally matching hallucinations is *sufficient* to explain the phenomenology of causally matching hallucinations (Soteriou, 2016). This appears to suggest that the psychological effect is *also* sufficient to explain the

phenomenology of genuine perceptual experiences. Thus, as Soteriou observes, it appears that 'we have no reason to accept the naïve realist account of the phenomenal character of veridical perception' (2016, p.164).

One line of response for the naïve realist is simply to deny that the 'proximate cause involved in causally matching hallucination is sufficient to produce a phenomenally conscious perceptual experience that is introspectively indiscriminable from a veridical perception' (Soteriou, 2016, p.166). The plausibility of this response depends upon the plausibility of the empirical assumption made in 3), viz., that if T obtains in the absence of O then P is sufficient to induce in S the same kind of perceptual state that occurs when one has a hallucinatory experience of O that is introspectively indistinguishable from a veridical perception. However, there are those (Fish, 2009) who have argued that it does not follow from the truth of 3) that the perceptual state induced in S by P is a phenomenally conscious perceptual state. This being said, one might think that – in being forced to reject what is a reasonable assumption – the naïve realist account is significantly weakened.

An alternative line of response involves accepting that the proximate cause of a causally matching hallucination is sufficient to induce a phenomenally conscious perception that is subjectively indistinguishable from a genuine perceptual experience but denying that it follows that genuine perceptual experiences and hallucinations are metaphysically identical. This reply is reminiscent of Austin's defence of disjunctivism outlined above. The problem is that it runs into what is called the "screening-off objection" – the objection that the 'phenomenal core that is common to veridical perception and hallucination' (Soteriou, 2016, p.169) makes the naïve realist account of the phenomenal character of genuine perceptual experience redundant.

§5.2. The Explanatory Benefits of Common-Kind Theories

Let us now consider the second objection to disjunctivism, an outline of which can be found in Scott Sturgeon (1998, p.179-184). For Sturgeon, genuine perceptual experiences, hallucinatory experiences, and illusory experiences share five 'Remarkable Features':

1. They are *Behaviourally Equivalent*
2. They are *Rationally Equivalent*
3. They are *Subjective*
4. They are *Scene-Immediate*
5. They are *Indistinguishable*

The fact that genuine, hallucinatory and illusory perceptual experiences share these five features raises the following question: Is there something common to all three experiences which explains their possession of these five features? Sturgeon's contention is that genuine, hallucinatory and illusory perceptual experiences *most likely do* share a common nature and, until a good reason to think otherwise is presented, we should assume that they do share a common nature. This position is opposed to what Sturgeon calls *Disjunctive Quietism* (DQ), which holds that genuine, hallucinatory and illusory perceptual experiences *do not* share a common nature.

For proponents of DQ, in *genuine* perceptual experience the subject is *related directly* to a mind-independent, external object, and the qualitative character of this experience is constituted by the qualitative character of the external relatum. Armed with this characterisation of genuine perceptual experience, proponents of DQ proceed to provide a *derivative* account of hallucinatory and illusory perceptual experience. A *hallucinatory* perceptual experience neither involves the direct relation of a subject to an external object, nor is the qualitative character of such an experience constituted by the qualitative character of external objects. *Illusory* perceptual experiences occupy the middle-ground between

hallucinatory and genuine perceptual experiences. The qualitative character of illusory perceptual experiences is not constituted by the qualitative character of mind-independent, ordinary objects, but it does involve the relation of a subject to a mind-independent, external object.

The problem with this derivative account of illusions and hallucinations is that it is *entirely negative*. That is, it only says what hallucinations *are not*: they are not genuine perceptual experiences. What's more, DQ 'fully explains no Remarkable Feature' (Sturgeon, 1998, p.186). At least in this sense disjunctivist theories are inferior to common-kind theories which *can* provide a positive account of at least some of the Remarkable Features. For example, Qualia Theory can fully explain 5), and at least partially explain 1); Intentional Theory can fully explain 5) and 2), and at least partially explain 1); and Sense-Data Theory can fully explain 5) and 3), and at least partially explain 1)[14].

How ought disjunctivists respond to the common-kind objection? One option is to try and provide a positive account of hallucinatory and illusory experiences, and some have gone so far as to suggest that a positive account is *necessary* (Dancy, 1995, p.436). However, the difficulty is that any positive account of hallucinations makes disjunctivism vulnerable to the aforementioned screening-off objection. It is for this reason that Michael Martin (2004) denies that a positive account is necessary. For Martin, the qualitative character of hallucinatory experiences just is the qualitative character of being subjectively indistinguishable from veridical perceptual experiences. Martin offers no *positive* account of what hallucinatory experiences are, or any explanation as to why they are subjectively indistinguishable from genuine perceptual experiences. In my view, this is the best the disjunctivist can do. Although it is vulnerable to some significant objections (Johnston, 2004; Sturgeon, 1998), it avoids the screening-off objection and gives the disjunctivist room for manoeuvre.

[14] See Sturgeon (1998) for full discussion.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

In my view, what is clear from the preceding discussion is that, whilst there are plenty of options for the realist, there is no simple solution to Berkeley's Puzzle. In this concluding section, I would like to highlight some key takeaways and present some additional reflections.

First, although my discussion was largely inconclusive, I find the essential role reading of experientialism quite compelling. The thought that we might be able to acquire a purely theoretical understanding of concepts through the process of conceptual combination was an interesting one and merits further inquiry. However, it seems likely that our grasp of concepts of our surroundings depends in some significant way upon sensory experience, even if some such concepts are innately given. The strength of experientialism became especially apparent in the process of constructing Hero's alternative auditory world, where care had to be taken to construct an experience that would support a grasp of certain concepts, such as simultaneous quasi-spatial concepts, or the distinction between the self and the world.

Second, I found Campbell's relational view promising. Although I remain unconvinced by his characterisation of mind-independence in terms of internal causal connectedness, and whilst accounting for hallucinations remains problematic, the thought that we are related directly to categorical and abiding objects in our environment is a powerful one and aligns with common-sense. It would be interesting to explore a version of the relational view which does not invoke mechanisms or, in any other way, invoke our grasp of concepts of primary properties. By contrast, sensationist representationalism strikes me as mysterious and counter-intuitive. Moreover, it seems particularly vulnerable to the criticism that sensory experience can only represent *actual* properties of objects purely in virtue of its phenomenology. This does not just undermine Cassam's particular characterisation of mind-independence, but the claim that sensory experience can represent objects as mind-independent in any sense.

Lastly, I take it that some grasp of the distinction between the self and the world is necessary for objective thought. Grasp of this distinction might be achieved through grasp of space or quasi-space, which allows one to understand that objects can occupy points outside the mind. Although I remain unconvinced that grasp of the idea of space is necessary for objective thought, even if just in our own case, I am open to the idea that it is nevertheless sufficient or at least can contribute to our conception of an independent world. Alternatively, it might emerge from grasp of the distinction between changes in experience which are due to the world, and changes in experience which result from the exercise of one's own agency. An interesting third possibility, that I did not have time to discuss, is that grasp of this distinction might arise from experience of order in the world. For Evans (1980), the ordered nature of the master-sound is a superfluous, borderline rhetorical addition. However, experience of order may well be crucial for objective thought. Only in an ordered universe can we come to understand that there are independent powers which govern the interactions between objects, nurturing some and destroying others. The laws which govern the interactions between objects also govern our interactions with the world, as well as our interactions with each other: in an ordered universe, we experience ourselves as *subject* to the actions and processes of the universe, and not the *source* of them[15].

Word Count: 29, 962

[15] The relation between objective thought and experience of order is discussed in an interesting paper by: Farkas, K. (2013).

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