

Demonstrative Concepts without Re-identification

PHILIPPE CHUARD

Philosophy Program, The Research School of Social Sciences,
Australian National University

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Conceptualist accounts of the representational content of perceptual experiences have it that a subject *S* can experience no object, property, relation, etc., unless *S* (i) possesses and (ii) exercises concepts for such object, property, or relation. Perceptual experiences, on such a view, represent the world in a way that is conceptual “through and through” (McDowell, 1994: 46; see also McDowell, 1998; Brewer, 1999:ch.5).

A familiar objection against such a conception of experience exploits the fact that perceptual experiences, it seems, have a certain *fineness of grain*. What this means exactly isn’t too clear, but at least the following seems to be true. One can, for example, visually perceive very subtle differences between highly similar properties—such as some specific shades of red, say. As a result of the fineness of grain with which experiences represent these properties, normal perceivers like you and me are able to make quite fine-grained discriminations.

Why is the fineness of grain of experience supposed to be problematic for advocates of Conceptualism? Because, the suggestion goes, we can perceive distinct shades of color and their specific differences without possessing distinct concepts for each such shade. As Evans puts it in an often quoted passage (1982: 229): “Do we really understand the proposal that we have as many colour concepts as there are shades of colour that we can sensibly discriminate?” Whether or not we understand such a proposal, it seems quite plausible that normal perceivers might lack specific concepts for certain shades of color they perceive nonetheless (see e.g., Peacocke, 1986: 15-6; 1989: 315-17).

If it worked, this ‘Argument from the Fineness of Grain of Experience’—or (AFG) for short—would present a neat refutation of Conceptualism. The argument derives the negation of one of the constraints Conceptualists impose upon the content of experience—the one about concept-possession—*via* the combination of two claims: namely, that (1) experiences are fine-grained, and that (2) normal

subjects of experience can lack certain concepts. Thus:

- (1) *Fineness of Grain of Experience*: it is possible that *S*'s experience *e* represents two distinct, yet very similar, properties f_1 and f_2 in such a way that *S* can perceptually discriminate f_1 from f_2 .
- (2) *Evans' Thesis*: it is possible that *S* does not possess distinct concepts C_1 and C_2 , for f_1 and f_2 respectively.

Therefore,

- (3) it is possible that *S*'s experience *e* represents a property *f* and *S* does not possess a concept *C* for *f*.

And (3) directly contradicts the conceptualist claim that, necessarily, if a subject *S*'s experience *e* represents a property *f*, *S* must possess a concept *C* for *f*.

Unfortunately, the argument doesn't work. The fault resides with Evans' Thesis in premise (2)—or so Conceptualists retort. The point is not so much that, taken in isolation, such a premise is false—surely, it is at least *possible* that a subject lacks concepts for certain properties. Rather, the argument is invalid because of an equivocation in the transition from (1) to (2). The possible worlds described in premise (1), they say, cannot be the same as the possible worlds described in (2). As a result, it doesn't follow that there is *one* possible world in which the conclusion (3) is true.

The reason advanced for this modal mismatch is that premise (2) ignores the fact that normal perceivers can form *demonstrative concepts* for what they experience—call this response the 'Demonstrative Strategy' (McDowell, 1994: 56ff, 172; Brewer, 1999: 170-4). Whenever *S* perceptually discriminates two distinct shades of red f_1 and f_2 , *S* can deploy the demonstrative concepts *THIS SHADE* and *THAT SHADE* for f_1 and f_2 respectively. Thus, even though premise (2) might be true in *some* worlds, it isn't true in worlds where premise (1) is true and where the subject perceptually discriminates these two shades of red.¹

¹ Usually, (AFG) is presented in a way that omits the modal concepts in premises (1) and (2), and rests upon general claims regarding (1*) what normal perceivers *tend to* discriminate in experience, and (2*) which concepts they *tend to* lack. The Demonstrative Strategy is then interpreted as showing the argument to be unsound: (2*) is false, because it ignores the availability of demonstrative concepts for the shades mentioned in (1*). I think that the modal version of (AFG) is preferable, however. First, the modal claim in (3) is all it really takes to refute the conceptualist constraint. Second, it is also important to see that Conceptualists need not deny Evans' Thesis as such.

Recently, however, a barrage of objections has been mounted against the Demonstrative Strategy (see Dokic and Pacherie (2001), Eilan (2001), Kelly (2001a), and Peacocke (1998, 2001b)). Most prominent among these is Sean Kelly's (2001b) insistence that Conceptualists fail to pay enough attention to an important condition on the possession of demonstrative concepts: such concepts must be associated with a capacity to re-identify the things to which they apply. But, he points out, if normal subjects can make fine-grained discriminations in experience, they often fail to re-identify the properties thus discriminated. In which case, they also seem to lack demonstrative concepts for such properties. And so, Kelly concludes, appeal to such demonstrative concepts cannot really salvage Conceptualism from (AFG).

Note that Kelly isn't alone in emphasizing the connection between (a) the possession of a concept and (b) the ability to re-identify things which fall in the extension of that concept. Unlike others, however, he offers an argument for the existence of such a connection. In this paper, I advertise one way to resist Kelly's argument on the Conceptualists' behalf. In particular, I consider some (independent) reasons to think that such a connection doesn't hold—at least, not for all demonstrative concepts.

I should point out that my aim here isn't to rescue Conceptualism. On the contrary, I agree with Kelly and others that such a view ought to be rejected.² Nevertheless, I also share Christopher Peacocke's (2001a: 610) skepticism as to whether the fineness of grain of experience can serve to refute such a view. The Demonstrative Strategy—once properly understood—strikes me as a rather powerful defense of Conceptualism.³

The paper has three parts. The first (§1) contains a presentation of some the background necessary to understand the dispute between Conceptualists and their opponents. In particular, I discuss in some detail how (AFG) is supposed to refute

² See also Bermúdez (1998), Crane (1992, 2001), Evans (1982), Heck (2000), Martin (1992), Peacocke (1986, 1989, 1992, 1998, 2001), and Smith (2002).

³ There is a certain amount of confusion regarding the role of the Demonstrative Strategy. As I understand it, such a strategy was never meant to be an argument *for* Conceptualism—as some seem to read it (see, e.g., Kelly, 2001b: 409; Heck, 2000: 491). Its sole purpose is to provide an escape route to an argument against Conceptualism.

Conceptualism. In the second part (§2), I try to clarify the notion of ‘re-identification’ at play in this dispute, and outline Kelly’s argument. Finally, I show how his objection to the Demonstrative Strategy can be answered (§3).

1. Background

Central to the conceptualist conception of experience is the idea that there is some necessary connection between the representational content of an experience and concepts possessed by the perceiver. Admittedly, to gain a better understanding of such a connection would demand that we make our way through some vexing questions in the philosophy of mind and cognition (for a survey, see Bermúdez (2003a)). For instance, (i) what does it mean to say that perceptual experiences have a representational content? (ii) What are concepts? (iii) What does possessing a concept amount to? And, (iv) what exactly is the nature of the link between concepts and content, so that certain contents can be said to be ‘conceptual’?

I shan’t be able to answer any of these questions here. Not only do I lack the space to do so, but questions like these address some of the most difficult issues in the philosophy of mind. In this respect, it seems unfair to ask that one solve such issues before one can even begin to discuss the dispute between Conceptualists and their opponents. Instead, I shall take an unusual shortcut, and offer a very minimalist characterization of the conceptualist doctrine.

1.1. Conceptualism

Conceptualism is often phrased in terms of the slogan that ‘the representational content of perceptual experiences is wholly conceptual’. One natural reading of this slogan is that, for Conceptualists, perceptual experiences represent the world in a way that is *determined* by the concepts the perceiver possesses and brings to bear on what she experiences at the time (see, e.g., McDowell, 1994: 66). And one way in which to render claims about the determination of something by something else is *via* a so-called *supervenience thesis* (strictly-speaking, a co-variance thesis) of the form:

- (C) Necessarily, for any representational difference in experience, there has to be a conceptual difference.

Obviously, (C) is rather vague. The following remarks should help to clarify it somewhat.

i) *Representational Differences*. Regardless of what theory of mental content one favors, there seems to be at least two kinds of representational differences in experience. Some representational differences amount to distinct things being represented *as* different. But not all representational differences are of this kind. Let me explain.

According to *referential* (or relational) accounts of mental content, the representational content of a psychological state is individuated solely in terms of the objects, properties, relations, etc., the state represents. Hence, on this view, a representational difference within the content of an experience (or between different experiences) simply owes to different objects, properties, relations, etc., being referred to. But the differences between such objects, properties, relations, need not be represented themselves. Alternatively, two things might be represented *as* different. And presumably, two things can be represented *as* different just in case the properties *in virtue of* which they differ are represented too—this is all it takes for their difference(s) to be represented, on this kind of account.

In contrast, *representationalist* accounts—for want of a better term⁴—have it that the content of a psychological state is not individuated just in terms of the objects, properties, relations, etc., the state represents. The *way*, or *manner*, in which such things are represented—their so-called ‘mode of presentation’—is relevant too. This sort of view also allows for at least two types of representational differences. Again, distinct things might be represented *as* different, as when two distinct objects and their properties are represented differently, *via different modes of presentation*. (Presumably, on such a view, if different properties are represented under the same mode of presentation, they will neither be represented as different, nor even differently.) But it’s also possible that things be represented differently, without being represented *as* different. For instance, the very same object could be

⁴ One could also call this a ‘fregean’—broadly construed—view of mental content. Although this kind of representationalism will accept that (1) representational differences go beyond referential differences, it may not go so far as to (2) account for such representational differences in terms of fregean senses—construed as abstract

represented differently, with different modes of presentation. But in this case, the modes of presentation in question might be such that *their* differences are insufficient to make it the case that the object thus represented is represented *as* different.

Possible examples of this type of representational difference (without represented difference) include cases where an object is perceived from different orientations; or where a uniformly colored object is seen under different lighting-conditions, but as having the same color. Alternatively, such differences in mode of presentation might owe to the different sensory modalities involved, as when one touches and sees the texture of an object. One difficulty with such cases, however, is that different objects or properties seem to be represented too. Experiences of the same object from different orientations are likely to represent a different background. Likewise, visual experiences of the texture of an object also represent its color, unlike tactile experiences of the same property. In this respect, the referential view of mental content seems somewhat more natural, at least insofar as perceptual experiences are concerned. In the remainder of this paper, however, I shall stay neutral on this point.

ii) *Conceptual Differences*. Conceptual differences in (or between) the contents of psychological states are essentially due to different concepts the subjects *deploy* while being in those states. What does this mean? Most views about concepts agree at least on the following point: *possession* of a particular concept is typically associated with a set of psychological capacities. This holds whether concepts are supposed to be abstract entities or concrete symbols in a subject's brain; whether the capacities in question are merely associated in some way with such concepts, or whether concept-possession is identified with such capacities. As for the *deployment* of a concept *C*, I shall assume that it amounts to nothing more than the subject's exercise of some of the capacities associated with—or constitutive of—possession of *C*.

A conceptual difference in this sense just consists in the subject exercising psychological capacities associated with different concepts. For instance, the propositions that *kangaroos taste good* and that *rabbits taste good* involve at least one

objects a subject needs to 'grasp'—, or (3) claim that such Fregean senses determine reference.

conceptual difference. If a subject entertains these propositions, she must exercise distinct sets of conceptual capacities: one associated with the concept *RABBIT*, another with the concept *KANGAROO*.

Of course, not *any* psychological capacity will serve to determine possession of a *concept*. In particular, Conceptualism would be trivial—and almost irrefutable—if it were cashed out in terms of, say, the capacity to represent certain objects, or the capacity to discriminate them from other objects.⁵ Surely, even opponents of Conceptualism will agree that if one perceives an object *o*, one thereby represents such an object, and is thus capable to discriminate it perceptually from other objects. One worry, at this point, is that the dispute between Conceptualists and their opponents might collapse. Perhaps, such a dispute owes mainly to different conceptions of the possession-conditions of concepts—rather than anything to do with the nature of perceptual representation. Such a worry, however, seems unwarranted. There is no good reason to expect that Conceptualists and their opponents *cannot* reach agreement on these issues.

iii) *The Scope of (C)*. We can now rephrase (C) as follows. For any representational difference in experience—whether things are represented *as* different, or just differently—, the subject must be exercising distinct capacities, associated with different concepts she possesses. Note that (C) can be interpreted to range over representational and conceptual differences (a) within a single experience, or (b) between distinct experiences of a subject—or different subjects. For Conceptualists, I presume, it may be tempting to think that the converse holds too, so that conceptual differences entail representational differences.

I want to suggest that (C)—thus interpreted—is all one needs to characterize Conceptualism. Conceptualists explicitly make a claim about the nature of the representational content of experience. (C) serves to capture the alleged connection between what is represented in an experience and the concepts the perceiver exercises at the time.⁶ What's more, (C) seems sufficient to sketch the

⁵ Thanks to Andy Egan for pressing me on this point.

⁶ In this respect, (C) makes it clear that Conceptualism isn't just about the kind of psychological *states* that perceptual experiences are, *pace* Crane (2001: 150ff)—see also Heck (2000) for discussion. It is about the *content* of such states. Another advantage of (C) is that it remains silent on the much-disputed thesis whether certain

contours of the dispute between Conceptualists and their opponents. There is no need to specify the notion of ‘conceptual content’ any further at this point.⁷ (C) expresses a substantial—and controversial enough—constraint upon perceptual experiences.

1.2. *The Fineness of Grain of Experience*

Now that we have some rough idea about the sort of constraint(s) Conceptualists impose upon the content of experience, I turn to the premises of (AFG): the claim that (1) experiences are fine-grained, and that (2) perceivers can lack concepts for things they experience nonetheless.

i) *Fineness of Grain*. *A propos* premise (1), two questions need to be addressed: (a) what does it mean to say that experiences are ‘fine-grained’? And (b): how does the fact that experiences instantiate such a trait threaten the conceptualist conception of experience?

With regard to the first question (a), note first that the fineness of grain of experiences is a property of their content. It characterizes the way in which perceptual experiences represent the environment. The idea seems to be that, in contrast to other kinds of mental representation, perceptual experiences represent the world with more detail and nuance. Among other things, this means that experiences can represent very specific properties in all their specificity. A typical illustration is provided by the very specific shades of color which, despite close similarities, normal subjects seem able to discriminate visually. Sometimes, it is also said that the content of perceptual experiences rules out more possibilities than coarser-grained types of mental representation (Crane, 1992: 153). Thus, your belief that the wall is beige is compatible with a range of possible shades of beige—but the content of such a belief leaves unspecified which shade of beige is the actual shade of the wall. In contrast, your experience of the wall represents

contents are *constituted* by concepts (see, e.g., Stalnaker, 1998). The supervenience thesis captured in (C) is weaker than the latter constitution claim, although it is compatible with it.

⁷ Alternatively, one might simply define the notion of ‘conceptual content’ in terms of a particularized version of (C): an experience *e* of a subject *S* will count as having *conceptual content* just in case representational differences in *e* supervene upon differences in the concepts *S* exercises at the time—non-conceptual content otherwise.

the particular shade of beige of the wall.

As for the second question (b), the problem for Conceptualists stems from their adherence to the following constraint on perceptual discrimination:

- (D) if a subject S can perceptually discriminate two properties f_1 and f_2 , S must possess distinct concepts C_1 and C_2 for f_1 and f_2 respectively.

That is, according to Conceptualists, a perceiver's capacity to discriminate between different objects or properties is to be explained in terms of her possession and deployment of different concepts. It is easy to see how (D) can be derived from the conceptualists thesis (C). As Sean Kelly (2001: 403, n. 13) observes, it is reasonable to assume that S can discriminate f_1 from f_2 *on the basis of* her experience e , *only if* e represents f_1 and f_2 differently.⁸ This latter claim, when combined with thesis (C), entails constraint (D).

Given (D), proponents of the objection try to establish that normal perceivers can carry out fine-grained discriminations on the basis of experience, without possessing corresponding fine-grained concepts for the properties they discriminate. If correct, this would falsify not just (D), but (C) too. For it would show that there can be representational differences in experience—those which allow the subject to discriminate the properties in question—without matching conceptual differences.

ii) *Concept-possession*. The crucial question, then, becomes: how can proponents of (AFG) establish that normal subjects actually lack concepts for the specific properties they discriminate in experience? In other words, how to warrant premise (2)? The following will not do.

One often hears the complaint that both Conceptualists and their opponents presuppose that concept-possession is determined in some important way by the capacity to express such concepts in language.⁹ Surely, the complaint goes, one

⁸ The converse isn't true, however. If the perceiver fails to appraise the difference between the way in which her experience represents f_1 and the way it represents f_2 , she will fail to discriminate these two properties. This point need not falsify (C), provided the subject deploys distinct concepts nonetheless. Of course, Conceptualists might be tempted to reject this.

⁹ See, e.g., Crane (2001: 153), and Luntley (1999: 304). Note that Christopher Peacocke (2001b: 243) is explicit that "[the] connections between concepts, and, for instance, language have to be earned by further argument" (see also Peacocke, 1992: 3). As for McDowell, although he rejects a one-to-one mapping between concepts and

cannot deduce that a perceiver lacks a concept for a certain property just because she lacks a word for it. Such criterion would rule out young infants and cognitively sophisticated animals from possessing concepts *by definition*—whereas it seems to be an empirical question whether or not they possess concepts.

Nor can it be just taken for granted that, intuitively, it is conceivable that one be able to discriminate properties on the basis of experience without possessing distinct concepts for such properties. This would beg the question against the Conceptualists' commitment to (D). Thus, proponents of (AFG) must be able to motivate premise (2) in a way that isn't questionable by the Conceptualists' own lights.

Despite such difficulties, the following two-step strategy might look to work. First, proponents of (AFG) exploit what is often presented as a fairly uncontroversial constraint upon the possession of concepts such as *GREEN*, *SQUARE*, *KANGAROO*, etc. Call it the 'Re-identification constraint':

- (R) if a subject *S* possesses a concept *C*, then *S* must be able to re-identify different objects o_1, o_2, \dots, o_n , which fall under the concept *C*.

Undoubtedly, there is some intuitive appeal to (R). For instance, one would naturally suspect that if a subject fails to re-identify kangaroos, this strongly suggests that she must lack the concept of *KANGAROO*. (I will discuss in slightly more details how such a constraint is to be unpacked in §2.1.)

The second step relies upon an empirical claim about perceptual memory. When it comes to re-identifying the specific shades of color they have visually discriminated earlier, normal perceivers tend to perform poorly. It's not just that they make occasional errors. Rather, they appear to lack the general ability to re-identify such shades (see Raffman, 1995: 294-6, as well as Dokic and Pacherie, 2001: 198, for reference to the relevant empirical literature). This fact suggests that certain limitations hold on how fine-grained the perceptual memory of normal subjects is—since memory seems to be a natural precondition for the ability to re-identify things one has previously experienced.

linguistic expressions, he seems prepared to embrace the idea that belonging to a linguistic community is essential for the acquisition of a wide range of concepts (McDowell, 1994: 124-6). This is not to say, however, that the capacity to express a concept in language is necessary for possession of that concept. On this set of issues, see Bermúdez (2003b).

The following scenario can help to bring the point home (Kelly, 2001b: 411; Smith, 2002: 111). Suppose you are in the paint section of a hardware shop, looking at various color charts (imagine you want to repaint your kitchen wall). You can discriminate various highly similar shades on such charts. After a while, you come to make up your mind upon a particular shade of beige. All of a sudden, though, you accidentally drop the chart. You pick it up promptly and look at it again. However, in situations of this kind, as Kelly puts it, “[i]t can be very difficult to remember which [shade] you earlier judged to be preferable” (*ibid.*).¹⁰ The point is supposed to be a familiar one—something most perceivers must have experienced at least once.

The reasoning behind premise (2) can then be summarized as follows. Typically, normal subjects have a feeble memory of the specific shades of color they have recently experienced, as is shown by their inability to re-identify such shades. Given (R), it looks as though normal subjects lack concepts for the shades in question. And since, according to premise (1), it is possible for normal perceivers to discriminate such shades in experience, the conjunction of these two premises falsifies both (D) and the conceptualist thesis (C). *Ergo*, Conceptualism is false.

1.3. *The Demonstrative Strategy*

Unfortunately, it looks as though Conceptualists have a good response to this argument (see McDowell, 1994: 56ff; and Brewer, 1999: 170-4). While they acknowledge with premise (1) that perceptual experiences are indeed very fine-grained, they reject premise (2), insisting that it rests on an unwarrantedly narrow conception of what concepts are available to normal perceivers. Thus, for instance, Bill Brewer (1999: 171):

There is an unacceptable assumption behind this line of argument, that concepts necessarily correspond with entirely context-independent classifications of things, [...]. This restriction unacceptably rules out any appeal to context-dependent demonstrative concepts, though—concepts associated with expression like ‘that shade of red’, or ‘just that large in volume’, grasp of which essentially depends upon the subject’s relations with the actual entities which constitute their semantic values.

¹⁰ Of course, you might be able to pick up the sample of the color you’d previously chosen simply on the basis of its location on the chart. But the point is that you might fail to re-identify the sample in question on the basis of color alone (see Kelly, 2001b: 410).

According to this Demonstrative Strategy, normal perceivers can form fine-grained demonstrative concepts for the specific properties they experience. If a subject can perceptually discriminate two specific properties f_1 and f_2 , she is in a position to form two distinct demonstrative concepts that pick out f_1 and f_2 respectively.

Such a strategy might seem appealing for at least two reasons.¹¹ For one thing, the formation and deployment of such demonstrative concepts seem to require mainly that one be *directly presented* in experience with the object or property such a concept picks out. As McDowell (1994: 59, 172) puts it, a demonstrative concept of color essentially “exploits the presence” of a sample of such color. Furthermore, as the quote from Brewer suggests, the *context* in which the subject perceives such objects or properties is supposed to help determine which object or property in her perceptual field her demonstrative concept picks out. That is, such demonstrative concepts are both *context-dependent* and *perception-dependent*. As a result, it seems that, unlike other concepts, the possession of demonstrative concepts need not require possession of any other concept (see Brewer (1999: 171), Kelly (2001b: 408), and Peacocke (2001a: 610; 2001b: 245) for discussion).

One obvious question at this point is whether demonstrative concepts can—and should—satisfy the Re-identification constraint (R). After all, the point of the Demonstrative Strategy isn’t just that (AFG) ignores a certain kind of concept. The point seems to be that (AFG) ignores concepts which (i) allow subjects to carry out certain discriminations in experience, and nevertheless (ii) satisfy the Re-identification constraint. The official line Conceptualists take on this issue is that the demonstrative concepts in question do satisfy (R), if only to a certain degree. Thus, McDowell (1994: 57):

We can ensure that what we have in view is genuinely recognizable as a conceptual capacity if we insist that the very same capacity to embrace a colour in mind can in principle persist

¹¹ Perhaps, one could reach the same result without resorting to demonstrative concepts. Suppose that a subject S possesses some chromatic concepts like *RED* and *GREEN*, together with concepts of *ILLUMINATION*, *HUE*, *SATURATION*, etc. She may then be able to form enough *complex concepts* composed out of those simpler concepts, so as to conceptualize the fine-grained differences between the shades she perceptually discriminates. The problem with this suggestion, it might be retorted, is that a subject might in fact lack even some basic chromatic concepts, not to mention concepts of *ILLUMINATION*, *HUE* and *SATURATION*.

beyond the duration of the experience itself. In the presence of the original sample, “that shade” can give expression to a concept of a shade; what ensures that it is a concept—what ensures that thoughts that exploit it have the necessary distance from what would determine to be true—is that the associated capacity can persist into the future, if only for a short time, and that, having persisted, it can be used also in thoughts about what is by then the past, if only the recent past. What is in play here is a recognitional capacity, possibly quite short-lived, that sets in with the experience.

In other words, McDowell appears committed to the view that a subject’s possession of a demonstrative concept can satisfy the Re-identification constraint, if only for a short amount of time after the experience.¹² Whether Conceptualists can—and ought to—maintain such a line is one of the main questions to be addressed in this paper.

And it’s not obvious that they can. After all, the hardware shop example was designed to show that a normal subject might not even have the sort of short-term recognitional capacity McDowell talks about. Such a subject could perceptually discriminate between different shades of beige, and get to choose one. Seconds later after she drops the chart and picks it up again, it seems possible that she fails to re-identify which shade of beige she had just chosen. In other words, it seems possible that subjects fail to re-identify what they have perceived as soon as they stop perceiving it.

Therefore, it’s not entirely clear whether the Demonstrative Strategy alone suffices to alleviate the threat posed by (AFG). Unless Conceptualists also reject condition (R) as a necessary constraint upon the possession of concepts, it doesn’t really matter which concepts they appeal to. Their conception of experience remains under threat. At this point, there are three options open to Conceptualists: (i) deny that (R) expresses a necessary constraint on the possession of *all* demonstrative concepts; (ii) find another kind of concept which can serve to explain how the perceiver’s fine-grained perceptual discriminations still satisfies

¹² McDowell appears to think that this is compatible with the fact that normal perceivers fail to re-identify such properties. He rightly points out that people differ “in the retentiveness of their memory for precise shades”, and that some perceivers might in fact perform very well at remembering such shades—painters, for example (1994: 57, n.14). This is true, but irrelevant. The question is whether (R) applies to *all* demonstrative concepts, not whether it can apply to just some of them. Note McDowell’s slightly more cautious approach in the postscript (1994: 171-2).

both conditions (D) and (R); or (iii) argue that, appearances notwithstanding, all demonstrative concepts satisfy condition (R).

I hope that, by now, the first option seems irresistible—since I shall develop it in the rest of this paper. In light of the hardware shop example, there hardly seems to be any prospect for the third option. As for the second, it should encounter exactly the same difficulties as the Demonstrative Strategy. If the hardware shop example is cogent, it is difficult to see how any color concept can satisfy both conditions (D) and (R).

2. Kelly's Argument

The worry just described amounts more or less to the sort of challenge Sean Kelly (2001b) raises against the Demonstrative Strategy. But for Kelly, there is a good reason to accept that demonstrative concepts *are* governed by the Re-identification constraint. Not the reason offered by McDowell (1994) and Brewer (1999), he argues, but a very intuitive motivation nonetheless.

A quick word about Kelly's overall strategy: having defended (R), he uses it to rebut Conceptualism—in what amounts in fact to a remake of the 'Argument from the Fineness of Grain of Experience'. First, the argument goes, experiences of specific properties do not instantiate (R): as we have seen, normal perceivers may be unable to re-identify such properties, even very shortly after having discriminated them from very similar ones. Second, demonstrative concepts, according to Kelly, must satisfy (R). Thus, condition (R) governs the possession of demonstrative concepts, but fails to apply to the content of experiences. In which case, demonstrative concepts and the representational content of experiences have distinct properties. By Leibniz's Law, they must be distinct. And so, Conceptualism is false—and the Demonstrative Strategy is useless as a rescue.

Kelly (2001b: 418) is aware that Conceptualists could very well decide to reject (R), at least insofar as demonstrative concepts are concerned (see, e.g., Coliva, 2003). He points out that in so doing, however, Conceptualists have to meet the following challenge. First, they must address his argument for (R)—otherwise, their rejection of (R) is entirely *ad hoc*. Second, Conceptualists must provide a set of constraints, such that the demonstrative concepts mentioned in the Demonstrative Strategy count as concepts in the proper sense of the term. In particular, they must offer an alternative account of what it is to possess a

demonstrative concept.

I will show how both demands can be answered in section 3. But first, some clarifications: I shall try to specify in a little more detail how the notion of ‘re-identification’ in condition (R) is to be cashed out (§2.1). I then briefly draw attention to certain discrepancies in the way (R) is formulated in this dispute (§2.2). After that, I outline why Kelly seems to think that such a constraint determines possession of demonstrative concepts (§2.3).

2.1. *Re-identification?*

As we saw in (§1.2), premise (2) in (AFG) appears to rely on a principle allegedly determining the possession of concepts—together with the empirical claim that, for some specific properties, normal subjects fail to satisfy such a principle. According to this principle,

- (R) if a subject *S* possesses a concept *C*, then *S* must be able to re-identify different objects o_1, o_2, \dots, o_n , which fall under the concept *C*.

Obviously, (R) requires some explication. Here, I will consider (*albeit* very briefly) just four clarifications of the notion of ‘re-identification’.

First, there is a question about the sort of things *S* must be able to re-identify to possess a certain concept. Of course, it all depends on what the relevant concepts are concepts of. Still, in this case, the answer seems fairly obvious. As it was outlined above, (AFG) is particularly concerned with the perception of specific color shades. It seems reasonable to assume that these are properties of day-to-day physical objects—or of their surfaces.

Another question concerns the type of mental states identification and *re-identification* are supposed to consist in. I shall assume that, if *S* is able to identify object *o* as having property *f*, she must at least be able to believe that *o* is *f*. Presumably, the kind of identification at issue in this context is perceptual. And so, *S*’s belief that *o* is *f* must at least be based upon her experience of *o*.¹³

What about *re-identification*? Here, the difficulty lies in the fact that there are

¹³ A more difficult question is whether identification and re-identification require accuracy. I’m not sure quite what to say about this. Perhaps, the best thing is to follow Kelly (2001b: 407) and say that, in order to have such ability for re-identification, the subject must at least manifest it *reliably* and *consistently*. This, note, allows that the subject isn’t infallible. Thanks to David Chalmers for pressing me on these questions.

at least two different readings of what it means to ‘re-identify’ an object or property. On what I shall call the *de re* reading, re-identification just comes down to repeated identification:

de re re-identification: a subject *S* re-identifies *de re* (instances of) some property *f* if (i) *S* identifies some object *o* as *f* in context δ and (ii) *S* identifies some object *o'* as *f* in context ω .¹⁴

What is crucial to *de re* re-identification is that the subject need not be aware that what she thus re-identifies is the same. For instance, she may not remember having identified the object or property the first time around—indeed, she may not remember having identify anything *as f*. Or she might fail to realize that the objects in question are the same in such-and-such respect.

On the *de dicto* reading, in contrast, the ‘re’ of ‘re-identification’ governs the content of what the subject re-identifies—not the state. Thus,

de dicto re-identification: *S* re-identifies *de dicto* (instances of) some property *f* only if (i) *S* identifies some object *o* as *f* in context δ , (ii) *S* identifies some object *o'* as *f* in context ω , and (iii), in ω , *S* identifies *f* as *the same property f* as in δ .

Clearly, *de dicto* re-identification thus construed entails *de re* re-identification. The crucial difference lies in clause (iii): whereas clauses (i) and (ii) require that the subject re-applies the predicate ‘is *f*’ to some objects *o* and *o'*, clause (iii) demands of the subject that she applies (but not necessarily re-applies) the predicate ‘is *the same ... as ...*’ to property *f*. Here, what matters is that the subject realizes that the property she identified *o* as having in some context is the same property she identified *o'* as having in some other context.¹⁵

An orthogonal distinction concerns the temporal dimension of re-

¹⁴ This formulation suits our purposes because (AFG) and (R) are concerned with concepts for properties of day-to-day physical objects—and the re-identification of their instances. But, of course, this notion of re-identification could be generalized to the re-identification of particular objects (repeated identification of the same object), or to the re-identification of the properties themselves (as when *f* is repeatedly identified as *g*).

¹⁵ Presumably, when *de dicto* re-identification applies to particular objects, it comes close to capturing what we mean ordinarily by the notion of ‘recognition’. However, recognition in this sense is distinct from the kind of *de dicto* re-identification that concerns us here: subjects need not be able to re-identify an object as the very same object they’ve identified earlier in order to possess a concept for a property of that object. (I am aware that further useful distinctions could be made here about different kinds of identification and re-identification. I am sweeping some of these difficult issues under the carpet with the hope that they are not relevant to our discussion of (R).)

identification. *Synchronic* re-identification allows that *S* identifies objects *o* and *o'* as *f* in different contexts δ and ω , but at the same time—whether or not *S* identifies *f* as the same property *f*. *Diachronic* re-identification of a property *f* requires some temporal gap between the time when *S* first identifies *o* as *f* and the time at which *S* identifies *o'* as *f*—*de re* or *de dicto*. When combined with the *de re/de dicto* reading, this temporal distinction allows for at least four possible interpretations of the notion of ‘re-identification’.

The question now is: which interpretation is most appropriate to characterize this putative Re-identification constraint (R) on the possession of concepts? Note that, in this context, one desideratum upon (R) is that it can be construed in such a way that it initially supports premise (2) in (AFG). Otherwise, we’ll have discovered another flaw in the argument—other than the one singled out by the Demonstrative Strategy. This suggests that the notion of ‘re-identification’ at play in (R) is that of *diachronic de dicto* re-identification. For one thing, the empirical claim behind premise (2) in (AFG) concerns *diachronic* failures on the part of normal subjects to re-identify specific color shades, across different perceptual encounters at different times. For another, the kind of failure these subjects apparently instantiate is one where they cannot re-identify a certain specific color shade *as the same shade* they’d previously encountered. This presupposes a failure to re-identify *de dicto* certain shades of color. (The same is true of Kelly’s argument, since he exploits the very same empirical claim about typical re-identification failures.)

Hence, if (AFG) is to go through, the Re-identification constraint behind premise (2) ought to be rephrased more or less as follows:

- (R’) if a subject *S* possesses a concept *C* for a property *f*, then *S* must be able to (i) identify some object *o* as *f* at time *t*; (ii) to identify some object *o'* as *f* at time *t+1*; and (iii) to identify *f* at *t+1* as *the same property f* as at *t*.

Most participants in the dispute, we can assume, agree that something like (R’) governs the possession of normal non-demonstrative concepts like *RED*, *CAR*, *KANGAROO*, etc.—call these ‘standing’ concepts. At first sight, this is not implausible: we often interpret failures of re-identification of red things as evidence that a subject has no concept for redness.¹⁶ The question to be addressed in the

¹⁶ Although, there could still be a gap between this evidential role of the Re-identification constraint and the

remainder of this paper is whether such a constraint extends to demonstrative concepts.

2.2. *A Plethora of Re-identification constraints*

I have tried to specify which kind of Re-identification constraint seems to be at stake in (AFG). Unfortunately, when Kelly, McDowell, Brewer, and others talk about the Re-identification constraint, it is not obvious that they have exactly the same thing in mind.

To begin with, it is worth going back to what McDowell says in the passage above. Although McDowell talks about a “recognitional capacity”, he describes it in a way that does not even seem to involve the capacity to *re-identify*—whether *de dicto* or *de re*—instances of a certain concept. What McDowell is explicitly concerned with in this passage is the capacity to “embrace a colour in mind” (whatever that means). Of such a capacity, he says that it “can in principle persist beyond the duration of the experience itself” (McDowell, 1994: 57). He also insists that such a capacity “can be used in thought about what is by then the past, if only the recent past” (*ibid.*).

This raises an exegetical difficulty. One might wonder whether McDowell is in fact really committed to (R’). Perhaps, he only accepts a much weaker constraint, such as:

(R*) if a subject *S* possesses a demonstrative concept *C* for a specific shade of color *f*, *S* must be able to (i) embrace *f* in mind while *S* perceives *f*, and (ii) exercise such capacity in thoughts about her perceptual encounter with *f*, even after that encounter has taken place.

(R*) does not explicitly require *S* to identify other instances of *C*. For instance, a subject might “embrace” a perceived shade of color in mind in such a way that she can think about it, even when it isn’t in sight any more. Yet, she may not be able to identify that shade again, even if she sees it straight away. Perhaps, her memory of the shade is fading so rapidly that it loses the fineness of grain of her experience of the shade. Nevertheless, even a fading memory allows the subject to think about

claim that it is constitutive of the possession of concepts. Perhaps, some other constraint on the possession of concepts might explain why subjects who fail the re-identification test lack those concepts. Thanks to Martin Davies for pointing this out. Furthermore, as we shall see in (§3.1), certain cases suggest that (R’) is in fact far too strong, even as a general constraint on the possession of non-demonstrative concepts.

her past perceptual encounter with such a shade. In this sense, it is not clear whether McDowell's (R*) involves a capacity to re-identify things one has earlier discriminated in experience (as Kelly, 2001b: 410, n.24 seems to note).

Another difficulty has to do with Kelly's own formulation of the Re-identification constraint. He writes:

Let me be as clear as possible about how I understand the re-identification condition. If a subject has a perceptual experience whose content is constituted in part by a demonstrative concept then she must, at that time, have an ability reliably to identify a separate experience as having the same content if it occurs after some interval (perhaps extremely short) of no such experience. (Kelly, 2001b: 406-7).¹⁷

Here, Kelly appears to be concerned with something like the following:

(R**) if a subject *S* has an experience e_1 , the content of which involves the demonstrative concept *C*, *S* must be able to re-identify a later experience e_2 as having the same content involving *C*.

(R**) is problematic. First, Kelly's characterization suggests that *experiences* are what the subject must re-identify. However, it seems that demonstrative concepts typically apply to objects and properties in the world, not to the experiences of those objects and properties—at least, Conceptualists seem to presuppose that much. Second, and relatedly, the capacity in question seems more sophisticated than it needs to be. In particular, it requires of the subject that she has a concept of *EXPERIENCE*—since it is experiences she must be able to re-identify.

So why phrase the Re-identification constraint the way Kelly does? His reason seems to be that the demonstrative concepts Conceptualists are interested in cannot just be concepts of objects and properties *tout court*. They must be concepts of objects and properties *as they are represented in experience*. He argues:

[...] a demonstrative utterance like “that shade” is ambiguous between the shade that is experienced and the shade as the subject experiences it (at the time of the utterance). We might call the latter the shade *as experienced*. [...] We can imagine the shade that is experienced remaining the same while the experience of it changes. For instance, we can imagine a fog gradually dissipating around a color chip. In such a case my experience of the

¹⁷ About such an interval, Kelly (2001b: 407, n. 19) adds that it (i) must be long enough to counts as a “break in the original experience”, and (ii) long enough to “be experienced itself”. Other than that, it can be “indefinitely short” (*ibid.*).

color may become progressively clearer while the color I'm experiencing remains constant. [...] If the demonstrative concept is to have any hope at all of characterizing the content of the experience, it must pick out different referents as the fog clears. But it cannot do that if the content of the demonstrative concept is individuated by the shade that is experienced. (Kelly, 2001b: 398, n. 2)

In Kelly's example, an unchanging shade of red nevertheless changes in appearance as the fog surrounding it gradually dissipates. The thought is that such a shade must be represented differently in the course of a single experience. As Kelly seems to assume, Conceptualists must claim that the conceptual content of such an experience varies over time. Indeed, (C) requires that, if the representational content of an experience varies over time, the concepts the subject deploys must vary accordingly. However, Kelly makes two further assumptions about how Conceptualists ought to describe the conceptual change in question. Both assumptions are unwarranted.

First, he presupposes that if the conceptual content of an experience of a particular shade varies over time, Conceptualists must account for such a conceptual change solely in terms of the demonstrative concept the subject deploys for that shade. It is "the demonstrative concept", he writes, which is to serve in "characterizing the content of the experience" (*ibid.*).

Surely, though, Conceptualists will allow that the subject also deploys concepts for, say, the fog surrounding the shade of red and other elements in the background. Presumably, the conceptual content of her experience may include a variety of concepts—demonstrative or not. Why not say that it is the *whole* conceptual content of her experience—rather than just one demonstrative concept—which changes over time? Perhaps, as the fog gradually dissipates, the subject will deploy different concepts at different times for the thickness of the fog. This is compatible with thesis (C).

Second, even if the subject's demonstrative concept alone were to capture the representational differences in her experience, Kelly presupposes that such a concept "must pick out different referents as the fog clears" (*ibid.*). In other words, he assumes that Conceptualists should account for the conceptual differences under consideration as follows: (i) the subject deploys a *unique* demonstrative concept for the shade of red in front of her, and (ii) representational differences in her experience arise at the level of *reference* of such a demonstrative concept—that

is, the concept takes different referents over time.¹⁸ Given (ii), Kelly concludes that the demonstrative concept cannot refer just to the actual shade of red, since that shade remains unchanged. Rather, the demonstrative concept must pick out different properties *of the* experience—that is, different ways in which the experience represents such a shade over time. And this, presumably, is why the Re-identification constraint ought to be phrased in terms of (R**).

Alternative accounts of the conceptual differences under consideration are available, though. For instance, Conceptualists could insist that, as the fog clears up, the representational differences in the subject's experience are explained by *different demonstrative concepts* she deploys for that very same shade. Whenever the appearance of the shade of red changes, the subject deploys a new demonstrative concept. Each such demonstrative concept picks out the same shade of red, but differs from other such concepts, due to the distinct way in which that shade is presented at a time. Again, this much is compatible with (C).

Hence, Kelly's argument hardly provides a good reason to accept (R**). Perhaps, the argument was meant to show that demonstrative concepts are individuated, not just in terms of the objects and properties they pick out, but also by the particular *ways* in which their referents are presented to the subject.¹⁹ This seems plausible, but doesn't offer any support for (R**) either, since it is compatible with (R').

Suppose that a subject forms a demonstrative concept for a property *f*, while being visually presented with an instance of *f* under a certain mode of presentation *m*. Such a subject is able to re-identify other instances of *f*, but only when they are represented with the very same mode of presentation *m*. When the subject has an experience with a different mode of presentation *m**, she fails to identify any instance of *f*. Still, her demonstrative concept for *f* satisfies (R'). No need to think that the subject must be able to re-identify the mode of presentation *m*, in order

¹⁸ But even if Conceptualists accepted that demonstrative concepts differ only by having different referents, such a view would not allow that the very same demonstrative concept picks out different things over time and still remains the same concept—as Kelly seems to presuppose. On any view of demonstrative concepts, differences in reference normally suffice to make it the case that different concepts are at play.

¹⁹ As Kelly has suggested (personal communication). Even so, it seems as though Kelly fails to distinguish between the claim that (a) demonstrative concepts are *individuated* in terms of perceptual modes of presentations, with the claim that (b) demonstrative concepts *refer* to (or pick out) such modes of presentation.

to re-identify the objects and properties thus represented.

Thus, neither (R*) nor (R**) appear to capture appropriately the Re-identification constraint (R'). McDowell's (R*) is too weak to allow that normal subjects could fail to possess color concepts on the ground that they fail to re-identify specific colors over time. (Of course, this might suggest, either that McDowell doesn't accept (R') as a constraint on the possession of concepts in general, or that he regards the possession of *demonstrative* concepts to be determined by a constraint weaker than (R').) Kelly's (R**), on the other hand, seems too strong. It requires that subjects must re-identify properties of their own *experiences* in order to possess concepts for the properties of day-to-day physical objects represented by such experiences.

For this reason, the following discussion of Kelly's argument will be carried out in terms of (R'). This does not matter too much, however. For Kelly's (R**) seems to entail (R'): if a perceiver is able to re-identify a new experience as having *the same content* as another previous experience, she must thereby be able to re-identify the objects and properties represented in those experiences. (The converse entailment doesn't hold however, for the perceiver might lack a concept of experience.)

2.3. *Arguments for the Re-identification Constraint*

It is time to look at Kelly's argument for the view that possession of demonstrative concepts is governed by (R'). Kelly reviews three different motivations for (R'), and finds the first two inconclusive. The third is Kelly's own argument. To get a better grasp of that argument, it will help to have all three motivations for (R') on the table.

i) *the Distance Requirement*. Kelly calls the first consideration advanced to motivate the Re-identification constraint the 'Distance Requirement': he finds such a consideration both in McDowell (1994: 57) and Brewer (1999: 175). It can be phrased in terms of the following conditional:

(DR) if a subject *S* can deploy a concept *C* for a property *f* only while perceiving *f*, then *S* doesn't really possess *C*.

(DR) is supposed to capture the thought that "there must some kind of *distance* between the thought had by means of the concept and the thing in the world that makes the thought true" (Kelly, 2001b: 404). The idea can also be rendered

modally, in terms of the possible absence of the object of the thought in question.

Kelly remains unconvinced, since he finds (DR) to be unmotivated:

[...] I'm not sure what the *argument* is that thoughts must be this way. Why should we think that I can't have a thought about a color I'm now looking at just because I couldn't later recognize that color as the one I then saw? (Kelly, 2001b: 405)

Why, indeed?²⁰ I shall later run a similar line against Kelly's own argument. Meanwhile, Kelly goes on to consider whether (R') could find support in another constraint on concepts, such as Evans' Generality Constraint.

ii) *the Generality Constraint*. Perhaps, Kelly (2001b: 405) suggests, McDowell and Brewer take the Distance Requirement to be true, because they accept Evans' Generality Constraint:

(GC) if a subject *S* possesses a concept *C* for a property *f*, *S* must be able to apply *C* to a host of different objects, such that, if *S* thinks that *a* is *f*, she can also think that *b* is *f*, and that *d* isn't *f*, etc.

As Kelly observes, a subject's demonstrative concept might satisfy (GC), although the subject lacks the ability to re-identify instances of that concept:

The Generality Constraint suggests that in order to possess a concept *a*, a subject ought to be able to predicate *a* of lots of different things. But surely in the case under consideration that constraint is satisfied, at least as long as I'm looking at the color in question. I can say, for instance, at least while looking at the color, that *that color* is darker than the color of a Macintosh apple, but lighter than the color of a rich red Burgundy wine. And it's not clear to me from the considerations adduced above why anything more is required to possess a demonstrative concept for the color. (Kelly, 2001b: 405)

Again, if Kelly is right about this, one might wonder why the Re-identification constraint is needed at all. Nevertheless, he insists, (R') does offer a "potentially plausible" condition on the possession of demonstrative concepts (*ibid.*).

iii) *an intuitive example*. Kelly's own argument for (R') rests upon the following scenario (2001b: 406). A subject *S* is presented with two objects: a triangle on the left of her visual field and a square on the right. Suppose that she is able to

²⁰ Notice how, instead of (DR), Kelly seems to be targeting (R')—with its notion of *diachronic* re-identification.

discriminate the triangle from the square on the basis of her experience. Suppose further that, when later confronted with the very same triangle ten times in a row, the subject fails to re-identify the triangle, in any consistent way. In particular, she fails to re-identify it *as* the same object she discriminated from a square earlier on. Perhaps, she recognizes the triangle only five times out of ten, and fails otherwise. On the basis of this scenario, Kelly concludes:

I want to suggest that if we were confronted with such a subject we'd have no choice but to think that he does not know what that shape on the left, the triangle, is. [...] I think it is impossible for us to allow that such a person possesses the concept expressed by the phrase "that shape" (said while pointing to what is in fact a triangle). The reason for this, I think, is that one natural condition on the possession of a demonstrative concept is that a person be able consistently to re-identify a given object as falling under a given concept, assuming it does. Hence, the re-identification condition. (Kelly, 2001b: 406)

Kelly's main point seems to be that we are reluctant to attribute possession of a concept for that particular triangle to subject *S*, because her inconsistent re-identification of the triangle *indicates* that she doesn't *know* the shape she was originally presented with.

Such an argument raises a variety of questions. First, is Kelly offering a principled reason to think that the possession of demonstrative concepts like *THAT SHAPE* is constrained by (R)? Or is he merely suggesting that, intuitively, we tend to think that the possession of such concepts is determined by such a constraint?²¹ If the former, then what is this principled reason? If, on the other hand, Kelly's argument amounts to no more than an 'intuition pump', one might ask whether the intuition it is supposed to elicit is indeed correct, and whether it is reliable.

3. Demonstrative Concepts without Re-identification

I shall outline two main reasons to be dissatisfied with Kelly's argument. First, I suggest that it amounts in fact to little more than a statement of (R)'s alleged intuitive appeal. Worse, it seems likely that the argument might rest on a conflation between different kinds of concepts (§3.1). The second reason concerns the intuitive appeal the conclusion of Kelly's example is alleged to elicit (§3.2). I

²¹ Kelly describes his argument as an intuition pump (Kelly, 2001b: 405), but also claims to have offered an argument for (R), which should establish its truth (Kelly, 2001b: 409).

consider what putative considerations may be behind it, and argue that all such motivations face intuitive counter-examples.

3.1. *Kelly's argument*

The argument above exploits the example of a subject who is able to discriminate a triangle from a square, but is later incapable to re-identify the triangle “as the shape that was earlier presented on [her] left” (Kelly, 2001b: 406). Because she cannot re-identify such a triangle, Kelly concludes, she lacks the demonstrative concept *THAT SHAPE* for the triangle. His reason for this conclusion is that the subject “does not know what that shape on the left, the triangle, is” (*ibid.*).

This suggests that the argument relies on the existence of a connection between (a) possession of a concept, (b) knowledge of the things which fall under that concept, and (c) the capacity to re-identify such things. The knowledge in question, presumably, relates to the *kind* of thing a triangle is: Kelly is not interested here with whether the subject can track the particular object that happens to be a triangle. What matters is whether she can track the property of triangularity instantiated by that object.

This twofold connection between concepts, knowledge and re-identification may be rendered as follows:

- (IK) if a subject *S* is unable to re-identify a property *f*, *S* has no knowledge of which kind of thing *f* is.
- (KC) if a subject *S* has no knowledge of which kind of thing a property *f* is, *S* has no concept for *f*.

Given that, by hypothesis, the subject in Kelly's example is unable to re-identify the triangle as such, Kelly concludes on the basis of (IK) and (KC) that she lacks any concept—demonstrative or not—for triangles.

There are two problems with this argument—at least. First, the additional assumptions (IK) and (KC) Kelly seems to rely upon come somewhat out of the blue. Second, even if (IK) and (KC) were relevant to the possession of demonstrative concepts, it's not obvious that they entail (R').

i) *concepts & knowledge of kinds*. If my reconstruction of Kelly's argument is correct, an obvious question presents itself. Why think that principles like (IK)

and (KC) apply to demonstrative concepts like *THAT SHAPE* (which picks out a particular triangle)? Unfortunately, Kelly seems to have nothing to say on this point. Perhaps, (IK) and (KC) are meant to be so obviously true that they hardly need defending.²² Even so, Kelly's argument is a bit of a disappointment: his example hardly amounts to an *argument* for (R'). It merely shows that, pre-reflectively, we tend to accept such principles as determining the possession of certain concepts. And even if we do accept such principles, it's unclear whether we are *justified* in doing so. Here, I shall briefly outline one reason suggesting that we aren't. The worry is that Kelly's reliance on conditions (IK) and (KC) in his argument for (R') results from a conflation between demonstrative concepts and some other kind of concepts. Following Campbell (2002), I shall call the latter 'sortal concepts'.

It is not too clear what sortal concepts are exactly, and which concepts can be counted as sortal.²³ According to John Campbell (2002: 61ff), at least two conditions determine sortal concepts. First, a sortal concept *C* (1) can be used by a subject, even if no instance of that concept is present in her immediate environment. For instance, I can think of red things without having any red thing in sight: likewise for squares, dogs, valleys, clouds, persons, washing machines, etc. Second, the possession of a sortal concept *C* requires (2) knowledge of a criterion, which allows the subject to decide whether or not a given object falls under *C*. Importantly, knowledge of such a criterion need not be in any way descriptive or propositional. The subject might simply be able to react to certain perceptual cues, as indicating the presence of instances of *C*.²⁴

If this account of sortal concepts is along the right track, it is interesting to note that the two conditions distinctive of sortal concepts coincide with some of

²² Which is doubtful: I know a lot about Jedis—and have a concept thereof, but this doesn't mean I am able to identify one when I see one.

²³ Perhaps, there are different types of sortal concepts. One might distinguish between recognitional sortal concepts, and sortal concepts which are used deferentially, based on the advice of an expert for whom the concept is a recognitional one. Perhaps, there are intermediate types of concepts, which combine recognitional knowledge with more descriptive knowledge. See also the interesting discussion in Yablo (2002).

²⁴ Thus, knowledge of such a criterion can take different forms. With purely recognitional sortal concepts, the criterion may be a perceptual one; whereas, with more deferential sortal concepts, the criterion might amount to knowledge of a description.

the requirements discussed earlier in support of (R'). Thus, condition (1) about the possibility of exercising a sortal concept in the absence of any object to which it applies looks very much like McDowell and Brewer's Distance Requirement (DR). Likewise, I shall suggest, Kelly's argument relies in fact on the assumption that something like (2)—knowledge of a criterion—is required for the possession of demonstrative concepts. Notice how (KC) resembles the second constraint on *sortal* concepts. According to such a constraint, one must have knowledge of some criterion determining which things fall under a concept *C*, if one is to possess that concept. Presumably, this is exactly the sort of knowledge Kelly has in mind: knowledge of triangles must enable subjects to re-identify triangles. And so, it must include some criterion to that effect.²⁵

Given such similarities, Conceptualists could argue that attempts to promote (R') as a necessary requirement on the possession of demonstrative concepts result in fact from a conflation between sortal and demonstrative concepts. Perhaps, what guides Kelly and others is precisely the thought that demonstrative concepts *are* sortal concepts. But again, no reason has been offered for such an assumption. Perhaps, the thought is that demonstrative concepts like *THAT SHAPE*, *THIS RED*, or *THAT SHADE OF RED* are concepts of properties like shapes and colors. And, it seems, most of our concepts of shapes and colors like *RED*, *GREEN*, *TRIANGLE* and *SQUARE* satisfy conditions (1) and (2) on sortal concepts. Thus, it might be natural to think that demonstrative concepts too are governed by (1) and (2).

But this latter assumption is unwarranted too. The fact that demonstrative concepts are concepts of the same properties as sortal concepts need not entail that the concepts are the same. Usually, subjects can have more than one concept for the same kind of thing. Pauline might possess a day-to-day sortal concept for grey kangaroos: namely, *GREY KANGAROO*. She might also possess—*albeit* deferentially—the more scientific species-concept *MACROPUS RUFUS*. In addition, she could form a descriptive concept such as *THE PARTICULAR KIND OF CREATURE HAPPILY HOPPING ON TATHRA BEACH*, as well as a demonstrative concept *THAT KIND OF ANIMAL*. From the mere fact that all these concepts refer to the same property (or kind of thing), we wouldn't normally deduce that they are the same concepts—or that their

²⁵ As Kelly (2001b: 407) points out, (R') is not supposed to apply to all concepts: for instance, it may not

possession-conditions are necessarily the same. Hence, unless Kelly has a better reason to think that demonstrative concepts *are* sortal concepts, his argument for (R') appears to rely on a conflation between these two kinds of concepts.

ii) *re-identification once again*. The previous remarks notwithstanding, let us assume that demonstrative concepts like *THAT SHAPE* are sortal concepts, so that principles (IK) and (KC) apply. Is this sufficient to establish that (R') determines the possession of such demonstrative concepts? The answer to this question will depend, in part, on which notion of 're-identification' is at play in (IK):

(IK) if a subject *S* is unable to re-identify a property *f*, *S* has no knowledge of which kind of thing *f* is.

It will also depend on whether Kelly's example captures the relevant test to establish whether or not a subject possesses a concept. Here, there is cause for skepticism. The example contains two key elements. First, (i) the subject is able to visually discriminate a triangle on the left of her visual field from a square on the right, and does so consistently. Second, (ii) when presented with the same triangle ten times in a row, she "is unable consistently to classify this as the shape that was earlier presented on [her] left" (Kelly, 2001b: 405). But why does (ii) matter with regard to whether or not the subject possesses the demonstrative concept *THAT SHAPE*—or even the concept *TRIANGLE*?

Suppose that the subject had recently lost her capacity for short-term and long-term memory about her personal life. She still has a very general knowledge about the world, but none about herself. Her general knowledge implies that she hasn't lost her conceptual skills—and is thus perfectly capable to identify triangles. In her situation, the subject will be completely unable to re-identify the newly presented triangle *as the same shape she was earlier presented with*. That's because she cannot remember anything about her past experiences. Still, by hypothesis, she can identify the shape in question *as a triangle*.²⁶ After all, she knows what triangles are

apply to those concepts a subject applies by deference to some expert.

²⁶ Cases like this, it seems, are not merely possible. Knowlton (1997)—discussed in Prinz (2002: 71)—has shown that amnesiacs can be trained to categorize patterns of dots, without being able to recognize previously encountered patterns. Despite their ability for such categorization, the categorized patterns never seem familiar to those subjects.

and how they look like. In which case, the amnesiac's concepts appear to satisfy (IK) and (KC), but not (R'): the former do not entail the latter.

Here, we also touch upon a more important question. Such an example suggests, more generally, that (R') may not constitute an appropriate constraint on concept-possession. In order to establish whether a subject possesses a concept *C* for a property *f*, the crucial question seems to be whether she can identify new instances of *f* as falling under *C*; not whether she can re-identify these instances *as the very same objects* (or property) she has previously perceived. In other words, if the case of the amnesiac is plausible, *de dicto* re-identification cannot be necessary for possession of a concept *C* for a property *f*—at least not diachronically. For it requires, not only that the subject repeatedly identifies instances of *f*, but also that she remembers having identified at least some of these instances previously, and be able to judge that the property she is identifying now is the same as the one she had earlier identified. Even if she doesn't exactly remember when (and how) she had identified *f*, she must at least remember *that* she had identified *f*. And this seems to be what the amnesiac is unable to do.²⁷

This raises another problem for (AFG). For it now seems as though premise (2) in the argument presupposes a far too strong constraint on the possession of concepts—one ruling out that complete amnesiacs can possess concepts. The empirical claim that normal subjects fail to re-identify instances of things they have just perceived may well show that such subjects violate (R'). But if (R') isn't a plausible constraint on the possession of concepts, such failures do not show that subjects lack concepts for the specific shades they discriminate. And so, premise (2) in (AFG) remains groundless.

We have seen that Kelly's argument relies upon some principles he does not defend—and whose relevance to demonstrative concepts may result from a conflation between demonstrative and sortal concepts. We have also seen that such principles do not support (R') anyway—worse: under scrutiny, (R') isn't a very plausible constraint on concept possession. Kelly's first challenge has thus been

²⁷ Of course, though, when presented simultaneously with two instances of *f*, the amnesiac might identify them both as *f*, and also identify one as the same as the other. Thus, the amnesiac can *synchronically* re-identify *f de dicto*. She can also identify *f* and its instances *de re*, both synchronically and diachronically. What she cannot do is re-identify *f de dicto* and diachronically.

answered: I have identified four respects in which his argument for (R') fails.

3.2. *Why the Re-identification Constraint?*

Still, there is a sense in which (R') presents a somewhat intuitive constraint on concepts. And this intuition might provide some support to Kelly's claim that demonstrative concepts must include (R') among their possession-conditions—even if, ultimately, we need a proper argument for this claim. There are at least three questions we can ask about such an intuition. (a) Where does it come from? (b) Does it support the view that *all* demonstrative concepts are governed by the Re-identification constraint in (R')? And (c) do we really have such a clear-cut intuition, or is it rather the case that we are inclined to have contrary intuitions about these issues?

In response to the first question, it seems that we might be led to think that (R') determines the possession of demonstrative concepts like *THAT SHAPE* or *THIS SHADE OF RED*, because we believe that (i) (R') determines the possession of *demonstrative concepts* in general; that (ii) it constrains all *concepts of properties* like shapes and colors; or (iii) that it specifically governs *fine-grained* concepts. Each such suggestion, I think, faces an intuitive counter-example. This might indicate that we have in fact contrary intuitions as to whether demonstrative concepts are really constrained by (R').

i) *demonstrative concepts & re-identification*. Do all demonstrative concepts have (R') among their possession-conditions? The answer seems to be 'no'. To see this, consider a case where a subject is visually presented for the first time with a completely unknown object, whose properties look mysterious and unfamiliar. The point of this assumption is to ensure that the subject has no previous knowledge of the object in question (or of its properties), which would allow her to re-identify such an object.

CASE I. A stone from outer space suddenly lands on Susie's desk. She has never seen anything like it before. Its color, insofar as it seems to have one, looks completely different from any color Susie might have experienced in the past; and likewise for its shape. She focuses her perceptual attention on the stone. As a result, she can point at it (or at some of its properties). When her colleagues ask Susie "What is *that*?" (pointing at the mysterious stone), she is perfectly capable to understand their question, even if she is unable to answer. Likewise, they understand what Susie means when she says "Why is *this* on my desk?".

In this case, there is linguistic evidence that the subject and her colleagues form demonstrative concepts for the extraterrestrial stone: they communicate using demonstrative expressions like “this” or “that” to refer to the stone.²⁸ The fact that they seem to understand one another suggests that they are able to grasp the thoughts expressed by such demonstrative expressions. And, it seems natural to suppose, such thoughts clearly involve demonstrative concepts. What else would Susie’s utterance “What is *that*?” express?²⁹

What’s more, such demonstrative concepts provide Susie with a way of thinking about the stone, which is intimately linked with her experience of it. In this sense, Susie’s use of demonstrative expressions does express concepts which are perception-dependent and context-dependent just the way demonstrative concepts are supposed to be. Yet, by hypothesis, Susie has no idea whatsoever about the ‘thing’ she thus refers to. Her ignorance notwithstanding, she seems able to think demonstratively about it.

Of course, this is no counter-example to the claim that demonstrative concepts must satisfy the Re-identification constraint as yet.³⁰ The example must be developed further:

CASE I (CONTINUED). More extra-terrestrial stones appear on Susie’s desk. Each stone looks slightly different from the first stone—they seem to be chromatically and geometrically different, although Susie can’t quite say how. Susie has a careful look around her desk, looking minutely at each stone and its properties. Suddenly, due to the amount of new stones on her desk, Susie finds herself unable to tell which stone appeared first. Despite their differences, they all look more or less the same to her. And because of their sheer number, she can’t even recall the location of the first stone—or its

²⁸ Likewise, in Kelly’s example, when the subject is presented with the triangle again, she understands when the experimenter asks her “What is *this*?”, or “Is *this* what you’ve seen before?”.

²⁹ Of course, demonstrative expressions can sometimes be used anaphorically, to refer to something named, described, or mentioned, earlier in the conversation. For instance, Susie might say: “The boss said that the new annual budget analysis would be delivered today.” and her colleague respond: “What does this (the new annual budget analysis) have to do with *that* (pointing at the stone)?” The first demonstrative expression here has its reference fixed by Susie’s definite description. The second demonstrative expression, on the other hand, has its reference fixed perceptually, *via* the speaker’s pointing at the stone: non-anaphoric demonstratives seem to involve something like a demonstration, which exploits the perceptual context, and requires the interlocutors’ joint attention to the object thus referred to.

³⁰ But it does suggest that principle (KC) above is false: the subject can have a demonstrative concept for something she knows nothing about.

color or shape. And so, Susie is unable to re-identify which stone it was that first appeared on her desk.

Surely, though, the fact that Susie is *now* unable to re-identify the stone she initially saw appear on her desk doesn't *retroactively* undermine the fact that she did *earlier* think of that stone demonstratively.³¹ She cannot re-identify the original stone by its color, shape, or location. Yet, when that stone stood alone on Susie's desk, Susie clearly seemed able to form a demonstrative concept for it. If so, not *all* demonstrative concepts must have (R') among their possession-conditions. In this particular example, it seems possible that a subject forms a demonstrative concept for an object without being able to later re-identify that object.

Indeed, this seems to have been one of the main insights of Evans' (1982) seminal work on demonstrative concepts. For him, possession of a demonstrative concept essentially rests upon the ability to know *which* object one is referring to at the time (1982: 149, 171). And knowing *which* object one's demonstrative concept picks out requires only that one be *able* to (i) *locate* the object in one's perceptual field (1982: 149, 170), by (ii) focusing one's attention upon it (1982: 172-5).³² On Evans' view, there is no need to know *which kind* of object is being picked out (1982: 178-9). Such demonstrative concepts lead to 'identification-free knowledge' (Evans, 1982: 173, 181ff). And if Evans grants the importance of recognitional capacities for cognition in general, he argues that they are not *necessary* to form demonstrative concepts (1982: 273ff).

ii) *concepts of sensible properties*. Perhaps, the intuition behind Kelly's example has another source. The thought might be that concepts of properties like colors and shapes—properties which crucially figure in the content of visual experiences—are essentially linked with the Re-identification constraint. Indeed, a suggestion of this kind appears explicitly in Jacob and Jeannerod's (2003: 25) comments on the Demonstrative Strategy:

Color concepts and shape concepts stored in a creature's memory must allow recognition and

³¹ To echo a remark of Kelly's (2001: 405) against the Distance Requirement: see (§2.3).

³² See also Brewer (1999: 186ff), Campbell (2002), and Peacocke (1983: 139ff). Importantly, seeing the object isn't sufficient to form a demonstrative concept about it: see Evans (1982: 147-50), Hawthorne and Scala (2000). Perceptual attention seems to be a necessary condition on such concepts.

re-identification of colors and shapes over long periods of time. Although pure demonstrative color concepts may allow comparison of simultaneously presented samples of color, it is unlikely that they can be used to reliably reidentify one and the same sample over time. [...] Now, if the conceptualist was tempted to turn the tables around and argue that demonstrative concepts (of shapes or colors) are precisely well-suited to capture the fine-grainedness of perceptual experiences on the ground that they are not designed to achieve recognitional tasks, we would really ask in what sense they would still deserve to be called concepts.

One of the many threads in this passage seems to be the idea that, if demonstrative concepts really are concepts of shades of color, shapes, lengths, and so on, they should behave just like other concepts for such colors, shapes, lengths. Concepts such as *RED* or *SQUARE* mainly serve to *categorize, identify, and recognize* objects and their properties—or so Jacob and Jeannerod assume. Hence, one might conclude that demonstrative concepts such as *THIS SHADE* or *THAT RED* should naturally fulfill the same function.

But why believe that? As we have seen, the mere fact that demonstrative concepts pick out the same properties as other concepts shouldn't by itself entail that they fulfill the very same function. For one thing, there are important differences between concepts like *RED* and *SQUARE* and demonstrative concepts in general. After all, demonstrative concepts *are demonstrative*. First, to repeat, they are perception-dependent, in the sense that a perceptual experience is necessary for the formation of such a concept. Second, unlike concepts such as *RED* or *SQUARE*, demonstrative concepts are context-dependent. That is, which object or property they pick out is determined, in part, by the context in which such objects or properties are perceived (see Brewer, 1999: 172; Kelly, 2001b: 401). In light of these differences, any claim about what common constraints might hold upon demonstrative and non-demonstrative concepts cannot just be taken for granted, but must be properly argued for.

In this respect, the assumption that demonstrative concepts for colors and shapes should behave just like non-demonstrative color and shape concepts also begs the question against the Demonstrative Strategy. Recall Brewer's suggestion (in §1.3) that demonstrative concepts provide *context-dependent* classifications of objects and properties (Brewer, 1999: 171). The idea seems to be that demonstrative color concepts like *THIS SHADE* or *THAT RED* serve to categorize and

identify certain shades, but only *relative to a particular context*. On such a view, demonstrative concepts are akin to disposable classificatory devices: a subject may need to categorize certain objects and properties in a particular visual scene, only to be able to act upon them at the time. There need not be any cognitive pressure on the subject to store such classifications in memory. Perhaps, she is unlikely to encounter such objects and properties again, or it may not matter whether she does.³³ Demonstrative concepts of this kind might nonetheless fulfill a useful short-term classificatory purpose. To this extent, short-term and long-term categorization ought to be kept distinct: the two functions might meet different needs in a subject's cognitive life.

Another theme in the passage from Jacob and Jeannerod is the suggestion that, unless demonstrative concepts satisfy the Re-identification constraint, they aren't really concepts in the proper sense of the term. Again, though, it's unclear why one should accept this claim—in support of which Jacob and Jeannerod provide no argument. Perhaps, the thought is that there doesn't seem to be any other condition which could serve to establish whether or not a given subject possesses a particular demonstrative concept. And so, if (R') doesn't apply to them, there is nothing to suggest that demonstrative concepts really are concepts. This seems to presuppose that the nature of a concept is essentially determined by its possession-conditions (cf. Peacocke, 1992). If nothing determines the possession-conditions of demonstrative concepts, then they aren't really concepts.³⁴

However, there are a variety of conditions other than (R'), which could contribute to the possession-conditions of demonstrative concepts. In fact, we have already reviewed some of them throughout this paper. They include, for instance, Evans' Generality constraint (GC), as well as McDowell and Brewer's Distance Requirement (DR):

(DR) if a subject *S* can deploy a concept *C* for a property *f* only while perceiving *f*, then *S*

³³ Jacob and Jeannerod are explicitly concerned with "concepts stored in a creature's memory" (*ibid.*). However, if they rely on the thought that all concepts must *necessarily* be stored in memory, no argument for such a claim has been offered.

³⁴ A.D. Smith (2002: 111) seems to be making a similar point, when he says that demonstrative concepts are useless, if not constrained by something like (R'). More generally, Smith (2002: 110-1) contends that Conceptualism will be empty and trivial, if the concepts allegedly essential for perception are mere "discriminatory capacities" and do not allow subjects to *classify* the objects they perceive.

doesn't really possess *C*.

- (GC) if a subject *S* possesses a concept *C* for a property *f*, *S* must be able to apply *C* to a host of different objects, such that, if *S* thinks that *a* is *f*, she can also think that *b* is *f*, and that *d* isn't *f*, etc.

Neither of which, we have seen, entails (R').

We might add two fairly obvious conditions which seem to apply to the possession of concepts in general. The first one—the *Discrimination* constraint (DC)—captures the idea that:

- (DC) if a subject *S* possesses a concept *C* for a property *f*, *S* must be able to discriminate instances of *f* from non-instances of *f*.³⁵

The second condition—the *Inferential* constraint (IC)—simply expresses the thought that there is some constitutive link between possession of certain concepts on the one hand, and the capacity to draw certain inferences involving these concepts on the other:

- (IC) if a subject *S* possesses a concept *C* for a property *f*, *S* must be able to infer from *a* is *f* that *something* is *f*, that *not all fs* are *gs*, etc.

To this list, we can add conditions which seem distinctive of demonstrative concepts—such as the claim that, if concept *C* is a demonstrative concept, forming such a concept is both (i) perception-dependent (PC) and (ii) context-dependent (CC):

- (PC) if a subject *S* forms a *demonstrative* concept *C* for a property *f* at time *t*, *S* perceives *f* at *t*.³⁶
- (CC) if a subject *S* forms a *demonstrative* concepts *C* for a property *f*, there is a context δ in which *f* is perceived, and in virtue of which *C* picks out *f*.

We could even add what looks like Evans' account of the latter constraint—the context-dependence of demonstrative concepts. Of course, Evans's account is meant to apply to demonstrative concepts which pick out particular objects. But it

³⁵ The notion of 'discrimination' here at play may or may not be perceptual. For example, I can discriminate quarks from proteins, even if I can't perceive any instance of such things.

³⁶ Note that this constraint is compatible with the Distance Requirement (DR): while the latter is about the *deployment* of demonstrative concepts, the former is about their *formation*. One could form a concept on the basis of experience, and then exercise it independently.

doesn't seem to be too much of a stretch to adapt such conditions to demonstrative concepts of properties like color and shape. Call these the *Location* constraint (LC) and the *Attention* constraint (AC):

- (LC) if a subject *S* forms a *demonstrative* concept *C* for a property *f*, *S* is able to locate an instance of *f* in her perceptual field.
- (AC) if a subject *S* forms a *demonstrative* concept *C* for a property *f*, *S* is able to focus her attention on an instance of *f* in her perceptual field.

We thus have at least eight conditions, satisfaction of which contributes to determining whether or not a subject *S* possesses a demonstrative concept *C* for a property *f*.

These constraints can be met by a subject *S* who cannot satisfy the Re-identification constraint (R'). To see this, consider a variant of the extraterrestrial stone example:

CASE 2. Only three unknown stones from outer space now appear on Susie's desk. Despite their close similarities, the color and shape of these mysterious objects look more or less different. Susie attempts to compare them. She can perceive the color of each stone distinctly—thus satisfying condition (PC). A certain distance separates each stone from the others, and Susie can clearly discriminate their bizarre contours against the background of her desk. Hence, she can locate each stone and its respective color in her visual field—in accordance with (LC). She can also focus her attention on the color of each stone—condition (AC). Given Susie's ability to perceive, locate, and focus her attention upon the color of each stone, it seems that for each stone, there is a certain perceptual context—condition (CC)—which determines which colors her demonstrative concepts pick out.

Despite their close similarity, Susie can also discriminate the strange color of each stone. She realizes that, in fact, two of the stones seem to have the same color. But she can discriminate the color of the third one against the other two—thus satisfying condition (DC). She can also draw various inferences about the colors of these objects—condition (IC). For instance, from the thought that *this is thus* (pointing at the shade of the third stone), she can infer that *there is something on her desk which is thus*, or that *there is some color such as this*, and that *this is different from any shade she has previously experienced*. For the same reason, she satisfies the Generality constraint (GC): she can think that the first stone is like *this*, and that the second stone is also like *this*—although the third stone isn't. Finally, Susie can look intently at one of the two stones with the same color, then close her eyes, and think that two of the objects on her desk are *thus*. In which case, it seems, she can deploy a demonstrative concept for the color of these two stones without necessarily perceiving them—condition (DR).

The demonstrative concepts Susie forms for the colors of such stones seem to

satisfy all of our eight constraints. Given that Susie's concepts satisfy four conditions on concepts in general, it seems likely that Susie's concepts are *concepts* in the proper sense of the term. Given that they satisfy four other constraints distinctive of demonstrative concepts, it seems likely that her concepts are *demonstrative*. However:

CASE 2 (CONTINUED). Another twenty-five stones appear in one go on Susie's desk. Some of them fill in the space between the three stones that first stood on her desk. Although Susie can locate each stone, focus her attention on their color, and discriminate such colors from one another, she cannot re-identify the colors of the first three stones. Not only is she unable to re-identify the stones themselves. There are just too many of these weird objects now on her desk. But she can't even identify any of the colors she now sees, *as* being *the same* as one of the two shades she first saw.

Despite the fact that Susie is now unable to re-identify the bizarre shades she first observed when the first three stones stood alone on her desk, this in no way undermines the fact that she did *then* form perfectly respectable demonstrative concepts for such shades. In which case, satisfaction of the eight constraints above need not entail the Re-identification constraint.

Thus, it seems, the possession of demonstrative concepts for properties like colors—or shapes—is not necessarily determined by (R'). Even granting that Susie loses the demonstrative concepts in question when she fails to re-identify the shades identified earlier, it is a mystery why this should also retroactively entail that, in fact, Susie failed to form any concept in the first place. In any case, conditions other than (R') are available to determine whether or not Susie possessed demonstrative concepts for such shades. And so, Kelly's second challenge can be answered—*albeit* sketchily. (R') is by far not the sole candidate to determine the possession-conditions of demonstrative concepts. Even if (R') doesn't apply to such concepts, these other constraints might form the basis of a theory of the possession-conditions of demonstrative concepts.

At this point, proponents of (R') might still insist that Susie didn't in fact deploy any *demonstrative* concept for the shades of the first three stones. The mere fact that Susie used demonstrative expressions to voice her concepts, they will point out, need not imply that such concepts were themselves demonstrative. Instead, they suggest, such demonstrative expressions might have served to express disguised definite descriptions of the form *THE SHADE OF THE THIRD OBJECT ON*

THE RIGHT OF MY DESK OR THE COLOUR OF THE OBJECT IN THE MIDDLE OF MY DESK, WHATEVER THAT MIGHT BE.³⁷

But this seems unlikely. After all, Susie's concepts for such shades did satisfy a variety of constraints *distinctive* of demonstrative concepts. To repeat, she forms such concepts (i) on the basis of her experience of the color of such shades, (ii) while focusing her attention on the shade in question, at (iii) the location of the stone. Disguised descriptive concepts, on the other hand, need satisfy none of these conditions. Susie could have formed the concept *THE COLOUR OF THE OBJECT IN THE MIDDLE OF MY DESK, WHATEVER THAT MIGHT BE* just by being told by one of her colleagues that there is such a thing on her desk. Given this, it's hard to take the suggestion too seriously. At best, proponents of (R') owe us a good reason to think that Susie's concepts are disguised definite descriptions, which can nevertheless explain Susie's cognitive behavior entirely.

iii) *fine-grained concepts & re-identification*. Perhaps, then, (R')'s intuitive appeal has to do with fine-grained concepts in particular. Recall that the sorts of concepts at issue in (AFG) are concepts of specific properties (like particular color shades), which must be as fine-grained as perceptual experiences of those properties. Indeed, this is another point Jacob and Jeannerod seem to be making: they express doubt as to whether a demonstrative concept can be sufficiently fine-grained and yet fail the Re-identification constraint.

This, again, seems unwarranted. In the example of Susie just outlined (case 2), the subject seems able to discriminate rather specific—if unfamiliar—shades of color. This suggests that the demonstrative concepts Susie forms for the colors of these mysterious objects are fine-grained indeed: such concepts pick out specific properties, which Susie is able to discriminate. What else is there to fine-grained concepts? Proponents of (R') might try to resist this point and suggest that, in fact, Susie only possesses *coarse-grained* concepts for the shades she discriminates. But if

³⁷ In such a case, Susie's use of demonstrative expressions might be anaphoric (see note 29). I owe this suggestion to both Sean Kelly and an anonymous referee for this journal. However, in the way I described the scenario, Susie's use of demonstrative expressions doesn't seem to be anaphoric at all. She can point at the shade of one of the stones while saying "this is different from the color of the other two objects". Her colleagues, insofar as they manage to focus their attention on the object thus demonstrated, will be able to understand Susie's utterance. Her use of "this" doesn't refer *via* a previous description of the color in question.

they are just insisting that a demonstrative concept cannot be fine-grained unless its possession-conditions include the Re-identification constraint, it seems as though they owe us an explanation as to why this is so. After all, when arguing against Conceptualism, proponents of (R') seem entitled to assume that a subject's ability to carry out fine-grained perceptual discriminations between different shades establishes that her perceptual experiences have a fine-grained representational content. Why can't Conceptualists make a similar claim about demonstrative concepts?³⁸

The following scenario might help to see how unlikely it is that (R') is a necessary constraint on fine-grained concepts. It seems as though face perception is a rather fine-grained discriminatory capacity—if anything is. Normal subjects are usually able to distinguish very similar faces on the basis of quite specific facial characteristics:

CASE 3. Jacqueline is presented with successive pairs of photographs of twins—one photograph for each twin shown simultaneously. The twins are *almost* completely identical: there is a slight difference in their facial characteristics, which Jacqueline seems able to detect. She always succeeds to discriminate one twin from the other. And often, she can tell where their facial difference lies. Furthermore, when presented simultaneously with two photos of the same twin, she correctly doesn't discriminate them.

While carrying out such discriminations, Jacqueline forms (and expresses) various demonstrative concepts to refer to the different twins, as well as to their different facial traits. Given the highly specific facial characteristics her demonstrative concepts are designed to pick out, it seems quite likely that at least some of her demonstrative concepts are fine-grained. Jacqueline, however, is a complete amnesiac. When presented twice with photos of the same pair of twins, she is patently incapable to re-identify them. Indeed, she even denies that she has seen the pair of twins previously.

There seems to be nothing conceptually or psychologically incoherent about Jacqueline. Surely, an amnesiac should be able to carry out fine-grained discriminations—insofar as the things she discriminates are presented simultaneously. Being amnesiac, though, she cannot remember any of her previous experiences. And so, she cannot re-identify the twins she previously

³⁸ Especially if, as Kelly assumes (see § 2.2, n. 21), demonstrative concepts are individuated in terms of the particular mode of presentation with which their referent is perceived. Thus, if a shade is experienced in a fine-grained way, it seems that the corresponding demonstrative concept based on such an experience should be fine-grained too.

discriminated—or their specific and distinctive facial traits. Yet, it seems, the demonstrative concepts she forms for such facial characteristics are fine-grained.

The point of the scenarios described in this section was essentially to throw doubt on the alleged intuitive appeal behind (R'). I have tried to argue that there is no reason to think that the Re-identification constraint figures among the possession-conditions of (i) all demonstrative concepts, (ii) concepts of properties like shapes and color, or of (iii) fine-grained demonstrative concepts. In each of these cases, there seems to be a plausible counter-example to the claim that the possession of the relevant demonstrative concepts is determined by (R'). If this is correct, it seems as though we might in fact have contrary intuitions about (R'). On the one hand, the Re-identification constraint seems *prima facie* to present an intuitive condition on the possession of concepts. On the other, we seem to have a variety of situations where a subject possesses demonstrative concepts but fails to satisfy (R').

4. Conclusion

The Demonstrative Strategy should now appear as a potent way to neutralize (AFG), and not just because (AFG) ignores the availability of demonstrative concepts in experience. It is rather that one of the assumptions behind Evans' thesis in premise (2) has no basis. Proponents of the argument exploit (R') to show that normal perceivers lack concepts for certain specific properties they can perceptually discriminate. But if (R') doesn't apply to all concepts, Conceptualists can retort that perceivers can deploy concepts for such properties, even if they fail to re-identify them later.

Perhaps, better arguments could be designed to show that (R') applies to demonstrative concepts. But, I have tried to suggest, no such argument can as yet be found in the literature. And the prospects seem rather dim. In any case, it seems odd to suggest that a subject's inability to *later* re-identify certain objects or properties retroactively undermines her earlier demonstrative thoughts about such objects and properties. As we have seen, some concepts might serve a rather transient function, without being stored in memory.

More generally, it seems possible that we sometimes forget at least some of the concepts we had previously acquired. Surely, then, it should seem unlikely that a necessary constraint upon possession of a particular concept C at t_1 is that one

should still possess C at t_2 or t_3 . Many of our concepts do indeed satisfy such a requirement, but not all do, given the limitations on our memory.³⁹

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ANU Philosophy Society in Canberra: I thank the audience for their questions.