

## *Explaining De Se Phenomena*

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Whenever there are phenomena distinctive of a given concept, a good theory of that concept should explain those phenomena. This general point applies when the phenomena are those of immunity to error through misidentification, and the concept is the first person concept *I*. The general point implies that there must exist an explanation of these immunity phenomena, an explanation that draws on a theory of the first person concept. My aim here is to offer such an explanation; and to consider some rivals to the proposed explanation.

Any such explanation has to employ a characterization of the notion of a concept, and it has to employ a characterization of immunity to error through misidentification. I will be taking it that a concept is individuated by its fundamental reference rule. The fundamental reference rule for a concept states what makes something the reference of, or makes something fall within the extension of, the concept. Examples of such fundamental reference rules are:

What makes something fall within the extension of the observational concept *oval* is that it is of the same shape a thing is represented as being in a perceptual experience of an object as oval.

What makes a time the reference of the concept *now* in a given event of thinking is that it is the time at which that thinking occurs.

What makes something the reference of a particular perceptual demonstrative *that F*, where the perceptual demonstrative is individuated by a particular manner *M* in which something is given in a thinker's percept, is that it is the *F* that is perceived in that manner *M* in that percept.

This is the approach to concepts that I offered in *Truly Understood*, and I will be taking it for granted here.<sup>1</sup> The approach is broadly Fregean in several respects. It respects the idea, so sharply formulated in Frege's *Grundgesetze*, that senses are

individuated by the contribution they make to the truth-conditions of complete Thoughts. It also respects the idea that a concept is a way of thinking of something. The approach contrasts sharply with views according to which a concept is individuated by some kind of canonical evidence for certain contents containing the concept, or by some kind of canonical consequences of the holding of certain contents containing the concept. Under this approach to concepts, I will be taking it that the first person concept *I* is individuated by this fundamental reference rule:

What makes someone the reference of *I* in a thinking is that he or she is the producer of that thinking.

The characterization of immunity to error through misidentification to be used in the explanation needs rather more discussion. A notion of such immunity to misidentification, together with an appreciation of its generality and significance, was first introduced in philosophy by Sidney Shoemaker in his justly famous paper ‘Self-Reference and Self-Awareness’.<sup>2</sup> Various forms of the notion were distinguished in Shoemaker’s later writings, and their significance was discussed in Gareth Evans’ *The Varieties of Reference*.<sup>3</sup> The form of the notion pertinent here needs three relativizations. The relevant notion is that of a judgement with the content *Fa* being immune to error through misidentification (a) relative to the particular occurrence of *a* in the content, (b) when the judgement is reached in a certain way *W*, and (c) in normal circumstances. We will confine our attention here to first person contents containing only a single occurrence of the first person in the content. So we can dispense, for present purposes, with the relativization (a). We can then offer the following table of examples, which shows first judgements of contents which are immune in the intended sense to misidentification in normal circumstances, when they are made on the basis of the reasons specified below under the heading ‘Way’, and then contents which are not so immune:

Judgements immune in normal circumstances, relative to the specified way:

Content	Way
I’m hungry	Feeling of hunger

I'm in front of a desk	Perceptual experience of being in front of a desk
I once stood on a glacier	Personal memory of standing on a glacier
My arm is broken	Visual experience of own broken arm, seen as attached to one's own body.

Judgements not immune to misidentification in normal circumstances, relative to the specified way:

My arm is broken	Arm seen in tangle of limbs, post-accident
I have a Roman nose	Visual experience of silhouette of nose taken to be one's own
My cellphone is ringing	Auditory experience of a cellphone ringing
I was in Athens	Seeing a photo of someone looking like oneself in front of the Acropolis.

Shoemaker's original characterization of immunity to error through misidentification was in modal terms. Adapting his formulation (which was given in terms of language) to the case of thought, and restricting it to the first person, that characterization ran: it is not possible to reach the judgement *I'm F* in question in way *W* in normal circumstances and to be right thereby that something is *F*, but wrong about whether it is oneself that is *F*.<sup>4</sup> Formulations that replace "be right" with "know" are also possible and illuminating. This modal criterion classifies a large number of examples correctly, including those Wittgenstein gave in *The Blue Book* in which he distinguished uses of "I" as subject (immune to misidentification) from uses of "I" as object (not so immune).<sup>5</sup> When I see a broken arm in a tangle of arms post-accident, and judge *My arm is broken*, it is possible for me to be right that some arm is broken, but be wrong that my arm is broken. When I judge that I have a Roman nose on the basis of the shape of a seen shadow of a face in profile, I may be right that someone has a Roman nose, but be wrong that I have a Roman nose. By contrast, when in entirely normal circumstances, I have a perceptual experience as of being in

front of a desk, it is not possible for me to be right that someone is in front of a desk, but wrong that it is me. It is not possible, when in entirely normal circumstances, I have a feeling of hunger, I am right that someone is hungry, but wrong that it is me.

All the same, the modal criterion is not quite right. Suppose, for one reason or another, that in normal circumstances mirrors were always entirely flat, and that they only reflected faces very close to the mirror, so that in those normal circumstances, for any person  $x$ , only  $x$  can see  $x$  in the mirror. In those circumstances, it would not be possible for someone, basing his judgement on what he sees in the mirror, to be right that someone's hair is tidy, but wrong that his hair is tidy. Nonetheless this judgement still rests on acceptance of a substantive empirical identity, that that person seen in the mirror is he himself. So an improved criterion is this: the thinker's judgement  $I'm F$  is immune to error through misidentification when reached in way  $W$  if there is no individual concept  $m$  distinct from  $I$  such that the thinker, in reaching the judgement in way  $W$ , relies on the thinker's identity belief  $I=m$ . Then, when mistakes about which thing is  $F$  are really possible, that will be so because it is a real nearby possibility that the thinker's identity belief  $I=m$  is false. But even when, as in the mirror case as just described, there is no real nearby possibility that  $I=m$  is false, nonetheless the thinker's belief *My hair is tidy* rests upon his belief *I am that person in the mirror*. So let us take the criterion for immunity to error for misidentification as this most recent one involving reliance on an identity belief.<sup>6</sup> Our announced task then becomes that of explaining first person immunity to misidentification, so understood, from the nature of the first person concept, characterized as above.

Why should there be such an explanation? Could the kinds of cases in which there is first person immunity to misidentification simply be given by a list, not unified by any underlying principle? This would be a form of minimalist position about immunity to misidentification. Perhaps the most fundamental difficulty with such a minimalism is that the phenomena of immunity to misidentification do not seem to be arbitrary, unprincipled add-ons to first person thought. Once it is given that it is the first person concept that is being employed in a judgement, and that judgement is reached in a certain way in normal circumstances, it seems to be already settled, for instance in the examples listed in the table above, whether or not the judgement is vulnerable to error through misidentification. If someone claims there can be a use of the first person that is the same first person concept as ours, but claims that because of different conventions, judgements that we do not now classify as

immune to misidentification would be so (or vice versa), it seems impossible to fill in any detail on such an alleged possibility.

There is here not merely a parallel, but an actual identity, with an argument that can be applied to the status of certain contents as a priori. Being a priori is evidently a matter of epistemic status. For the case of the a priori too, we can equally formulate a version of minimalism. And there too, the minimalism is faced with exactly the same problem it faces in the case of immunity to misidentification. It does not seem to be merely an add-on to a concept that certain contents containing it have an a priori status. It seems, rather, that once we have fixed the identity of the concept in question, the status of contents containing it as a priori or not is thereby settled. In both the case of the a priori and the case of immunity to misidentification, we have a philosophical obligation to say how it is so settled. In short, in both the case of immunity to misidentification and the case of the a priori, we should aim to give what I have called a metasemantic explanation of the phenomena.<sup>7</sup>

Here are two sample explanations of first person immunity to misidentification on a metasemantic view.

Example One: here the judgement is *I'm hungry*, made in normal circumstances, and on the rational basis of an experience of hunger.

In such a case, all of the following hold:

- (a) The judgement is true iff the thinker of the thought is hungry (by the fundamental reference rule for the first person).
- (b) The concept *is hungry* is such that an experience of hunger makes reasonable self-ascription of the concept by a subject having such an experience.

Hence, an experience of hunger (by the maker of the judgement) makes reasonable the judgement *I'm hungry*.

This explanation of the rationality of the judgement does not at any point appeal to the truth or rationality of a judgement *I am identical with m*, for some mode of presentation *m* distinct from the first person concept. A corresponding explanation can also be given of why the judgement is true when it comes to be made in this way. The explanation involves the point that an experience of hunger is sufficient for being hungry. This explanation of truth also does not rely on the correctness of any *I am*

*identical with m*, for some mode of presentation *m* distinct from the first person concept.

This explanation of why the judgement *I'm hungry* is immune to error through misidentification is not intended to be a description of something going on in the mind of the ordinary thinker who comes to judge, on the basis of his experience of hunger, that he is hungry. No such explanation need be present to his mind. The explanation is in the first instance rather one which explains why the norms are as they are. It is an explanation of why there can be good reason for making a judgement *I'm hungry* in this way, and why there is no vulnerability to misidentification when the judgement is so made.

Example Two: here the judgement is *I'm in front of a desk*, made in normal circumstances, on the rational basis of a visual experience as of being in front of a desk.

In this example, all of the following hold:

- (a) The judgement is true iff the thinker is in front of a desk (by the fundamental reference rule for *I*).
- (b) A subject has a spatial or material property iff the subject's body has that property ( by the constitutive account of what it is for a subject to have such properties.)
- (c) The subject's body is the body from which he perceives, the body over which he has action control (by the constitutive account of what makes something the subject's body.)
- (d) In ordinary circumstances, perceptual experience as of one's body being in front of a desk makes rational the judgement that that body is in front of a desk.

Hence, the visual experience makes rational the judgement *I'm in front of a desk*.

In this explanation of the rationality of the judgement, (c) is indeed an identity, but it is a constitutive and a priori truth. There is also reliance on, or better perhaps a presupposition of, the content *I am the person with this body*. But the holding of that too is something characteristic of normal conditions (a form of the proposition holds for any normal person in relation to his body in normal circumstances). There is no

reliance on such empirical propositions, which may or may not hold in normal circumstances, as *I am that person in the photograph*, or *I am the author of such-and-such book*. The explanation of the correctness of the judgement *I'm in front of a desk*, when it comes to be made in this way, also does not involve any such empirical identities. It relies only on (a) through (c) in this explanation, together with the fact that in normal circumstances, an experience as of being in front of a desk is sufficient for point of view enjoyed in the experience really being one that is in front of a desk. Why it is sufficient is a debated matter - that it is sufficient is all that we need for the present point.

It is noteworthy that these derivations do not rely on any premise to the effect that a subject referred to by the first person must be essentially or fundamentally embodied. The derivations rely only on the premise that when a subject is embodied, certain equivalences hold between first person spatial or material predications and predications of the subject's body.<sup>8</sup>

A rival approach to these issues holds that we can explain the immunity phenomena without appeal to the nature of the first person concept. This rival approach may be motivated by the thesis that there is no distinctive first person concept, so a fortiori it cannot explain anything. This thesis is not claiming that there are not distinctive features of mental states picked out using the first person pronoun. The thesis is rather that none of these distinctive features require a theory that appeals to a first person concept. The features can, according to the rival account, all be explained in some other way. Such a rival approach to immunity to misidentification and the thesis that there is no need in our theory for a first person concept have been endorsed in a resourceful and challenging series of papers by John Perry.<sup>9</sup> I turn to a consideration of Perry's account.

Perry suggests that ways of knowing that are immune to misidentification are just a special case of what he calls "normally R-informative ways of knowing". He writes, "A perceptual state *S* is a normally self-informative way of knowing that one is  $\phi$  if the fact that a person is in state *S* normally carries the information that the person in state *S* is  $\phi$  and normally does not carry the information that any other person is  $\phi$ ".<sup>10</sup> This is certainly an account that does not draw on a theory of a first person concept or notion. But it does not apply in all cases. It is not a sufficient condition of a perceptual state's being a normally self-informative way of knowing

*I'm  $\phi$* . Consider a judgement with the content *I am in central neural state N*, where N is the neural state a normal human being is in when his or her legs are crossed, and N is identified in neurophysiological terms. Take *S* as the proprioceptive experience of having one's legs crossed. *S* normally carries the information that the person state *S* has his or her legs crossed, and it does not normally carry the information that any other person has his or her legs crossed. But being in *S* is not a normally self-informative way of knowing that one is in neural state N. You are not in a position to know that you are in a neurophysiologically identified state simply by having the proprioceptive experience of your legs being crossed.

Would it be an adequate revision to amend Perry's proposal to a more qualified version which states only that in the cases in which being in *S* is a way of coming to know *I'm  $\phi$* , then his condition on carrying information is met? That qualified version may be true, but it leaves unexplained why some states *S* are ways of coming to have self-knowledge, while others are not. That is an epistemic fact about *de se* contents that needs explanation. If it is left unexplained, we will not have explained all the *de se* epistemic facts without appeal to the nature of the first person concept.

An alternative revision would be to insist that the perceptual state *S* must be such that when one is in it, it presents oneself as  $\phi$ . Again, that may be true and also avoid the counterexample, but it does so by placing the first person concept inside the scope of "presents" – that is, it seems to be using the first person concept in precisely the way the approach was intended to explain away, rather than simply employ. My own view of this example is that it illustrates the need, in explaining cases of immunity to misidentification, to acknowledge a close connection between the concept of the property self-ascribed, the first person concept, and the way that is in question of coming to know self-ascriptions of the property under the given concept of the property. The right kind of connection between these three is lacking in the case of the concept of the neurophysiological property.

The rival approach to immunity just considered does not come out of the blue, as an isolated proposal. Such proposals are of most interest when they are offered as an instance of the more general thesis already noted, the thesis that there are no phenomena distinctive of ordinary uses of the first person for which we need in a philosophical theory to postulate a special *de se* notion or concept.<sup>11</sup> In the remainder of this paper, I discuss a series of suggestions of ways in which we might attempt to



explain the first person phenomena without appealing to a first person concept or notion. Once again, the person who has done most to develop such an approach is John Perry.<sup>12</sup> Although I will be disagreeing with these proposals, I have certainly learned from reflecting on his rich discussions. Some of these proposals are explicitly in his writings, others are proposals it is natural to extract from his explanations.

I will consider three salient issues involved in assessing the more general thesis that we do not need a first person concept in explaining first person phenomena. These issues are (1) the possibility of giving an account of a subject's file on himself that does not appeal to a first person concept; (2) the alleged dispensability of a first person notion or concept in basic cases of action and perception; and (3) the feasibility of treatments that attempt to explain away the role of the first person concept or notion in imagination. I take these in turn.

(1) It should be agreed that there are many purposes for which we need to postulate, for each subject, a mental file that the subject has on himself – as we can call it, a *self-file*. When a subject comes to believe that he is the *F*, the mental files that he already has on himself becomes linked with the file that is labeled with the concept or notion *the F*. My own view is that we should regard each subject's self-file as labeled with the first person concept or notion *me*. That is a conception of mental files and their labels that embraces, rather than dispenses with, the first person concepts or notions.

A different approach to self-files, an approach that does dispense with any first person concept or notion, might say this: for each subject *x*, what makes something *x*'s self-file is that it is the file which contains information on *x* gained by means that are normally informative about *x*. I have formulated this as a constitutive thesis, about what makes something a self-file, because that is what a philosophical thesis should be claiming. If a position says only something about what properties *de facto* a self-file has, it is not addressing the constitutive question.<sup>13</sup>

My objection to the proposal is that, for a given subject *x*, there is no such thing as *the* file which contains information on *x* gained by means that are normally informative about *x*. When files are labeled by concepts or notions, there is more than one such file. Consider the file with the label *the person who normally has this body*, where *this body* is a mode of presentation of a body given by a subject's current

proprioception, and by his current visual and tactile perception of his body. These files can become unlinked in any of the following four ways.

(i) For a subject with no proprioception, and no other perception of his own body (in a sensory deprivation tank, for instance, with his proprioception blocked), there is nothing for a perceptual-demonstrative *this body* to refer to. But this subject's use of *I* still refers in these circumstances. As Anscombe says, the subject may think to himself *I will make sure I don't get into this situation again*. The predicate or concept *not perceiving anything now* will, at the time the subject is in this deprived state, enter the subject's self-file. But this subject will have no file labeled with the concept *the person who normally has this body*. The self-file and the file labeled with *the person who normally has this body* have different conditions of existence; so they are distinct. Both files meet the condition that in actual circumstances, they contain information on the subject that is gained by means that is normally informative about the subject.

(ii) In Dennett's well-known examples in his paper "Where Am I?", a subject can very reasonably wonder, "Am I the person who normally has this body?".<sup>14</sup> In some of the possible worlds Dennett described, the answer to this question is negative. The subject's brain may be hooked up by radio links to perceptual and proprioceptive input from a body that is not normally his own.

(iii) For those familiar with the film *The Matrix*: the principal character Neo initially does not realize that he is in a software-induced illusory world. He seems to have a body in that illusory world, but these seemings are, or do not need to be, genuine perceptions of his own body. As used by Neo when in the illusory world, the concept *the person who normally has this body* fails to denote, for *this body* so used fails to denote. But Neo's use of *I* continues to refer in the illusory world (as we can imagine Descartes insisting). When Neo comes to discover his situation, he will not even attempt to form a file labeled *the person who normally has this body* when he is having experiences as of the illusory software-induced world. But he will continue to have first person beliefs and to have a self-file. When he discovers that his initial experiences were illusory, he discovers that there is no such person as the person who normally had the body he seemed to experience. He does not discover that he did not then exist. He did exist then.

(iv) Some of these points are entirely analogous to the one Anscombe makes when she insists, rightly in my view, that in her example of the 'A'-users, 'A' does

not mean the same as the first person pronoun.<sup>15</sup> In her example, a person truly utters “A is F” iff “A” is the letter written on the inside of his wrist and the person with “A” written there is F. For each person  $x$  in Anscombe’s imagined community,  $x$ ’s “A”-file will contain information on  $x$  gained by means that are normally informative about  $x$ . It does not follow that a subject’s “A”-file is his self-file.

Would it help the proposal to revise it to say: for each subject  $x$ ,  $x$ ’s self-file is the file which contains information on  $x$  gained by means that are normally self-informative (that is,  $y$ -informative for any subject  $y$ ) for normal members of  $x$ ’s species? This would not cover all the examples. Perceptual experience is normally self-informative for normal members of the subject’s species in examples (i), (ii) and (iv) above, so those counterexamples still apply. Even in *The Matrix* example, we can alter it so that Neo is the first human to be subject to the illusions of the software world. So perceptual experience is then still normally self-informative for normal members of his species – it is just not self-informative for him. His use of the first person still refers when he is in the illusory world in the example thus modified; his use of *this body* still fails to refer; and when he comes to discover his situation, he will have no file associated with the concept *the person who normally has this body*. He will still have a self-file.

An alternative proposal that purports to offer a self-file without a first person concept or notion is this: for each person named NN, the file labeled with the name NN can be his self-file. John Perry writes, “there is only one person I will ever be identical with, myself. I never have to unlink my self-buffer from my John Perry notion. It can be a self-notion; it can just be my self-buffer. Accumulating information in one’s self-buffer for life is valid, unlike accumulating in one’s here buffer longer than one stays in one place” (‘The Self, Self-Knowledge, and Self-Notions’, p.212). This proposal could not apply to all cases, because a person can have a self-file without having any proper name at all. But even for subjects who do have proper names, it does not work. It may in some sense be “valid” for John Perry to put information about himself into his “John Perry” file, but it will not in all cases be epistemically justified for him to do so, and in some cases it may be irrational. As we know from other cases that Perry has discussed, if Perry is suffering from amnesia, he may not know whether he is John Perry. In such case, he will rationally place some information in his self-file or self-buffer without placing the same information in his

“John Perry” file. The fact that he will only ever be identical with John Perry does not mean that his self-file can be his “John Perry” file.

(2) Perry writes, “When one sees dirty hand in a certain way, it is the perceiver’s hands that are dirty. When one washes hands in a certain way, it is the agent’s hands that get clean. And when a perception of the first sort causes an action of the second sort in a more-or-less direct way, the subject of the perception is the agent of the action. We don’t really need a self-notion to handle any of this. We will need one when we start to get information about ourselves in ways that are not normally self-informative” (“The Self,...”, pp.208-9). Earlier in the same paper, he writes, “The identity between the perceiver and the agent is (normally) guaranteed outside of thought, by the “architectural” relations between the eyes and arms. One need not keep track of it in thought” (208).

By contrast, I think we should attribute a *de se* content to both perception and action even in such basic cases, for several reasons. First, in the example Perry gives, the content of the perceptual experience is partly first personal. In that experience, the hand the subject sees is also represented as his own. *It is mine* is part of the representational content of his perception. This sense of ownership of the hand is part of the explanation of why he moves it.

A first person notion can also enter the content of experience even when the subject is not perceiving any part of his own body. You can experience a ball as coming through the air towards you even if you have no sensation in any part of your body, and do not perceive any part of your body.

Second, to attribute *de se* contents in these basic action and perception cases is not at all to imply that the subject needs to keep track of the object picked out by the *de se* component of the intentional content of the event. On the contrary, precisely in part because the first person is not a perception-based or a sensation-based demonstrative, but is rather an experience-independent indexical notion in its own right, there is no question of keeping track of what is thought about or represented as oneself. Keeping track of something is fundamentally a perceptually based capacity that does not need to be exercised when one perceives (and may also know) that one’s hands are dirty, and that one is washing one’s hands oneself. The architectural relations Perry mentions are what make possible various properties and relations of states and events with *de se* contents. The existence of these acknowledged

architectural relations does not imply that the states and events do not have *de se* contents.

Perry is very clear that when a subject also thinks of himself using “an objective notion”, as when Perry thinks “I am John Perry”, and so knows from reading his air ticket when his flight takes off, the subject must link his more objective notion - his “John Perry” notion in this example – with some first personal notion. But it is problematic what this linking can be if we do not acknowledge a distinctive first person notion or concept in the more basic cases. Where *c* is the more objective notion, this linking cannot consist merely in the subject *x* coming to think of *x* that it is *c*. That purely *de re* condition is much too weak to ensure a linking with the first person. But if what I have said earlier under (1) above about self-files is correct, then we also cannot explain the linking of the more objective notion with the first person simply by saying that some representation of being identical with *c* enters the file the subject *x* has which contains information obtained in ways that are normally *x*-informative. That is not sufficient and not necessary for being the subject’s self-file. I suggest that the way out of this is to acknowledge a first person notion (nonconceptual) that enters the content of all of perception, action-awareness, and intention; that contributes also to the individuation of a first person concept; that labels (noncircularly) a self-file; and whose conceptual analogue is employed in the content *I am c* when our subject does come to link an objective notion *c* with his self-file.

(3) Imagination famously, even notoriously, has a close relation with the first person.<sup>16</sup> How are we to describe the situation, mentioned by Perry, of imagining being in one’s daughter’s situation as she prepares to make a difficult shot towards the end of a basketball game (‘The Sense of Identity’, pp.256-7)? Perry very properly notes that when imagining this situation, he need not be imagining John Perry to be the shooter.

The correct description of the imagining is unproblematic when we employ the *de se* notion. Any imagining is imagining, from the first person point of view, some conscious state or event. In the imagining with which Perry is concerned, the first person type of notion (or type of concept, if one follows McDowell) enters the content of the imagined experience, as it would enter the content of a real experience. The hoop is imagined as at a certain distance and direction from oneself (*de se*); a

guarding player is imagined as located between oneself (*de se*) and the hoop; and so forth. In the situation as Perry imagines it, the reference of the *de se* component is not Perry. It need not be anyone, for the imagining is of a certain kind of situation, and it need not always have specific individuals as components.

Perry himself, aiming to give a description of this imagining without using a *de se* notion or concept, writes this: “An actual situation corresponding to my imagining would be one in which *this* imagining and the remembered shooting were done by the same person” (257); and “What connects the imagined proposition to me is not that I am a constituent of it, but that my imagining is a constituent of it” (257). I question this analysis. The state of affairs Perry is imagining is not one in which there needs to be any imagining going on at all. In the imagined state of affairs, all that needs to be going on is perception of a certain kind of situation. There can indeed be imaginings about imaginings, a sophisticated thing, and not something that is necessarily involved in imagining being in the situation of making the difficult basketball shot. Putting an imagining into the imagined state of affairs is not the right way to capture the distinctive first person point of view involved in imagining being in the situation of the basketball player. To capture the first person point of view, we need to use *de se* notions in specifying the content of the imagining.

I conclude for these reasons that self-files and the phenomena they help to explain cannot be properly characterized without using the *de se* notion and the *de se* concept.

This brief paper has been concerned only with the explanation of one particular kind of *de se* phenomenon, that of immunity to misidentification. There are many other distinctive first person phenomena, both in the epistemic domain and beyond. Nonetheless I hope the interest of what I have offered here may be more general. The technique of drawing in explanations on the fundamental reference rule for a notion or concept, together with principles about the correctness conditions for particular kinds of *de se* contents, is of much wider application.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. I favour a treatment of the first of these displayed fundamental reference rules that combines it with a conception of perceptual experiences as having a nonconceptual content that represents an object as oval. But the fundamental reference rule could, if one so wished, be combined with McDowell's conception of perceptual content as conceptual.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Philosophy* 65 (1968) 555-567.

<sup>3</sup> Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

<sup>4</sup> 'Self-Reference and Self-Awareness' p.557.

<sup>5</sup> *The Blue and Brown Books* (New York: Harper, 1958), pp.66-7.

<sup>6</sup> Further refinements are possible, but they do not affect the explanation I will be offering of the *de se* epistemic phenomena.

<sup>7</sup> See my papers 'Explaining the A Priori: The Programme of Moderate Rationalism', in *New Essays on the A Priori* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) ed. P. Boghossian and C. Peacocke, and 'How Are A Priori Truths Possible?' *European Journal of Philosophy* 1 (1993) 175-199.

<sup>8</sup> The derivations are thus not as deeply committed to embodiment as is Evans's position in the chapter on Self-Identification in *The Varieties of Reference*. The derivations are consistent with the more austere view of subjects of consciousness outlined in my 'Subjects and Consciousness', in *Self and Self-Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ed. A. Coliva.

<sup>9</sup> See especially 'The Self, Self-Knowledge and Self-Notions' and 'The Sense of Identity' in his collection *Identity, Personal Identity, and the Self* (Indianaapolis: Hackett, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> "The Self, Self-Knowledge,..." p.204.

<sup>11</sup> Terminology: I use 'notion' for nonconceptual content (for ways things, events, properties are given in nonconceptual intentional contents). The nonconceptual *de se* notion is individuated by the condition that in any mental event or token mental state in whose content it features, it refers *de jure* to the subject who enjoys that mental state or event. For further discussion of the matter, see 'Subjects and Consciousness'.

<sup>12</sup> In 'The Self, Self-Knowledge and Self-Notions'.

<sup>13</sup> It should be common ground between these two approaches that each individual has several self-files, even individuals who are not subject to some kind of internal

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dissociations. For instance, a subject will have a phenomenological file on himself, a file whose contents specify how he seems to himself to be. Some of these seemings may be overruled by judgement - he may judge some of these seemings to be illusory – so we must distinguish the phenomenological file from the file whose contents specify what he accepts about himself. The issue between the rival approaches is not over the multiplicity of self-files for a given person, but of whether we need to use a first person notion or concept in a constitutive account of them.

<sup>14</sup> In his *Brainstorms* (Montgomery VT: Bradford Books, 1978).

<sup>15</sup> ‘The First Person’, in *Mind and Language: The Wolfson College Lectures 1974*, ed. S. Guttenplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

<sup>16</sup> For discussions, see B. Williams, ‘Imagination and the Self’, in his *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), and C. Peacocke, ‘Imagination, Experience, and Possibility’ in *Essays on Berkeley* ed. J. Foster and H. Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

<sup>17</sup> This paper is extracted from material I presented in the conference on Mental Files at the Institut Jean Nicod, Ecole Normale Supérieure, in November 2010 and in one of my Kohut Lectures at the University of Chicago early in 2011. I thank Jonathan Lear, John Perry, François Recanati, and Georges Rey for valuable comments.