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Multi-Factor Causal Disjunctivism: a Nyāya-Informed Account of Perceptual Disjunctivism

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Abstract

Perceptual disjunctivism is a controversial thesis about perception. One familiar characterization of the thesis maintains that there is no common epistemic kind that is present in both veridical and non-veridical cases of perception. For example, the good case, in which one sees a yellow lemon, and the bad case, in which one hallucinates a yellow lemon, share a specific first-person phenomenology, being indistinguishable from the first-person point of view; however, seeing a yellow lemon and hallucinating a yellow lemon do not, according to the disjunctivist, share a common epistemic kind. There are two types of disjunctivism: epistemological vs. metaphysical. John McDowell (1996, 2008, *Philosophical Explorations*, 13(3), 243–255, 2011, *Philosophical Explorations*, 16(3), 259–279, 2013) has articulated, refined, and defended one kind of disjunctivism. Tyler Burge (*Philosophical Topics*, 33(1), 1–78, 2005, *Philosophical Explorations*, 13(3), 43–80, 2011) has objected to many forms of disjunctivism, arguing that they are all inconsistent with the proximity principle (PP) in the vision sciences. PP requires an ability-general kind in common between relevantly similar perceptual states, such as seeing a yellow lemon and hallucinating a yellow lemon, which disjunctivism denies. Against the background of this debate some analytic epistemologists, such as Michael Martin (*Philosophical Studies*, 120, 37–89, 2004), Alan Millar (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 73(1), 176–198, 2007), Berit Brogaard (*Philosophical Issues 21-The Epistemology of Perception*, 21(1), 46–73, 2011), Duncan Pritchard (2012), and Heather Logue (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 86(1), 105–133, 2013) remain attracted to some version of disjunctivism. Brogaard and Pritchard each have gone on to articulate and defend a version. Pritchard's (2012), for example, defends epistemological disjunctivism. Martin, Millar, and Logue, by contrast, have defended the idea that the disjunctivist is right about something, but perhaps not wholly correct about the nature of perception. In what follows, I articulate and defend the view that an

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interesting kind of disjunctivism is to be found through a reading of the Nyāya School of classical Indian philosophy. I articulate a version of perceptual disjunctivism informed by Nyāya perceptual theory that is not derivable from any single Nyāya philosopher. The view I offer is inspired by work on disjunctivism both in Anglo-analytic philosophy and in Nyāya scholarship, such as by Dasti and Phillips (*Philosophy East & West*, 60(4), 535–540, 2010), Ganeri (*Philosophy East & West*, 60(4), 541–550, 2010), Dasti (*Philosophy East & West*, 62(1), 1–15, 2012), Phillips (2012), Vaidya (*Philosophy East and West*, 63(4), 562–585, 2013), and Schiller (*History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 36(1), 1–18, 2019). Importantly, the causal account I offer is distinct from Grice's (*Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 121, 121–152, 1961) *single-factor* causal theory of perception by crucially involving a *multi-factor* causal theory of perception. My work on Nyāya perceptual theory derives primarily from Jaysankar Shaw's (2016a, b, c) account of Nyāya on the sources of knowledge, which is distinct from Stephen Phillips' well-known (2012) account of Nyāya epistemology. Shaw's theory has been developed and refined through textual analysis and dialectical engagement with the twentieth century Nyāya Pundit Philosopher, Viśvabandhu Tarkatīrtha. Like other modern Nyāya scholars, such as B. K. Matilal (1992), A. Chakrabarti (*Philosophy East and West*, 50(1), 1–8, 2010), M. Chadha (2015), J. Ganeri (2011), and S. Phillips (*Philosophy East and West*, 51(1), 104–113, 2001, 2012), J. Shaw's account shows how Nyāya epistemology is a living and continuing form of Indian philosophy. My goal here is twofold. On the one hand, I articulate multi-factor causal disjunctivism and show how it can be applied to the McDowell-Burge debate over the viability of disjunctivism and naïve realism. On the other hand, I aim to start a cross-cultural epistemological conversation with those that have contributed to the Anglo-analytic debate in anthologies, such as Haddock and Macpherson (2008), Byrne and Logue (2009), and introductions, such as Soteriou (2016). The hope is that a cross-cultural epistemological investigation into disjunctivism will lead to better epistemic theorizing about the nature of perception.

Keywords Epistemology · Perception · Disjunctivism · Nyāya · Stephen Phillips · Jay Shaw · Arindam Chakrabarti · John McDowell · Tyler Burge · John Campbell

Introduction

Reflection on perceptual knowledge in the human condition often leads one to the *capacity intuition*: visual perception, for example, is a capacity for knowledge in virtue of being a way of knowing about the world. On many occasions, we see objects and properties in our environment, and in virtue of seeing them, we can and do come to know something, and thereby, act upon the world. For example, by seeing a person in the distance, one can, in the right conditions, come to know that there is a person in the distance, and decide to walk towards them. However, reflection on the phenomenology of perception, especially cases where one is the subject of a hallucination or an illusion, invites one to ask the *capacity question*: how could perception be a capacity for knowledge, given the deceptive nature of the phenomenology of perception?—Sometimes we only seem to see a person in the distance.

Over the past 25 years, in a series of books and papers, John McDowell has articulated, argued, refined, and defended the thesis of disjunctivism about the proper taxonomy of perceptual experience.¹ Disjunctivism, DIS, about the proper taxonomy of perceptual experience maintains the following. Although veridical and non-veridical perceptual states of, for example a yellow lemon, are, from the first-person standpoint, phenomenologically indistinguishable, the two states do not fall under a common epistemic natural kind. That is, except for shared phenomenology, there is no common epistemic kind instantiated across both veridical and non-veridical states, since, for example, veridical states are true, while non-veridical states are false.

DIS, and its consequences, are controversial in contemporary philosophy. Tyler Burge (2005, 2011) has presented a series of objections that derive from the vision sciences. His basic argument against DIS is that it is inconsistent with the proximity principle, PP, that is prominent in the vision sciences. Crispin Wright (2008) has argued that even if DIS were true, it would not provide a response to epistemic skepticism. Nevertheless, Martin (2004), Millar (2007), Brogaard (2011), Pritchard (2012), and Logue (2013) remain attracted to some version of disjunctivism. Brogaard and Pritchard each have gone on to articulate and defend some version of disjunctivism, while Martin, Millar, and Logue have defended the idea that the disjunctivist is right about something, but perhaps not everything. In this work, I want to expand out the branch that critically builds off of McDowell's version of disjunctivism. In particular, I want to bring the debate over disjunctivism in Anglo-analytic epistemology into contact with work in Indo-analytic epistemology so as to generate a cross cultural and cross traditional discussion of disjunctivism.

In *McDowell's Disjunctive Conception of Experience*, I present an account of John McDowell's articulation of disjunctivism, DIS. In *Burge's Critique of Disjunctivism*, I present Tyler Burge's perceptual anti-individualism, PAI, and his critique of disjunctivism. In *A Pathway to Nyāya Perceptual Theory*, I present a path to discussions of disjunctivism in Nyāya. From *Shaw on Qualificative vs. Non-Qualificative Content to Shaw on the Nyāya on Error Through Defects and Inappropriate Causal Conditions*, I present Shaw's (2016a, b, c) account of Nyāya perceptual theory; I show that it offers ingredients for multi-factor causal disjunctivism. In *The Burge-McDowell Debate and Multi-Factor Causal Disjunctivism*, I conclude with a critical discussion of how multi-factor causal disjunctivism is unique yet consistent with PAI.

McDowell's Disjunctive Conception of Experience

McDowell's defense of DIS departs from his analysis of the highest common factor account of experience.

The highest common factor account of experience, HCF, maintains that veridical and non-veridical cases share a common kind of mental state that is important for epistemic purposes. HCF is motivated by the argument from illusion. McDowell's argument² for HCF is as follows:

¹ See his (1996), (2008), (2009), (2011), and (2013).

² See McDowell 2009: 80

1. If deceptive cases of *A* are experientially indistinguishable from real cases of *A*, then *S*'s experiential intake in both deceptive and real cases is the same.
2. Deceptive cases of *A* are experientially indistinguishable from real cases of *A*.
3. So, the experiential intake in both deceptive and real cases of *A* is the same.
4. If the experiential intake in deceptive and real cases of *A* is the same, then the warrant available in both cases is the same, the states are the same, and since the deceptive case falls short of the fact, the real case falls short of the fact as well.
5. Therefore, at best, we have a defeasible ground for knowledge by way of perception.

Under McDowell's rendering, the central idea in HCF is that experience falls short of the world, and, thus, we come to the view that the ultimate basis for our beliefs about the external world is to be found in mere appearances that cannot acquire more warrant than what is in common between veridical and non-veridical cases. The alternative view he endorses is DIS. It has four main components.

Perception is a capacity for knowledge. 'A perceptual capacity [...] is a capacity – of course fallible – [that enables us] to get into positions in which one has indefeasible warrant for certain beliefs' (McDowell 2011: 245).

Perceptual appearances are metaphysically distinct. '[P]erceptual appearances are either objective states of affairs making themselves manifest to subjects, or situations in which it is as if an objective state of affairs is making itself manifest to a subject, although that is not how things are.' (McDowell 2008: 381).

Perceptual appearances have asymmetric warrant. 'Experiences of the first kind [objective states of affairs making themselves manifest to subjects] have an epistemic significance that experiences of the second kind do not have. They afford opportunities for knowledge of objective states of affairs' (McDowell 2008: 381).

Perceptual experience is non-factorizable. '[DIS does not hold that] having an aspect of objective reality perceptually present to one can be factored into some non-mental conditions and an appearance conceived as being the mental state it is independently of the non-mental conditions' (McDowell 2011: 251).

McDowell (2008) argues that one motivation for DIS, as well as a consequence of it, is that it provides resources for a transcendental argument against skepticism. If HCF is true, then it is always possible for the skeptic to claim that the particular cause of one's perception of the world is different from how it appears. If the content of my experience is always a mere appearance, then the skeptic can always ask: how do you know that your appearance is caused by what it reveals through its content? However, if DIS is true, then it is possible for one to claim that the skeptic's move cannot always hold, since at least on some occasions, it must be the case that the content of one's visual experience is not simply or merely an appearance. Wright (2008) rejects McDowell's argument claiming that it does not answer the skeptic.

Burge's Critique of Disjunctivism

Burge (2005, 2011) presents a powerful criticism of DIS. His critique rests on a general examination of perceptual psychology, and vision science in particular. On his meta-theoretical account of the philosophy of perception: any theory of perceptual content must pay respect to perceptual psychology and the vision sciences.

Burge has argued that perceptual anti-individualism, PAI, is consistent with contemporary perceptual psychology, and that indeed the vision sciences presuppose the truth of it. ‘Perceptual anti-individualism is the thesis that a constitutively necessary condition on perceptual representation by an individual is that any such representation be associated with a background of some veridical perceptual representations’ (Burge 2005: 1).

However, Burge argues that both disjunctivism and naïve realism about perception are untenable theses. The core claims of these views cannot be made consistent with contemporary perceptual psychology, ‘Given that different distal causes can yield proximal stimulation that is relevantly the same, perception of entities in the distal environment is fallible’ (Burge 2005: 27). Burge’s point powerfully counters the way in which McDowell conceives of having a response to the skeptic. While Wright argues that skepticism is not avoided even if DIS is true, Burge simply argues that DIS is false. If Burge is correct, one cannot argue from disjunctivism to the falsity of skepticism because DIS is false. There are no transcendental reasons for rejecting skepticism, if disjunctivism is false.

Burge’s critique of DIS takes the form of an argument for the conclusion that DIS is false, since PP is true:

1. DIS denies that there is any important explanatory epistemic kind in common between veridical and non-veridical states.
2. The constitution of the perceptual system requires the truth of the proximality principle.
3. The proximality principle requires that perception involve an ability-general kind in common between veridical and non-veridical states. The ability-general kind is inconsistent with the claim that there is no important explanatory epistemic kind in common between veridical and non-veridical states.
4. Therefore, DIS is false.

The proximality principle, PP, maintains that holding constant the antecedent psychological set of the perceiver, a given type of proximal stimulation (over the whole body), together with the associated internal afferent and efferent input into the perceptual system, will produce a given type of perceptual state, assuming that there is no *malfunctioning* in the system and no *interference* with the system.

A set of cases where PP and DIS disagree is given by the following series.

Suppose that one sees an object. Then as one blinks, the object is removed and replaced by a duplicate that one cannot discern from the original in the context. As one blinks again, the duplicate is removed. One is induced by an abnormal confluence of light to have a visual illusion as of an object that is indiscriminable from the originally seen object. The light array hitting the retina is, we shall suppose, type-identical in the three cases – or at least sufficiently similar that the perceptual system cannot make use of the difference. (Burge 2005: 26)

While DIS holds that these three cases are epistemically distinct because the relevant differences between the cases cannot be registered at the type level, PP requires that one possess a general ability to use the information in common between the three cases. The

three cases are token-distinct, but type-identical on PP. On Burge's account, the ability is explanatory for how we come to have a perceptual system at all. Were we not to have a general ability to use the information in common between the three token states, we could not have evolved to have a perceptual system that is reliable. Of course, the possibility of the system evolving also requires that there are veridical states. That is why PP requires the truth of perceptual anti-individualism, PAI. PAI requires that perceptual psychology assume a background of veridical states. DIS, in contrast to PP, denies that there is any explanatorily relevant epistemic kind in common between the three token states. The token states are distinct with respect to truth as well as truth-makers, and thus the veridical states are fundamentally different from each other and from the non-veridical state at the type level for the purposes of epistemology. The phenomenological similarity between the three states does not matter for epistemic purposes. What matters is truth based on a given truth-maker. Illusions, hallucinations, and veridical states differ with respect to their truth-maker.

A Pathway to Nyāya Perceptual Theory

There are many great Anglo-analytic contributions to the debate on disjunctivism. Pritchard's (2012) defense of epistemic disjunctivism over McDowell's metaphysical disjunctivism is a good example. And there are also great engagements between McDowell's perceptual theory and phenomenological theories. For example, van Mazijk (2020) offers an engagement with McDowell and both Kant and Husserl. Nevertheless, a more comprehensive cross-cultural investigation of disjunctivism is both warranted and satisfying for at least three reasons.

First, a thesis in philosophy should gain more attention, if it is held across traditions. And by saying it should gain more attention, I only mean that we should attend to the thesis, since it is not an artifact of a single tradition. At least one reason that a thesis is worthy of philosophical attention is that it has occurred across many traditions. It has the property of being robust.

Second, a cross-traditional investigation helps us see how a thesis might not be hostage to a single set of arguments or a paradigm of investigation. For were we to find a thesis similar to disjunctivism in another tradition, we could then investigate the merits of different kinds of disjunctivism relative to what they are each trying to establish. In this respect, Schiller (2019) has done an excellent job locating what kind of argument Nyāya provides for disjunctivism in relation to other arguments for the view.

Third, a cross-cultural investigation helps us see how the thesis might have been developed in a different way and with different motivations. Of significant interest here will be the claim that disjunctivism in Indo-analytic epistemology is neither developed as a response to epistemological skepticism nor motivated by it. It is not a reactionary move against the force of skeptical arguments. Rather, it is a default position that is articulated alongside other views about the nature of knowledge and perception.

Let me begin my discussion of Nyāya perceptual theory with some remarks that help locate the Nyāya tradition of philosophy, as well as a presentation of the claim that it embraces disjunctivism, and how different kinds of disjunctivism can be motivated.

Nyāya is one of the six orthodox schools of Indian philosophy, along with other schools, such as Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta, and contrasted against heterodox schools, such as Buddhism, Jainism, and Cārvāka. The Nyāya tradition is long. It

breaks into one main division. *Prācīna Nyāya*, the old school, begins with Gautama Akṣapāda (2nd CE), who is the founding father of the school, and it continues through the work of Vātsyāyana (5th CE), Udyotakara (7th CE), Vācaspati Misra (9th CE), Jayanta Bhaṭṭa (9th CE), and Udayana (11th CE). *Navya-Nyāya*, the new school, begins with Gaṅgeśa (13th CE) and continues through figures such as Raghunāth Śiromaṇi (15th CE) and Gadādhara (17th CE).

The opening remarks on perception in the Nyāya tradition occur at *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.4, where Gautama offers a definition. Perception (*pratyakṣa*) is:

- (i) A cognition/awareness (*jñānam*)
- (ii) Generated by the connection between a sense organ and object (*indriya artha sannikarṣa utpannam*);
- (iii) Which is not impregnated by words (*avyapadeśyam*);
- (iv) Is unerring (*avyabhicārī*);
- (v) Is well-ascertained (*vyavasāyātmakam*).

One concern of the Nyāya tradition is over the sources of knowledge (*pramāṇas*). Since perception is an important source of knowledge, there is a long commentarial tradition on the definition of perception in both old and new Nyāya. In addition, there are considerable debates with other schools, such as Advaita Vedānta, Mīmāṃsā, and a variety of schools of Buddhism, over the nature of perception as a source of knowledge. The commentary within the Nyāya tradition moves from the *Prācīna* Nyāya commentators, such as Vātsyāyana, continuing through *Navya* Nyāya with Gaṅgeśa. But it is important to note that twentieth century scholars, such as B. K. Matilal, A. Chakrabarti, M. Chadha, A. Chatterjee, J. Ganeri, S. Phillips, P. Bilimoria, and J. L. Shaw keep the tradition alive by reinterpreting and refining core components of the tradition to address new philosophical problems and positions. There is even a movement underway that aims to develop *Navya-Navya-Nyāya*, the new-new school of Nyāya.

Dasti (2012) and Schiller (2019) have both argued that Nyāya perceptual theory embraces disjunctivism. Vaidya (2013) argues that Dasti's evidence falls short of showing that Nyāya would embrace McDowell's variety of disjunctivism. Vaidya (2015) argues that Nyāya would embrace some kind of causal theory of disjunctivism, which this essay aims to fill out. Schiller (2019) provides the Nyāya argument for disjunctivism. Phillips (2012) gives initial voice to the view that Nyāya perceptual theory is disjunctivist.

A non-veridical perception is not really a perception at all but a “pseudo-perception,” *pratyakṣa-ābhāsa*, “apparent perception,” a perception imitator or perception solely from a first-person point of view. You don't really see an illusory snake; you only think you see one. An apparent perception P may be indistinguishable from the subject's own perspective from a bit of genuine perceptual knowledge P, both forming *a-as-F* type dispositions. But Nyāya insists they are different, taking a *disjunctivist position*. (Phillips 2012: 10, *emphasis added*)

However, pointing out that Nyāya embraces disjunctivism by treating veridical and non-veridical cases of *a-as-F* differently does not get us to what kind of disjunctivism they embrace or why they embrace it. Both Dasti and Schiller do more work trying to drive out what exact kind of disjunctivism is at play in specific Nyāya thinkers.

Minimally, we can distinguish between phenomenological, epistemological, and metaphysical kinds of disjunctivism. Phenomenal disjunctivism maintains that at some level there is a phenomenal difference between a veridical perception of F and a perfect illusion of F , even if they first seem indistinguishable. Epistemic disjunctivism maintains that there is an epistemic difference between a veridical perception of F and a perfect illusion of F . Metaphysical disjunctivism maintains that there is a difference between the kind of state that a veridical perception of F is and a perfect illusion of F . Phenomenological disjunctivism is the hardest to defend because, if there is a perfect illusion of F , then there must be, by definition, no phenomenal difference between it, and a veridical perception of F . Pritchard (2012) distinguishes between epistemological and metaphysical kinds with respect to McDowell and other analytic disjunctivists, and Schiller (2019) brings out details from Nyāya when discussing a variety of disjunctivist positions and how the Nyāya establish their disjunctivism.

In *Shaw on Qualificative vs. Non-Qualificative Content to Shaw on the Nyāya on Error Through Defects and Inappropriate Causal Conditions*, I will articulate an account of disjunctivism that comes from my own reading of Nyāya perceptual theory through the lens of Jay Shaw's work on Nyāya on the sources of knowledge. On my account, whether or not any specific Nyāya thinker held the view, consideration of Nyāya perceptual theory leads to the view that veridical perceptions can be distinguished from non-veridical illusions and hallucinations through a causal theory of error where the possibility of error requires veridical experience in the first place—you do not mistake a snake for a rope unless you have first seen a rope and a snake. In addition, consideration of Nyāya perceptual theory also allows for a distinction between perception and non-perception, where the category of non-perception is not exhausted by illusions or hallucinations. On the Nyāya causal theory of error, see Vaidya (2013, 2015), illusion and hallucination are distinct from perception because of a process-wise-causal differentiation that occurs between the indeterminate (*nirvikalpa*, non-qualificative) first stage of perception and the determinate (*savikalpa*, qualificative) second stage of perception, where a subject has a person level conscious perceptual experience. In addition, there can be non-perceptions that occur because some of the conditions on perception have not been satisfied.³

Nyāya perceptual theory is a kind of multi-factor causal disjunctivism, MFCD, because it is distinct from veritic metaphysical disjunctivism—a form of disjunctivism that takes truth and truth-makers to be the only essential factors in individuating epistemic kinds. For example, the veritic-metaphysical-disjunctivist would hold that if you see a yellow lemon, then, were I to swap the yellow lemon out with another that you cannot distinguish from it, you would be in a different epistemic state. A common kind theorist, such as an HCF theorist, would hold that if there is no phenomenal difference that one can discern, then, one is in the same epistemic state.

From a logical point of view, however, factivity alone is not necessary for presenting a disjunctive account of a phenomenon, such as perception. Within metaphysical disjunctivism, we can distinguish two types. The veritic version focuses solely on truth and truth-makers. Another causal-veritic version focuses on truth, truth-makers, and causal relations between the cognizer, and the truth-makers. Although McDowell goes in for disjunctivism because of the tie to factivity, even though he is aware of the importance of causation, it is not necessary that one adopt disjunctivism for the purposes

³ Vaidya (2013)

of truth alone, for factivity does not exhaust the varieties of disjunctivism that have epistemic consequences. In general, disjunctivism rests on an intuitive higher-order principle concerning individuation, PI: Although x and y are similar on dimension F , their similarity along dimension F is not explanatorily relevant for maintaining that x and y are not similar under a deeper dimension G that is important for individuation. Now through an argument by analogy, we can separate disjunctivism from factivity alone.

Argument for Separation of Disjunctivism from Factivity Alone

1. Jadeite and Nephrite are macroscopically indistinguishable through vision.
2. Veridical and non-veridical perceptions of a yellow lemon are first-person-phenomenologically indistinguishable.
3. The fact that Jadeite and Nephrite are macroscopically indistinguishable does not make it the case that they are of equal economic value, since (i) Jadeite and Nephrite are microscopically distinguishable, and (ii) what matters for individuating gems for economic value is their microstructure and relative rarity.
4. The case of Jadeite and Nephrite is similar enough to the case of veridical vs. non-veridical perceptions of a yellow lemon.
5. Therefore, the fact that a veridical and non-veridical perception of a yellow lemon are first-person-phenomenologically indistinguishable does not make it the case that they are of equal value, since (i) veridical perception of a yellow lemon and non-veridical perception of a yellow lemon are distinguishable via X , and (ii) what matters for individuating perceptual kinds for epistemic value is X .

What is X ? McDowell takes it to be factivity because of the value of truth for epistemology. Within Anglo-analytic epistemology, it is often said that the norm of belief is truth, and that only what is true can be known. While truth is central to Anglo-analytic epistemology, it is possible to allow X to be any number of factors alone or in concert. Nyāya perceptual theory advances a multi-factor causal disjunctivism that takes X to involve both truth-makers and causal relations between the cognizer and the objects that lead the subject to a conscious perception of them. Nyāya epistemology is not alone in thinking that causation and truth are valuable, but there is a novel and unique story one can tell on the basis of their views.

Shaw on Qualificative vs. Non-Qualificative Content

My inspiration for articulating a Nyāya based multi-factor causal disjunctivism comes from Shaw's (1996, 2016a, b, c) in which he articulates an account of Nyāya perceptual theory through his many conversations with the Nyāya pundit, Viśvabandhu Tarkatīrtha.

Within Nyāya epistemology, there is a distinction between qualificative (*savikalpa*) perception and non-qualificative (*nirvikalpa*) perception; by examining the Sanskrit terms, one can see that *vikalpa* is common to both. In Sanskrit, *vikalpa* means that which makes something qualified, alternate, unresolved, or undecided (Williams-Monier 1992: 955). *Savikalpa* means that the content of the cognition has the qualifier-qualificand form. It is commonly called qualificative cognition or *relational cognition*. It has the latter title because there is a relation between the qualifier of the cognition and the qualificand. So, it has the

form *aRb*. *Nirvikalpa* means the content of the cognition does not have the qualifier-qualificand relation. It is commonly called non-qualificative. Since there are two distinct kinds of perception, it is important to note the relation between them in both veridical and non-veridical cases.

In general, non-qualificative perception is a necessary condition and constructive condition for qualificative perception. All conscious perception is qualificative. Thus, 'perception' as applied to human cognition is always qualificative—we are never aware of non-qualificative perception, even though, it is a necessary condition for qualificative perception.⁴ Non-qualificative perception is the elemental perception that feeds qualificative relational perception.

When we come to explain the distinction between qualificative and non-qualificative perception, it is important to distinguish between two kinds of cases: (i) atomic cases, and (ii) complex cases. An atomic case, for example, is a case where one cognizes a particular table and tableness. It is important to note that in a complex case all atomic elements are cognized only at the non-qualificative level. So, for example, seeing a red table requires seeing a table and a particular red color. Both seeing a table and a particular red color are atomic, and thus, their components are cognized at the non-qualificative level.

Non-qualificative perception is a kind of *elemental cognition*, whose chief aim is to capture the elements that are cognized relationally at the qualificative level. With respect to the scholarly literature on non-qualificative perception, Shaw points out the following:

- (i) It is a mistake to think that we cognize the relation in addition to the relata, performing its function as a relation.
- (ii) It is a mistake to think that truth or falsehood applies to non-qualificative perception.
- (iii) It is a mistake to think that non-qualificative perception does not play a causal role with respect to qualificative perception.
- (iv) It is a mistake to think that we can have a qualificative cognition without first cognizing the qualifier.

That is, in non-qualificative perception one must be related to each of the elements that are present in the qualificative cognition. For example, in seeing a table, one's perception must be related to the particular table and tableness. Importantly, the perception of the table and tableness does not go via modes of presentation as such. Rather, one is directly acquainted with the particular table and tableness. Furthermore, non-qualificative perception does not have truth-evaluable content, since it does not have the correct structure for truth-evaluation. It is also a cause of qualificative perception because it is immediately prior to, as well as, related to, the locus of the effect—the conscious perception that is qualificative.

Qualificative perception, by contrast, is a kind of *relational cognition*. It involves the cognition of the table as a unified entity through some mode of presentation, the content is truth-evaluable, and from a perceptual processing perspective the cognition of the qualifier is a causal condition for the cognition of the qualified object. One cannot have

⁴ It is important to note that there is a very large debate between A. Chakrabarti and S. Phillips over whether the Nyāya theory of perception ought to jettison the commitment it makes to both stages of perception. Chakrabarti (2000) argues that it should jettison the commitment. Phillips (2001) argues that it should not. Shaw (2016a) is in agreement with Phillips that Nyāya perceptual theory requires both qualificative and non-qualificative perception.

a qualificative cognition unless the qualifier played a causal role in the generation of the qualificative cognition.

The key differences between non-qualificative and qualificative perception with respect to our example of seeing a red table are the following:

Atomic case: perception of a table	Non-qualificative:	Qualificative:
What kind of cognition is present?	Elemental cognition	Relational cognition
What are the elements of the cognition?	(i) The particular table as such without any character. (ii) The universal tableness as such without any character.	(i) The particular table as such without any character. (ii) The universal tableness as such without any character. (iii) The relation of the universal tableness to the particular table –but not as an abstract relation.
How are the elements cognized?	(i) No mode of presentation for any element. (ii) No cognition of the relation between the elements.	(i) The particular table is cognized under the universal tableness. (ii) The cognition has the structure of qualifier-qualificand, and the relation between them.

Shaw on the Nyāya Causal Theory of Perception

The basic structure of Nyāya perceptual theory, from Gautama to Gaṅgeśa, is that of a causal theory of perception. However, it is crucial to note that the notion of a ‘causal theory’ of perception is much broader than what is used in Western philosophy. For example, Grice’s (1961) account holds that x ’s being a cause of A ’s perception of x is a necessary condition on veridical perception of x by A . While Nyāya perceptual theory accepts Grice’s condition by requiring organ to object contact, their conception of a ‘causal theory’ of perception pertains to the thesis that every perception involves the satisfaction of both positive and negative causal conditions. Not only must we account for causation by presence factors, but also causation due to absence factors. The causal conditions are given as a means for explaining perception in the cases of (a) perceptual cognition, (b) veridical perceptual cognition, (c) non-veridical perceptual cognition, and (d) perceptual cognition involving the ability to discriminate as a kind of justification. In addition, from the distinctions they draw one can also carve out an account of non-perception from perception. In general, in a single-factor causal analysis, we pay attention to one important factor concerning the role of causation in perception. By contrast, in a multi-factor causal analysis we pay attention to additional factors that play a role in a person having a perception. The Nyāya view belongs in the multi-factor category. Here are the central causal conditions on multi-factor causal disjunctivism, MFCD.

Positive conditions:

- (i) The presence of a self
- (ii) The presence of a properly functioning internal sense organ
- (iii) The presence of properly functioning external sense organs
- (iv) Contact between the external sense organ and the object

- (v) Contact between the external sense organ and the internal sense organ
- (vi) Contact between the internal sense organ and the self

Negative conditions:

- (vii) Not being too far
- (viii) Not being too close
- (ix) Not being overshadowed or covered by a more powerful object
- (x) Not being mixed up with similar objects

In order to make sense of the account being offered, it will be useful to work through an example of a veridical cognition and how a non-veridical cognition would differ.

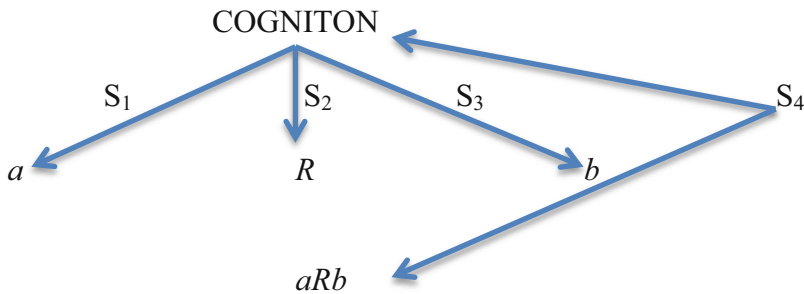
[L]et us consider the example, the table has a book. In this case our visual sense organ is the special instrumental cause, and the contact between the visual sense organ and the table is the operation. As our sense organ is related to the table by the relation of contact, it is also related to the book which is on the table by a complex relation. Since the cognition that the table has a book is due to the sense organ, it is considered as perceptual. The cognition is related to the table, the book and the conjunction relation. It is to be noted that the cognition will be related to these items even if it is false. Hence in terms of the relation between these items and the cognition alone we cannot draw the distinction between a true and a false cognition. When a perceptual cognition is true, our sense organ is related to the qualified object. Hence, in our example above, our visual sense organ is related not only to the table but also to the table qualified by a book on it. (Shaw 2016a: 107, *emphasis* added)

In Shaw's discussion we are invited to understand the contrast between veridical and non-veridical perception in terms of a number of dimensions of analysis: the elements involved in the perception, the origin of the contact relation from the agent to the elements of the perception, what is present at the non-qualificative level, and what is present at the qualificative level.

Dimensions	Veridical	Non-veridical
Elements	a, b, R	a, b, R
Non-qualificative content	a, b	a, b
Qualificative content	There is a fact [a qualified by b in the relation R] and one is related through a cognition to a fact. Thereby, the cognition is qualified by a relational property that is caused by its relation to the fact.	There is no fact [a qualified by b in the relation R] that one is related to. However, it does not follow that the absence of a fact means that one is related to an image in the mind or that there are no worldly objects one is related to.

Another way to grasp the general contrast between veridical and non-veridical perception is by way of the question: what else is one related to in

a veridical case, which is absent in the non-veridical case? Consider the following diagram.



The question is answered by S_4 at the qualificative level of perceptual cognition. In both a veridical and non-veridical perception, one is related to the elements marked by S_1 , S_2 , and S_3 . However, in the veridical case, one also instantiates the relation marked by S_4 .

Shaw on the Nyāya on Error Through Defects and Inappropriate Causal Conditions

In classical Indian philosophy, there exists a set of commonly discussed cases of perceptual error. These cases can look superficially similar to cases discussed in Western philosophy: however, it is by inspecting the purpose to which these cases are deployed, by different thinkers, that one can learn about their nuances and how they shed light on epistemic matters.

First, there are cases where there is nothing wrong with your environment, but there is something wrong with your biological organ for vision.

Jaundice of the Eyes: A person suffering from jaundice of the eyes looks upon an object, and sees it as yellow. The object is in fact not yellow.

Second, there are cases where there is nothing wrong with you or your environment, but you are out of range from an object that can look two different ways: as a snake or as a rope. And you have an emotional relation to one of the ways things can look, the snake appearance.

The Snake-Rope: A person is walking from a distance toward a coiled structure in low lighting. They come to have the perceptual cognition: there is a snake before me. However, upon moving closer to the coiled structure, it is discovered that the coiled structure is a rope.

Third, there are cases where there is nothing wrong with you or your environment, but you are out of range from an object that can look two different ways: as a post or as a person. However, you have no emotional relation to either way things can appear. And your conscious perception arrives in an interrogative form: is it an F or a G ?

The Post as a Person: A person walking from a distance towards an object comes to have the dubious perceptually based cognition: is there a person or a post before me? That is, their distance puts them in the perceptual state of natural doubt as to what is the object before them.

Fourth, there are cases where there is nothing wrong with you or your environment; you have no desire or emotional attachments towards the items in your visual field, but because things objectively look similar, you see something presented otherwise than it actually is.

The Silver in the Mother of Pearl: There is a mother of pearl in the distance. But because of the shiny nature of the mother of pearl, one has the perceptual cognition: there is a piece of silver before me.

In offering a causal theory of perception, the Nyāya also offer a causal account of error. Recall, that a veridical perceptual cognition arises due to the satisfaction of both positive causal conditions, the proper functioning of the visual system, and negative causal conditions. Thus, a non-veridical perceptual cognition arises because of a failure in one of the branches, either positive or negative. If the failure is due to something on the negative causal branch, then the failure is due to a defect (*doṣa*), and if the failure occurs on the positive causal branch, then the failure is due to an inappropriate causal condition (*kāraṇavaiguṇya*). The causal account of error is to be understood as offering a template for how to understand error in visual perception due to certain kinds of common causal failures.

Concerning the negative branch, there are four negative causal conditions that must be satisfied for a veridical perception to occur. Any time one (or more) of those conditions fails to be satisfied the resulting cognition is non-veridical because of a defect.

According to the Nyāya, not-being too far away and not-being too close are negative causal conditions for perception. Both of these make sense, even though many theories of perception would not include them as causes of veridical perception. In addition, it is worth noting that Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of an optimal grip in perception—having a thing in view, such as the optimal distance for viewing a work of art—can be derived from the two negative conditions.

A non-standard and interesting negative condition is the not-being too similar condition, such as when it is claimed that one cannot see the raindrops on a river because the raindrops are too similar to the river water.

All of the negative conditions allow for a distinction between different types of non-veridical perceptual states. Typically, some non-veridical states are non-veridical in virtue of being illusions where something is presented otherwise, such as a rope being presented as a snake. On the other hand, some non-veridical states are non-veridical in virtue of being hallucinations—cases where there is literally no object presented otherwise, but rather a pure perceptual projection on to, for example, a wall. However, one can also distinguish another kind of perceptual state on the basis of the negative conditions. One can say that non-perceptions are also possible when one does perceive something, but what they see is non-veridical without being an illusion or a hallucination. First, consider the case of the post seen as a person.

There are two ways in which this case can go. On the one hand, there could be no interrogative cognition simultaneous with the perception of something. On the other hand, there could be an interrogative cognition simultaneous with the perception of something. In the first case, we might suppose that what one sees is a person in the distance and as a consequence there is an illusion because something is presented otherwise, the post, and then one wonders what is before them. But, in the second case, we can say something different. One can argue that since one has an interrogative cognition—is it a person or a post?—the perceiver is having a non-perception because the condition of not being too far away is not satisfied. If complete satisfaction of positive and negative causal factors is necessary and sufficient for veridical perception, then when a negative causal condition fails to be satisfied, we can say that one either has an illusion, since something is presented otherwise, or one is having a non-perception—given that they are questioning what they are perceiving, there is no determinate perception, so there is a non-perception.

Another way to bring out the class of cases called non-perceptions is to think of the negative condition, not-being too similar. Consider the case where one walks into a room with red lighting, and looks upon a red ball against a red wall. Does the subject see the redness of the ball or the wall? Arguably, one could hold that the negative condition of not-being too similar is not satisfied. The light, which is a necessary condition for visual perception, is similar to the target property, redness; as a consequence, one is in a situation where the conditions for perception are too similar to what one is trying to see: the redness of the ball and the wall. One clearly sees a ball and a wall, but because of the lighting being red and the color of the ball and the wall being red, one cannot see the redness of either.

Although Nyāya philosophers (and Shaw) never extended their analysis out so as to distinguish between non-perception, illusion, hallucination, and perception, as I have shown, one can argue on the basis of the distinctions they do draw and the causal theory of error that such a distinction can be usefully drawn.

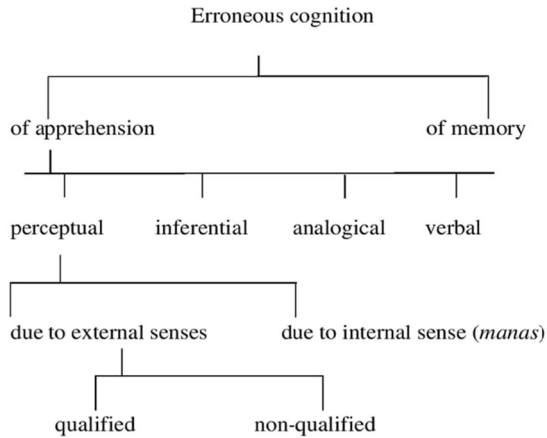
What about the positive side of MFCD. In the case of an inappropriate causal condition, a non-veridical perceptual cognition could arise because of the weakness of a positive causal condition or the absence of a positive causal condition. For example, a weak positive causal condition would be the improper functioning of the visual sense organ, such as in the case of jaundice of the eyes. And an absent positive causal condition would be the loss of the visual sense organ, due to blindness, for example. On Shaw's reading of Nyāya, they distinguish between these cases because weakness and absence are not the same kind of failure—in the sense of what is needed to correct for the condition, as well as the range in which the faculty might still be reliable.

In addition, we should take note of the fact that in Nyāya *attention* is an important phenomenon in perception. Mere contact with the object of perception is insufficient. A subject must have a continuous connection to the object all the way out from the self as perceiver to the objects in the visual field. And the causal links in that chain all have to be secure. One of those causal links will be attention, which serves a role in connecting the sense-organ-to-object-contact with the self as perceiver.

The snake-rope case is an excellent example for illustrating the misplacement theory of illusion as a source for generating an illusion. Matilal (1992) offers an excellent account of the misplacement theory of illusion, which is further deployed and

developed by Vaidya (2013, 2015). Simply put, in the snake-rope case, it is because a person has (i) a fear of snakes, (ii) possesses the concept of a snake and the concept of a rope through prior reliable interaction with snakes and ropes, (iii) snakes and ropes are objectively similar with respect to their shape, and (iv) perceptual processing is susceptible to a foul up or error with respect to assembling and transferring stage-one non-qualificative perception to stage-two qualificative perception that a person can have an appearance of a snake, take it to be real, but later discover, at a closer range, that it is a rope.

Shaw catalogs the general sources of error as follows.



Finally, on Shaw's account, it is important to understand the character of the Nyāya causal theory as one on which veridical perception occurs when there is no violation of positive or negative causal conditions. This is the heart of multi-factor causal disjunctivism. Veridical perception is due to an excellence (*guṇa*). We might say that veridical perception is a kind of *ability excellence* that comes about through the satisfaction of the relevant positive and negative causal conditions that are due to the skill of getting oneself into a position to use their visual capacity as a way of knowing. However, whether or not the ability excellence should be cashed out as a form of virtue epistemology, general fallibilism, or infallibilism is yet to be determined.⁵

The Burge-McDowell Debate and Multi-Factor Causal Disjunctivism

The core of the debate between McDowell and Burge concerns the issue of whether DIS is consistent with the vision sciences, where PP is a constraint on coherent theories of vision. The bottom line for Burge is that DIS is inconsistent with PP, which cannot be rejected because of the central role it plays in the vision sciences. In this final section, I will argue that Nyāya-informed MFCD is (i) distinct from McDowell's DIS;

⁵ See Turri (2017)

(ii) Burge's PP is false; and (iii) MFCD is consistent with Burge's PAI, which is more central to the vision sciences than PP.

First, to show that MFCD is distinct from DIS, we need to show that both fall under a common higher genus so as to establish that they are both instances of disjunctivism. As I noted earlier, disjunctivism, in general, rests on an intuitive principle of individuation, (PI):

Although x and y are similar on dimension F , their similarity along dimension F is not explanatorily relevant for maintaining that x and y are not similar under a deeper dimension G that is important for individuation.

DIS is an instance of this principle, since it holds that although veridical and non-veridical perceptions (as of) F , are similar in terms of perceptual phenomenology (you cannot tell them apart by phenomenology alone); their similarity in perceptual phenomenology is not relevant for maintaining that veridical and non-veridical perceptions have different epistemic warrant.

MFCD is an instance of the principle, since it holds that although veridical and non-veridical perceptions (as of) F , are similar in terms of perceptual phenomenology (you cannot tell them apart by phenomenology alone); their similarity in perceptual phenomenology is not relevant, since veridical and non-veridical perceptions do not have the same causal generation with respect to their truth-makers for the purposes of epistemic warrant.

However, one might object that even though DIS and MFCD instantiate PI in different ways, there are two problems. On *the collapse* objection, it turns out that MFCD collapses into DIS. On the *no additional reasons for* objection, it turns out that the reason why one would go in for MFCD is because of factivity. I will build out the objections as being related to one another in a mutually supporting way called the *collapse + no additional reasons for* objection.

The Collapse Part

1. There are good cases, such as when we perceive a yellow lemon in good light on a table before us, and there are bad cases, such as when we hallucinate the presence of a yellow lemon or are under the illusion that there is a yellow lemon on the table before us. Good case/bad case contrasts are first-person-phenomenologically indistinguishable.
2. DIS individuates perceptual states into two kinds: mere appearances, the bad cases, and relations to facts, the good cases.
3. MFCD individuates perceptual states into two kinds: those that are caused in the right way all the way from the truth-makers to the cognizing self, the so-called good cases; and those that are not caused in the right way, because of some failing on either the positive or negative branch of causal generation, the so-called bad cases.
4. DIS and MFCD would be different were it the case that DIS allowed for the possibility of deviant causal chains between the environment and the subject of perception, since in a case where a subject is related to a fact but the causal chain is deviant, it would follow that the subject is related to the fact, but some part of the relation to the fact is accidental in a way that undermines epistemic warrant.

5. DIS does not allow for deviant causal chains.
6. So, in a good case, there is no difference between DIS and MFCD.

The No Additional Reasons For Part

1. Were the Nyāya to have articulated MFCD as opposed to DIS, there would have been a reason why they preferred an account of perception on which causation is sufficient, and there is no further commitment to truth.
2. Nyāya thinkers are as concerned with truth as any other realist school of philosophy would have been. It would be odd for such a realist school to go in for causation only, without the concern for truth. Given that causation plays a central role in linking perception to facts in the right way, it is plausible that the Nyāya formulate a multi-factor causal account of perception for the purpose of making sure that truth plays the correct role in their perceptual theory.
3. Therefore, there is no reason for the Nyāya to formulate MFCD without also accepting DIS.

These two objections come from different sides. The first objection aims to show that from the perspective of contemporary Anglo-analytic philosophy there is nothing interesting in formulating an account of MFCD, and thus, we can dispense with MFCD and focus on DIS. The second objection aims to show that from the perspective of the history and development of Indo-analytic epistemology it would be odd to suggest that Nyāya philosophers formulated and defended MFCD and not DIS. If there is equal concern in Nyāya, in a realist school, for truth and knowledge, why go in for MFCD only? Why not defend DIS? Neither of these objections can be responded to comprehensively here. Yet, both can be addressed so as to reduce the negative force they exert on MFCD.

I will begin my response to the twin objections with the *no additional reasons for part*. In analyzing the differences, we must take note of the different ways in which DIS and MFCD are instances of disjunctivism. DIS is formulated with respect to truth and truth-makers only. MFCD is formulated with respect to truth-makers, truth, and causation. DIS does not offer a nuanced account of error. MFCD has a nuanced account of error. As a consequence, it is possible to argue that DIS and MFCD cannot be the same theory because MFCD itself is not formulated around truth alone and it has a detailed account of error. In addition, even if in a class of cases, MFCD has truth as a consequence; it might not be the case that the theory of truth at play in Nyāya philosophy is the same as the one that McDowell is assuming for the purpose of formulating DIS. Furthermore, at least one reason for thinking that DIS is formulated around truth is because McDowell, as I discussed in *Burge's Critique of Disjunctivism*, thinks that DIS can provide a response to a certain kind of skepticism.⁶ Thus, if McDowell's motivation for DIS is that it serves as an approach for silencing the skeptic, and not because it simply gets right the facts about perception, one can respond

⁶ For those that have read McDowell across his career, the attempt to respond to the skeptic or dislodge the skeptic is a constant theme stretching across his work. It is found in his (1996) *Mind and World*, and more recently, it is the central contention between McDowell and Wright in his (2008) 'The Disjunctive Conception of Experience as Material for a Transcendental Argument.'

to the *no additional reasons for* objection by filling in details about the nature of truth and the motivations that might be at play in Nyāya perceptual theory. Do Nyāya philosophers go in for the theory of perception that they defend because they want to respond to skepticism via an account of perception and because they hold a similar theory of truth to that assumed by McDowell's view? My doubts are here. My understanding is that Nyāya perceptual theory is (a) formulated primarily through a theory of causation in relation to the truth, (b) the theory of truth that the Nyāya hold is not the same as the one that McDowell would accept, and (c) the motivation for the theory is not primarily about refuting the skeptic through advancing MFCD. Let us look at (b) and (c) below.

Concerning (b), while McDowell has changed his mind about the nature of perceptual content, his (1996) defense of how perception can provide reasons for belief holds that perception has the capacity to do so because it has conceptual content. Now because a concept cannot be true or false, but only a proposition, it must be that those perceptions are true or false in virtue of their propositional content, which is constructed out of concepts. As a consequence, DIS must take truth to be a property of the propositional content of the perception. By contrast, in Nyāya, although qualificative perception has truth-evaluable content, there is no account of propositions, and concepts are not the elements of a perception at either the non-qualificative level or the qualificative level. And thus, propositions and concepts are not the bearers of truth or the ultimate account of what veridicality is. Nyāya perceptual theory does not embrace any form of representationalism about perceptual content. Shaw makes several important notes about the Nyāya conception of truth:

- a. According to the followers of the Nyāya, truth (*pramā*) is a qualifier of a qualificative cognition, which has the form '*aRb*' or '*a is F*'.
- b. According to Gaṅgeśa, truth (*pramā*) cannot be considered as a class-essence (*jāti*).
- c. [For the] Nyāya philosophers [...] truth is a complex divisible, imposed property (*sakhaṇḍa-upādhi*), consisting of three properties, if true memory cognitions or dispositions are excluded. It is neither a class-character (*jāti*), nor is it a simple indivisible imposed property (*akhaṇḍa-upādhi*). [...] Since the Nyāya philosophers can explain the truth of each of the true cognitions in terms of three properties, it cannot be equated with any deflationist or minimalist theory of truth discussed in contemporary philosophy. According to the followers of deflationism, 'truth is not a weighty notion, but a very light or thin one'. It is also claimed that this concept of truth is present in the following dictum of Aristotle 'To say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is true'. From the perspective of the Nyāya philosophers, truth is a weighty property, as it consists of the following three properties when the cognition has the form *x is F*.
 1. *F* is cognized as the relational qualifier
 2. *x* as the possessor of *F* is cognized as the qualificand, and
 3. The latter is the limiter of the former, or there is a mutual determiner-determined relation between them.

The easiest way to make the point that DIS and MFCD do not focus on the same theory of truth is to note that McDowell goes in for a correspondence theory of truth, while Shaw argues that the Nyāya could not accept such a notion. Now given that MFCD is not articulated in terms of truth alone, but does have truth-makers as elements in the causal nexus, we have an open pathway to block the *collapse* + the *no additional reasons for* objections by virtue of truth-differentiation. That is, truth is articulated differently in each account.

But suppose the combined objection is still pushed on the grounds that the way in which truth differs between the two theories is not sufficiently different. For example, both McDowell and the Nyāya more or less maintain a realist view of truth as opposed to an anti-realist position. If such an argument is pushed, we might turn away from the differentiation between the theories with respect to truth, and look at the motivations that drive each theory. As I noted before, within the work of McDowell (2008), there is motivation to use DIS as a way to provide a transcendental argument against skepticism. On McDowell's view, if disjunctivism is true, there is a way in which the skeptic's argument will become irrelevant. However, within the history of Nyāya perceptual theory, as Matthew Dasti (2017) notes, one can find an account of the value of knowledge, in the Nyāya thinker Vātsyāyana, on which the value lies in its relation to action.

A knowledge source (*pramāṇa*) is accurate, since cognition produced by a knowledge source leads to successful action. Without a knowledge source, one does not cognize an object. Without cognition of an object, one's actions are not successful (Commentary, 1; under Nyāya-Sūtra 1.1.1).

The connecting link between the two is the following:

Having grasped an object by means of a knowledge source, an individual either desires to obtain it or to avoid it. This striving of someone possessed of desire or aversion is purposive action. For such action, success is a relationship with its result: someone who acts possessed of desire or aversion toward some object will either achieve or avoid it. The object may be happiness, something instrumental towards it, unhappiness, or something instrumental towards it (Commentary, 1; under Nyāya-sūtra 1.1.1).

The passages above talk of knowledge sources (*pramāṇa*) in general, but since Nyāya epistemology holds that perception (*pratyakṣa*) is a knowledge source (*pramāṇa*), we can transfer the reason for knowledge sources to a specific knowledge source. As a consequence, in the case of perception, the theory is offered because it supposedly would be an account of how successful action depends on accurate cognition. Now, if the relation in play is accurate cognition for successful action, then, we can also immediately note that successful action does not depend on truth in so far as truth is separable from accuracy. Accuracy allows for degrees. A perception can be more or less accurate. But truth does not admit of degrees. A perception is either true or false because every element of the perceptual content gets something right about the external world, which caused it. As a consequence, because DIS is about answering the skeptic, and not obviously

about successful action, we can draw the distinction between the two accounts via consideration of the purpose for which the theory is advanced, as well as the relation between truth and accuracy. If accurate perception is sufficient for MFCD with respect to purposive action, then the epistemic value of truth over and above accuracy might be in the service of something other than purposive action.

Now that we have explored the difference between McDowell's view and Nyāya inspired MFCD perceptual theory, we are in a position to look at the difference between Burge's view and Nyāya perceptual theory. Our leading question is how can we make MFCD consistent with the vision sciences? For were the view inconsistent, contemporary interest in it might be lost.

Burge forwards PP as a constraint on coherent theories of perception. But is PP true? While there are many ways to critique PP, Campbell's (2010) argument against PP offers us a way to see why PP is an incomplete constraint on theories of perception. One of Campbell's techniques for arguing against PP is to argue that it is too strong. PP makes it the case that we cannot draw standard distinctions concerning perception, misperception, illusion, and hallucination. This would appear to be problematic, since those distinctions demarcate important epistemic kinds. If the key principle of vision sciences dumps all of the main epistemic distinctions we would want to draw, then, there is a *prima facie* problem with the principle. Here is a version of Campbell's argument.

Against PP, Because It Is Too Strong

1. There is a distinction between seeing and hallucinating. In a court of law, we care about whether the witness saw John stab the victim as opposed to merely having hallucinated an event that can be described as John stabbing the victim.
2. If PP is true, then there is no distinction between seeing and hallucinating, since all that matters is what happens at the proximal retinal level of description which is consistent with different distal causes, that is with John not stabbing the victim.
3. Therefore, PP is false.

Thus, if we want the distinction between seeing and hallucinating, we ought to reject PP as a fully specified principle concerning perception. Nyāya would also reject PP. Since, as already noted, for Nyāya, there are both positive and negative causal factors that are relevant, and one of them is *attention* with respect to the connection between the self as a perceiver/knower and the sense organ that enables the contact with the elements in a perceptual cognition.

In general, retinal stimulation is not sufficient for conscious perception. Retinal stimulation can be the same across a perfect hallucination of *a* as *F*, as well as two retinal stimulations of *a* as *F* that only differ in their attentional differences with respect to *a* as *F*. For example, seeing a book vs. seeing the color of the book can be the same in terms of retinal stimulation, but differ in terms of attentional focus. Burge's PP focuses on an ability general kind based on retinal stimulation, as opposed to retinal stimulation and attentional focus. We can see the importance of attentional focus vs. retinal stimulation by considering another example. Would it make sense to put forward (a) and (b)?

(a) I know you claim you saw Mary with a knife.

But

(b) Were you paying attention when you saw what you claim to be a knife? Could it have been something else?

(a) followed by (b) makes sense because mere retinal stimulation is not sufficient for capturing what a person sees, even when the retinal stimulation occurs for a sufficiently long period of time, such that a perception registers in consciousness. In general, retinal stimulation is necessary, but not sufficient. Nyāya theorists claim that attention is a causal condition on perception at the qualificative level, since it links the self as perceiver/knower to the sense organ that enables contact with the objects of perception. Take the example of the book again. When we have a qualificative perception of a book on a table, it is in part because we have attention on the book, as opposed to only the color of the book, that we can see the book. When one is over-focused on a portion of something, the color, for example, one can be disabled from seeing the thing in question.

While PP is part of the story about perception, it surely is not the whole story. I accept Campbell's argument. And I grant that it is also a strategy that McDowell can use to defend against Burge. So, both DIS and MFCD can reject PP on the grounds that it does not offer a complete specification. However, that does not put both of the theories on equal footing. The remaining worry is over whether both MFCD and DIS are consistent with perceptual anti-individualism.

Can it be shown that MFCD is consistent with perceptual anti-individualism? Recall that PAI is the thesis that a constitutively necessary condition on perceptual representation by an individual is that any such representation be associated with a background of some veridical perceptual representations. What is the upshot of this claim? It would appear that the central idea is simply that there is a world out there in addition to the individual. After all, it is called *anti-individualism*. Perception requires that there is more than a perceiver. Some form of realism about the external world is the main constraint provided by anti-individualism. But MFCD, which uses both positive and negative causal conditions on the generation of a veridical perception, says nothing that rules out the existence of an external world. Rather, it would appear, as I argued in Vaidya (2013), that some of the arguments offered by Nyāya theorists, such as Vātsyāyana, are best understood as advancing PAI and not DIS. For example, Vātsyāyana says the following:

The mis-cognition of something depends on an original. The cognition of a post – which is not a person – as a person depends upon an original. Indeed, there is no experience as of a person regarding something that is not a person, if a person was never experienced in the past. (Dasti 2012: 6, *emphasis added*)

This passage is consistent with the core of PAI. What PAI is telling us is that a constitutive condition on perception, either veridical or non-veridical, is that there be a background of veridical representation. The passage above informs us of that fact by noting the asymmetric dependence of non-veridical perception on veridical perception. You cannot see the post as a person unless you have acquired correctly the concept of a person and the concept of a post. And you cannot have the snake/rope illusion unless you have elsewhere and elsewhen had veridical engagements with snakes and ropes

reliably enough to possess a concept of them. Again, MFCD would reject PP because (a) Nyāya epistemology is not representationalist in a way governed by PP, and (b) Nyāya epistemology takes attention to be part of the causal nexus on the positive side.

In general, Nyāya perceptual theory is characterized as a form of naïve/direct realism. But, as I have been arguing, they are not naïve/direct realists in the sense offered by DIS. Rather, they are naïve/direct realists in the sense offered by MFCD. In fact—to borrow a line from Matilal—there is nothing naïve about their naïve realism, for Nyāya perceptual theory involves a truly complex account of causal relations and a two-stage theory of perception. The hope here is that others will become interested in engaging and refining it.

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