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Perdurance and Personhood: A Reply to Burge

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PERDURANCE AND PERSONHOOD: A REPLY TO BURGE

by

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ABSTRACT
PERDURANCE AND PERSONHOOD: A REPLY TO BURGE

by

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The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013
Under the supervision of Professor Edward Hinchman

This essay is a response to the attack on reductionist and perdurantist views of persons which Tyler Burge presents in a paper entitled “Memory and Persons”. Burge’s arguments appeal to a specific form of egocentric indexing called *de se* form, which he suggests is involved in the individuation conditions of the mental states entailed in the exercise of the core psychological competencies of personhood (i.e. intentional agency, perception with use, inference). Burge argues that the preservation of states with *de se* form requires the possession of a veridical *de se* memory competency, which in turn requires transtemporal agent identity. Burge suggests that perdurantist views which convey the persistence of individual persons through time in terms of causal continuity between momentary selves cannot be made compatible with this view of the relation between memory and the core competencies, and that reductionist accounts which attempt to explain personal identity in terms of psychological continuity cannot avoid falling into explanatory circularity in any attempt to account for the core psychological competencies. My response comprises three major parts. First, I argue that Burge’s apparently endurantist interpretation of the transtemporal agent identity condition entailed in memory is indefensible, and that a perdurantist interpretation is available which is amenable to reductionist views. Second, I

present an exploratory discussion which attempts to ascertain the extent to which egocentric indexing and its relation to memory are relevant to one of the core psychological competencies, intentional agency. I find that while some form of egocentric indexing is apparently necessary to adequately accounting for the exercise of intentional agency, it is not apparent – contrary to Burge’s claims – that such indexing need be considered to be partly individuated in terms of an endurantist conception of transtemporal agent identity. Finally, I present arguments from Sydney Shoemaker’s response to Burge which I suggest provide a way out of the difficulties occasioned for the reductionists by Burge’s arguments. Following Shoemaker, I conclude that Burge’s attack on reductionism fails because alternate forms of egocentric indexing are available to the reductionists which they may utilize to account for the core psychological competencies in a non-circular manner. I further suggest that the considerations adduced in favor of perdurantism provide support to the reductionist side of the anti-reductionist versus reductionist debate regarding persons.

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A Reductionist Rebuttal to Burge: Perdurantism, intentional agency, and *de se* form

In an essay entitled “Memory and Persons”, Tyler Burge presents arguments meant to demonstrate that veridical *de se* memory forms are necessary for possessing the core competencies of personhood. In section 11 of that paper, he claims that these arguments undermine reductionist views of persons which hold that “an individual person or agent is to be explained in terms of continuities of states characterized agent-neutrally” (Burge, 322).¹ My aim in what follows will be to show that Burge’s arguments fail to achieve such a result. Along the way I also hope to reiterate through argument the contention common to all reductionist views of persons, *viz.* the contention that psychological continuity and not metaphysical identity is what is explanatorily essential to our notion of persons.

1. Burge’s argument against the reductionist view

There are two interwoven strands in Burge’s argument which will need to be treated in turn. The first is epistemic; the second is metaphysical. The concerns underlying Burge’s arguments in “Memory and Persons” are fundamentally of an epistemic nature: they concern how we must conceive of the relation between memory and the psychological competencies which are essential to personhood (i.e. intentional agency, inference, and perception with use) in order to conceive of ourselves as individual agents who possess the entitlements required for the exercise of these core competencies. A principal claim undergirding Burge’s arguments is that the grounds by which we are warranted in taking ourselves to be agents who possess such entitlements

¹ As Sydney Shoemaker notes in “Careers and Quareers: A Reply to Burge”, Burge “sees attempts to use the notion of quasi-memory to analyze personal identity, and, I [Shoemaker] think, any psychological account of personal identity along Lockean or neo-Lockean lines, as involving a misguided attempt to analyze personal identity in terms of ‘agent-neutral’ psychological notions, one that ‘cannot recover *de se* notions’ (Burge, 322)” (Shoemaker, 88).

derive from our possessing attitudes with veridical *de se* form and presumptions. *De se* attitudes are attitudes with first-person content, and by Burge's usage, a state which is *de se* is one which is marked according to its relevance to the agent's needs and perspective. It is by virtue of this veridical *de se* form that the agent is entitled to think of himself as fulfilling his own previously formed intentions, as being entitled to make use of previously established conclusions with warrant preserved in present reasoning, and as being entitled to take make use of past perceptions in subsequent thought or action.

The metaphysical strand of Burge's argument emerges via the central role memory plays in his account of the mode by which we possess veridical *de se* attitudes and, hence, the relevant entitlements. His major contention in this regard is that in order for the *de se* form and presumptions of the states involved in the exercise of the core competencies to be *veridical* – that is, for these states to actually be indexed to the agent who possesses them; and, *a fortiori*, for them to actually provide the relevant entitlements – same *de se* form and presumptions must be preserved by memory through the interval spanning the time at which the subject forms the relevant attitude to the time at which the same subject makes use of that attitude in the exercise of a relevant competency. The possession of memory, Burge maintains, entails a same-agent constraint and hence carries with it a presupposition of transtemporal agent identity. And in this way Burge's argument takes a metaphysical turn.

Here is a recap of the preceding argument which may better draw out its metaphysical aspect. Part of what it is to be a person is to exercise certain psychological competencies. The exercise of such competencies requires the possession of *de se* memories and memories with *de se* presumptions. So the notion of a person is partly

individuated in terms of the exercise of certain competencies which require the possession of a *de se* memory competency for their use. Further, the possession of a *de se* memory competency requires transtemporal agent identity, because part of what it is to be a veridical memory is to preserve a past representational state that is the rememberer's own. So the notion of a person presupposes transtemporal agent identity because this notion is partly individuated by reference to psychological competencies which require for their exercise the possession of a *de se* memory competency which entails a same-subject condition.

Hence, contrary to reductionist views, the notion of a person entails as essential to it the condition that the metaphysical identity of the subject be maintained over time. Reductionist views which attempt to bypass this essential condition of metaphysical identity in providing an explanatory account of the notion of persons "cannot recover the *de se* notions" (Burge, 322) involved in the core competencies of personhood, and therefore cannot provide an account of those competencies. Reductionist views lack the conceptual tools necessary to account for the forms of entitlement agents must possess in order to exercise the competencies which are essential to being persons. Hence reductionist views are inadequate to account for all of the psychological notions essential to our notion of persons.

Burge anticipates and rebuts the reductionist response that quasi-memory might be utilized to provide a path out of the difficulties occasioned for reductionism by the preceding argument. Since the core psychological competencies and their exercises are themselves partly individuated in terms of the possession of veridical *de se* states, these "competencies and their exercises are partly individuated by reference to relations to their

agents” (Burge, 322). So the individuation of these basic competencies and their exercises is not agent-neutral. For this reason the reductionist cannot invoke quasi-memory to explain these competencies without appealing to memory with its same-subject condition. Quasi-memory therefore cannot be used to circumvent the explanatory circularity entailed in giving an account of personal identity which appeals to memory because any appeal to quasi-memory would be explanatorily reliant on memory in accounting for the core competencies of personhood. Quasi-memory cannot aid the reductionist in escaping explanatory circularity after all.

Burge considers these arguments to undermine the “central tenet of Shoemaker’s and Parfit’s reductionisms [which is] that the basic explanatory psychological notions do not presuppose individual identity over time” (Burge, 322). Any reductionist scheme which attempts to construe persons as “continuities of states characterized agent-neutrally” (Burge, 322) will be unable to account for the *de se* notions entailed in the core psychological competencies of personhood. This is the sense in which Burge takes his arguments pertaining to the role of veridical *de se* memory forms in personhood to undermine reductionist views of persons.

2. Outline of response

The epistemic and metaphysical strands of this argument will need to be treated in turn, though these strands will be as thoroughly intertwined in my response as they are in Burge’s essay. My response will comprise three major parts.

In the first part of my response, I will address Burge’s central metaphysical claim, *viz.* the claim that the notion of an individual person with a psychology entails a transtemporal identity condition. I will approach this issue through considering the

‘same-subject’ constraint Burge attaches to veridical *de se* memory and, in particular, how we should conceive of the manner in which the subject indicated in this constraint might be said to persist through time. I will argue that Burge’s same-subject constraint would be indefensible if the subject in question were required to *endure* through time, while conversely that if the same-subject constraint were taken to require a *perduring* person then Burge’s constraint would be amenable to a reductionist view. In support of this latter claim I will argue that for a person to perdure through time *just is* for that person to be a non-branching psychologically continuous series of states. Achieving this result bolsters the reductionist case while diminishing the plausibility of so-called ‘further-fact’ views of personal identity which posit as an aspect of the person a further substance which possesses a separate existence independent of the series of states which the reductionist identifies with the person.

In the second major part of the paper, I attempt to question as far as is possible the relevance of the notion of *de se* form to the functions essential to the core competencies of personhood. The purpose of this investigation is to attempt to ascertain from a descriptive standpoint whether the notion of *de se* form has unique work to do in explaining the practical functions entailed in these competencies. In exploring this issue, I will focus on the core competency of intentional agency. I will not dispute the point that the veridicality of *de se* form is necessary for providing the essential forms of entitlement entailed in the exercise of the relevant competencies. Rather, it will be my aim in the sections comprising this part to determine whether *de se* form factors in the metaphysics – as opposed to the epistemic issues concerning entitlements – of personhood. This second major section is largely exploratory in nature, but I believe that the discussion

there lends credence to a contention put forward by Sydney Shoemaker (2009), *viz.* the contention that veridical *de se* form is not unique in terms of the functional role it can play in intentional agency.

The final major part of this essay will present arguments which account for how the reductionist can recover the entitlements entailed in possessing the core competencies of personhood without appealing to veridical *de se* memory. Here I will present Shoemaker's (2009) arguments in reply to Burge's attack on the reductionist view. These arguments form the core of the response to Burge's attempted refutation of reductionism, and I view the section on the same-subject constraint and the persistence of persons through time, and especially, the exploratory section on the function of *de se* form in intentional agency, as being supplementary to the arguments Shoemaker presents.

The result of the arguments of these three major parts, if they are successful, will be a cumulative case in favor of the reductionist view that psychological continuity is the primary explanatory construct involved in the notion of persons. In addition, to the extent that these arguments are successful this will suggest that Burge has committed a misstep in attempting to derive metaphysical claims pertaining to personhood from the *de se* forms necessary to providing epistemic warrant to exercises of the core psychological competencies.

3. Burge on memory and *de se* content

It will be necessary before treating Burge's argument directly to briefly consider his claims regarding memory and *de se* content. Burge distinguishes between three types of memory: experiential memory, substantive content memory, and purely preservative memory. The content of an experiential memory represents a particular event or action

which the rememberer experienced first-hand. Substantive content memories take the form of beliefs that p , where p is some proposition derived from reasoning, perception, or various other means. The representational content of a substantive content memory need not be linked to experience. Purely preservative memory is distinguished from the other types in that it merely retains representational content from previous inferences or perceptions for use in future reasoning. Burge suggests purely preservative memory contrasts with experiential memory and substantive content memory in terms of its functional role: it does not introduce new content or warrant, whereas the latter two types of memory do.

Experiential memories are of *de se* form, which is to say they are egocentrically indexed (i.e. indexed to the needs of the subject). Burge identifies two conditions as being necessary for a representational state to have *de se* form. First, a *de se* element must be present in the state which marks all entities referenced in its content in terms of their relations to the rememberer's perspective. Second, the *de se* element must mark all such entities as being relevant to the needs, aims, or perspective of the rememberer. Any representational state which lacks such markings will fail to possess veridical *de se* form.

Burge further distinguishes three grades of *de se* involvement which will be relevant in what follows. The first grade of *de se* involvement is common to all experiential memories, and involves the action or event referred to by the state being marked as having been experienced by the agent. The second grade marks the agent as being active in the action or event represented by the state, and the third grade is present just in case the state represents its referent from the agent's perspective (i.e. in terms of

how the action or event felt or appeared to the agent as it occurred). Some experiential memories are *de se* at one or both of the second and third grades.

Not only experiential memories possess *de se* form: other memories as well as other representational states can be of *de se* form. For instance, substantive content memories and purely preservative memories may possess *de se* form, but this is not a constitutive requirement for being a memory of either of these types. However, Burge does assert that all memories of all three types must have *de se* ‘presumptions’. Burge states that “a *presumption that p is associated with an individual’s being in a representational state if and only if veridical recognition that p would rationally derive from fully informed, conceptually mature reflection on the conditions that make that state possible, from the would-be perspective of the individual in that state*” (Burge, 292; italics preserved from original). Unpacking this and applying it to specifically *de se* presumptions, Burge appears to be saying that a representational state carries a *de se* presumption if and only if the individual in that state would correctly recognize that state as being *de se* upon reflecting on how that state came about, given he was apprised of all the relevant facts about the formation of that state and understood the relevant concepts. As Shoemaker (2009) writes, this “seems to mean that fully informed and conceptually mature reflection by the subject would result in acceptance of first-person propositions” (Shoemaker, 92).

Burge’s less technical elaboration of this notion of ‘presumption’ grants helpful further insight into what he means when he claims all memories carry *de se* presumptions. As he writes, “substantive content memories and purely preservative memories need not have *de se* form. But all of them have *de se* and first-person

presumptions. To be any kind of memory is constitutively and necessarily to preserve a past representational state that is the rememberer's own ... Having a memory with a certain representational content presupposes that the rememberer was in a representational state with that content, or a content that implies it" (Burge, 293).

This is Burge's presentation of what I refer to as the 'same-subject' constraint on veridical memory forms. Having *de se* and first-person presumptions² – i.e. being 'any kind of memory' – entails that a memory preserves the representational content of a past representational state of the rememberer. A memory cannot carry *de se* presumptions unless that memory preserves representational content derived from a past representational state of the subject to whom that memory belongs, because failing to meet this condition would entail, by Burge's lights, failing to be the sort of state which a 'fully informed', 'conceptually mature' subject would accept as being his own—i.e., about which he would accept first-person propositions. Hence, according to Burge, in order for a memory to be veridical – i.e. to really be a memory, rather than a 'memory illusion' – the subject who entertains that memory must be the same subject who occupied the representational state the content of which is preserved in the memory. That is, in order for a memory to be veridical the rememberer and the subject of the experience remembered must be the same subject.

A relevant question to ask with regard to Burge's same-subject requirement is what sort of subject Burge takes the 'rememberer' to be. In the next section I explore this question in context of the issue of the mode by which persons persist through time.

Although the same-subject constraint Burge attaches to memory requires that the identity

² Burge mentions first-person presumptions in addition to *de se* presumptions, but he does not discuss the former in detail and the distinction plays no discernible role in his argument against reductionism. The distinction will play no role in the present essay.

of the subject be maintained over time, the arguments he presents in “Memory and Persons” do not explicitly address the debate with regard to the persistence of persons through time. In this sense, Burge is vague as to the nature of the subject he has in mind.

4. The persistence of persons through time

An important question regarding personal identity concerns the sense in which a person can be said to *persist* through time as a single, self-same entity. In addressing this issue, David Velleman (2006) employs a distinction between two conceptions of the persistence of objects through time. The first conception considers persistence through time on analogy with extension in space: an object is said to persist through a period of time by occupying each of the moments within that period with a distinct temporal part of itself, much as an object extends through a region of space by occupying the points within that region with its spatial parts. On this conception of persistence, persons are described as *perduring* through time by occupying one moment after another with successive temporal parts.

In another paper with Thomas Hofweber, Velleman and Hofweber (2010) describe the temporal parts of the perduring person as ‘momentary person-stages’, each of which exists as an experiential subject in a single moment of time.³ Considering the temporal parts of the perduring person in relation to memory, Velleman and Hofweber write, “When I remember a past experience, I remember the world as experienced from the perspective of a past subject ... my memory has an egocentric representational scheme,

³ Throughout this paper (with the exception of instances in which context indicates the endurantist view is being discussed) I use the terms ‘person-stage’, ‘self’, and ‘subject’ interchangeably, while reserving ‘person’ to indicate *the complete series* of person-stages (i.e. momentary selves, momentary subjects) which extends through the interval during which a person exists. In this sense, on a perdurantist construal the ‘same-subject’ requirement would actually be a ‘same-person’ requirement; in this paper I will only use the term ‘same-subject’, but context will suggest whether the endurantist or perdurantist construal is intended.

centered on the person-stage who originally had the experience from which the memory is derived” (Hofweber and Velleman, 13). In entertaining a memory, the mind muddles the distinction between the momentary person-stages occupying these perspectives, so that the past person-stage who was the subject of the remembered experience easily becomes conflated with the subject who is presently remembering the experience. This tendency to conflate the past subject of an experience with the subject who remembers it gives rise to the illusion that a single subject is present in both the past moment of the experience and the present moment of remembering. Velleman and Hofweber suggest this illusion is one reason that the notion that persons perdure is counter-intuitive to many, as it contributes to the perception that a person actually persists through time through being wholly present in every moment of its existence.

This alternative conception of persistence through time is known as *endurance*. Endurantists insist that extension through time is unlike extension through space. Whereas an object extended in space must comprise spatial parts which occupy the points across which it extends, an object extended in time is wholly present in each moment in which it exists. In this sense, an enduring object must be without temporal parts as a temporal part of an object must occupy a single moment of an object’s existence but an enduring object is one which is present in its entirety in each moment of its existence. Hence the enduring person is an entity which extends through time without temporal parts. This conception of persons as enduring through time is consistent with the egocentric scheme in memory which represents the first-person perspective of the rememberer as identical with the first-person perspective of the subject of the remembered experience. As there can be no distinction in terms of temporal parts of the

person, the subject of an experience must be identical with the subject who remembers that experience. Hence on the conception of persons as enduring through time, the egocentric scheme present in memory is not misleading after all.

However, Velleman and Hofweber argue that this conception of persons as enduring through time is incoherent. The notion of an object which is extended through time but which lacks temporal parts is incoherent in that it is not clear what it could mean to claim that an object which extends through a divisible dimension cannot be taken to have parts corresponding to the parts of that dimension. If time is divisible into smaller and smaller periods, there is no reason to suppose that persons, which extend through those divisible periods, cannot also be taken to comprise distinct parts, each of which is present in exactly one part of the temporal dimension. Just as the ‘whole’ extended entity corresponds to the ‘whole’ period of time across which it extends, so there must be ‘parts’ of the extended entity which correspond to the ‘parts’ of the period of time across which it extends. If the period of time across which an entity is extended is divisible, then the entity must itself be divisible in corresponding fashion. Hence the conception of enduring persons as being extended through time without temporal parts is incoherent.⁴

The notion that persons perdure rather than endure through time has important implications regarding the proper conceptions of memory and personhood. As noted earlier, Velleman and Hofweber hold that the egocentric representational scheme present

⁴ As I recognize that endurantists (as will emerge, I take Burge to be one) would likely protest that it would be possible to muster a rebuttal to the argument discussed in this section, I should say that its inclusion serves more to point out what I believe is one sense in which it is implausible to suppose persons endure through time, rather than to show decisively that such a view is incoherent. I simply follow Velleman and Hofweber in referring to the endurantist view as ‘incoherent’, because I believe their complete arguments in “How to Endure” (2010) go some way toward demonstrating this stronger conclusion. I have decided not to include their more detailed arguments concerning the debate over persistence in the metaphysics of time for reasons of space and relevance. The primary aim of this paper is not, after all, to attack Burge’s positive views, but to defend the perdurantist/reductionist views he takes his arguments to militate against.

in experiential memory gives rise to the tendency to conflate the present self with the person-stage who was the subject of the remembered event. The remembering subject seems to be present in two distinct moments – both in the present as the remembering self and in the past moment as the subject of the remembered experience. As Velleman and Hofweber put it, “the self appears to *be* a momentary person-stage that exists at more than one moment – one and the same temporal part existing at more than one time, which is no more possible than a spatial part existing in two places at once” (Hofweber and Velleman, 13). Velleman and Hofweber suggest the structure of memory is responsible for the illusion of transtemporal identity which gives rise to the appearance of coherence in the incoherent conception of the enduring person. The egocentric representational scheme of memory leads the rememberer to experience events in memory as though they were actually indexed to the perspective of the present, remembering self. This impression that the self in the present moment is identical to the self from whose perspective the remembered event was actually experienced gives rise to the false notion that the present self has traveled through time and occupied each moment from the moment of the remembered experience to the moment of remembering, all the time retaining the identity actually possessed only by the momentary subject who exists in the moment of remembering.⁵

The view that persons endure through time must be rejected once this illusion is dispelled, as the distinction between momentary person-stages implies that the subjective

⁵ A particular self cannot be strictly identical with any other self. This is somewhat trivial: strict identity between two selves would require sameness between those selves across all aspects, including spatiotemporal aspects. However, a given individual self can be the same as another individual self *in respect of some particular shared aspect*. For instance, when I speak of any two of my momentary selves these selves will be the same in respect of their both being human. Likewise, any two of my momentary selves will be the same in respect of their both being the same person, where this just means that any two of my momentary selves will be psychologically continuous and causally connected in the right way (i.e. causally connected without any manner of ‘branching’).

perspective indexed in any particular memory must be associated with a distinct momentary self. On the spatial analogy suggested by the perdurantist conception of persons, the subject of an experience remembered is no more identical with the remembering subject than the right hand is identical with the left. However, just as both hands are parts belonging to the same body, so two momentary selves may belong to the same temporally extended person (Hofweber and Velleman, 2010). Hence on the view that persons perdure rather than endure through time, the notion of identity is considered to apply to the momentary self and to the temporally extended person under different conceptions.

What there is of the person in a particular moment is sufficient to fully determine the identity of the momentary self which exists only within that moment, but that identity is distinct from the personal identity of the temporally extended person. The identity conditions of a particular momentary subject comprise the identity conditions of a particular person-stage (i.e. what is true of that particular temporal part of the person), whereas the personal identity of the temporally extended person is a matter of successive person-stages which are psychologically continuous and causally connected in the right way. Personal identity in the latter sense may be understood as corresponding to the notion of sameness in a process which extends through time. A process extends through time and by virtue of the causal connections between its constituent process-stages, the temporally extended process is considered to remain the same process through time despite the non-identity between its constituent process-stages. On analogy to this, the temporally extended person may be considered to be a process composed of successive person-stages (i.e. momentary selves) which are causally connected in the right way. No

two person-stages are identical, but together they participate in the same temporally extended ‘person-process’.

The conclusion that persons must be conceived as perduring series of distinct momentary selves rather than as individual subjects or substances which endure through time bears on the central themes of this essay in two ways. First, showing that the only defensible same-subject constraint on memory is one which is consistent with viewing persons as series of states undermines Burge’s anti-reductionist stance that metaphysical identity is an essential aspect of our conception of persons. The fact that a perduring person *just is* such a series – and hence can be cashed out in terms of psychological continuity between distinct momentary selves – renders trivial the identity condition involved in being a perduring person. The fact that this series amounts to a person and is self-identical, and therefore possesses a personal identity, says nothing in addition to this. And this, of course, supplies further support to the reductionist contention that psychological continuity rather than metaphysical identity is what is important to our notion of persons.

Second, the incoherence of the endurantist conception suggests that either (a) If Burge conceives of his same-subject constraint (and therefore his account) as requiring an enduring subject, then his account is incoherent as he conceives of it; or (b) If Burge conceives of the same-subject constraint as being satisfied by a perduring person, then the account he gives of the core competencies could be accepted in major part by reductionists (except that reductionists would appeal to *de se** form rather than *de se* form in characterizing the relevant states).⁶ Considering Burge’s stance against

⁶ The distinction between *de se* form and *de se** form will be discussed in detail in Section 7, the third major part of this paper.

reductionist accounts, it seems plausible to suppose that he has in mind an enduring subject as the satisfying condition of his same-subject constraint. Hence, because of the apparent affinity between the perdurantist view and the reductionist view Burge is attacking, I will employ an endurantist reading of Burge in the exploratory discussions of *de se* form as it stands in relation to memory (Section 5) and in relation to intentional agency (Section 6). It should further be noted that this affinity between the perdurantist view and the reductionist view suggests that Burge's attack on the reductionist view may be taken to be an attack on perdurantist accounts as well.⁷ For this reason, I consider the arguments I present in the remainder of this paper to stand in defense of the coherence of the perdurantist construal of persons as well as in defense of the more general reductionist view. The perdurantist account is, after all, primarily a fleshing-out of the mode of persistence of persons which is implicit in reductionist accounts.

The exploratory account set out in the next two sections is an attempt to explain without appeal to any mode of preservation of *de se* content the functions of intentional agency which Burge argues are dependent upon the retention of *de se* content in memory. If the account were successful, then dependence of the core competencies on possession of a *de se* memory competency would be circumvented and the same-subject requirement would fall out, thereby undermining the metaphysical strand of Burge's argument against reductionism. However, I believe the account ultimately falls short of being an account of

⁷ Burge suggests as much in the closing of his paper. In discussing the implications of his arguments in Section 12 of "Memory and Persons", he suggests that in context of those arguments, "Attempts to reduce personal identity to a sequence of psychological states, or a sequence of arbitrarily small time slices each of which has the relevant states seem to me to fail" (Burge, 327). So while the argument discussed in the present section is intended to function (when taken in conjunction with the broader discussion in Velleman and Hofweber (2010)) to illustrate the indefensibility of endurantist views, it seems Burge should be read as considering his arguments in "Memory and Persons" as illustrating the indefensibility of perdurantist views. As noted, the remainder of this paper is intended in part as a rebuttal of this implicit contention in Burge.

intentional agency as it is involved in personhood because in attempting to eliminate retention of *de se* form from the explanation of this competency it fails to take account of the role Burge has argued the preservation of *de se* form plays in providing the entitlements essential to such agency. That is, the account attempts to address the metaphysical strand of Burge's argument while neglecting the primary epistemic strand. For this reason the account does not itself constitute an adequate rebuttal to Burge's attack on reductionist/perdurantist views of persons. Following the presentation of the account, I will set out in more explicit detail the points on which it goes astray. I will also present a brief discussion which may resolve these difficulties in part, though not in full. The final major part of this paper adduces arguments from Shoemaker's (2009) reply to Burge which account for the shortcomings of the exploratory discussions of Sections 5 and 6. Since Shoemaker's arguments constitute the core of the rebuttal to the primary epistemic strain of Burge's argument, the substantive aspects of the account I present in the next two sections should be considered supplementary to Shoemaker's arguments, rather than vice versa.

The primary contribution of the exploratory account is to bolster the contention that Burge would bear a heavy burden of proof if he were to maintain that *de se* form plays a role in the essential functions of intentional agency which no other alternative form of egocentric indexing could perform. If these essential functions can be explained in large part without appeal to veridical *de se* form, then it becomes difficult to see how Burge could defend the assertion that possession of an alternative form of egocentric

indexing (e.g. *de se** form) would be inadequate to account for the cognitive dynamics involved in intentional agency (or, rather, intentional agency*).⁸

5. Forms of quasi-memory

I will not contest the notion that intentional agency must be informed by representational content retained from past representational states. Hence before treating Burge's argument for the reliance of intentional agency on *de se* memory it will be necessary to briefly describe the differences between *de se* memory and certain forms of quasi-memory and to present an alternative form of representational content retention.

The reductionist view of persons precludes explanatory reliance on the presupposition of transtemporal agent identity, and thus precludes adherence to the *de se* memory construct which Burge describes. But to deny transtemporal agent identity should occupy such a central explanatory role is not to deny that *de se* elements have any function in relation to memory. Parfit and Shoemaker each present versions of quasi-memory. On Parfit's view, both memory and quasi-memory present a past experience as though it is indexed to the perspective of the rememberer, though in the case of quasi-memory this representation is not veridical. Shoemaker also suggests that quasi-memory contrasts with memory in lacking a requirement that the subject of an experience and the subject who recalls that experience be identical, but he posits a further difference in claiming that quasi-memory does not involve *de se* content suggesting such an identity relation between experiencer and rememberer. Parfit builds *de se* content into the notion of quasi-memory whereas Shoemaker does not.

⁸ Intentional agency* involves intentions* rather than intentions. Intentions* are individuated in terms of *de se** form rather than *de se* form. So intentional agency* is exercised by creatures whose states are individuated in terms of *de se** form. The distinction between *de se** form and *de se* form is discussed in Section 7.

The notion of representational content retention to which I will appeal is closest to Shoemaker's quasi-memory construct in that it both denies identity between the subject of the experience remembered and the remembering subject and rejects the notion that *de se* content should be taken to be bound up in quasi-memory. The first point is a fairly transparent implication of the perdurantist view of persons: If no two momentary selves are identical, then the representational content recalled in the act of remembering must be that of a past representational state experienced by a past momentary self, not that of a representational state of the remembering self. The second point follows from an independent analysis of memory which construes the appearance of *de se* elements in memory as arising only by virtue of an interpretive element comprised in the process of memory recall. Just as the content of a memory is not an objective record of perceived events, but is instead the residue of an interpretive cognitive process, so memory recall is not a replaying of an exact record of that residue, but rather involves filtering that residue through interpretive cognitive processes which emphasize elements relevant to the perspective of the rememberer. On this analysis, the appearance that egocentric indices are elements intrinsic to memory is an illusion arising from the fact that the interpretive filtering involved in recalling a memory is an automatic process which occurs without conscious effort. The representational content of a past experience is preserved in memory over time (though, as is discussed below, such content can be altered through recall), but the *de se* markings which are associated with remembering that content emerge from the interpretive process of recall. Memory recall consists in a cognitive operation functioning to present past representational content as being relevant to the rememberer's needs, aims, and perspective. As the perspective of the rememberer is

indefinite at the time the impression of the representational content of an experience is initially consolidated in memory, the relevance of that content to the perspective of a future rememberer is indefinite. Hence the appearance of the specific relevance of content to the rememberer should be construed as emerging from the process of recall, rather than through the process of initial consolidation.

Entities represented in the content of a memory are marked in terms of their relevance to the rememberer's needs, aims, and perspective not because such *de se* markings are intrinsic elements built into the memory itself as *de se* content, but rather because such markings are the products of the interpretive process involved in recalling the memory. Hence quasi-memory as I conceive of it both lacks a transtemporal agent identity requirement and lacks *intrinsic de se* form or content.

It seems some elaboration of the interpretive processes which I have suggested are involved in the process of memory recall is in order. Such elaboration may best be presented in context of a direct critique of Burge's view of veridical *de se* memory forms. Burge requires that in order to be veridical a memory must not only preserve an earlier representational state of the agent who remembers it, but also must preserve the precise *de se* form of that earlier representational state. That is, for Burge, a veridical memory comprises representational contents which are marked in terms of the needs, aims, and perspective of the subject who experienced the event or action which is the referent of the memory.

Even supposing for the sake of argument that the subject of the remembered experience and the remembering subject are identical and that *de se* form is built into memory, it seems the interpretive nature of memory recall makes it implausible that

identical *de se* form and content should be preserved over time. Even assuming transtemporal agent identity, the perspective, needs, and aims of the agent change over time. The act of recalling a memory at a time significantly removed from the time it was formed may involve filtering that memory through a perspective significantly different from that under which it was originally formed. The 12-year-old who witnessed his drunken father beat his brother will have had very different interests, beliefs, and means of interpretation than will the 30-year-old who remembers the experience after having spent years studying for certification as a clinical psychologist. When the 30-year-old recalls that memory he interprets the event to which it refers quite differently than did the 12-year-old, and the nature of the relations between the rememberer and the entities involved in the memory will be far removed from the relations which held between those entities and the 12-year-old subject of the experience. The 30-year-old's recalling the memory alters it to reflect his present knowledge, interests, and understanding of the event; the actions of the father and the brother take on different meaning following this episode of recall than they could possibly have had at the time the event was experienced by the 12-year-old. Hence the act of recalling the memory alters the representational content of that memory through altering the meaning of the elements referenced in that content and alters the *de se* form of the memory through altering the distribution of egocentric indices among those elements (i.e. distribution of egocentric indices differs because different elements of the memory will be relevant to the rememberer's perspective than to the experiencing subject's perspective).

After the episode of recall, the memory will have been altered so that the entities it references become marked according to the needs, aims, and perspective of the

rememberer who *ex hypothesi* is identical to the subject of the experience but whose needs, aims, and perspective differ drastically from those of that original subject. In this way, the *de se* form of the memory of the event is altered through the interpretive process of recall. Such a memory would meet Burge's requirement that memories belong to the rememberer (because the rememberer is *ex hypothesi* identical to the experiencing subject), but such a memory would fail to meet Burge's further requirement that the memory preserve some past representational state of the rememberer. At the moment the interpretive process of recall alters the representational content of the memory, the memory fails to meet this requirement and hence ceases to possess veridical *de se* presumptions. Since possession of veridical *de se* presumptions is a necessary requirement for being a memory on Burge's view, it follows that merely through the process of being recalled a memory may cease to be a memory according to Burge's criteria.

Alteration of *de se* form through the process of recall does not require years and drastic changes in perspective in order to occur. Imagine you are a student and have just arrived in physics class, having just come from learning you failed an exam in economics. As you are mulling over the repercussions of this fact and berating yourself for failing to properly prepare for the exam, a romantic interest you have been courting for a week comes into class and walks by, failing to speak to you. In the midst of your self-deprecation, you think, 'That just figures, she would have lost interest in me just now'. A memory of this experience is formed, complete with this thought and an accompanying sense of foreboding. Now fast forward a week later. You're in class once again, and the same romantic interest enters and begins a conversation with you. You

learn that last week she had just come to class from visiting her grandmother in the hospital and had been very worried and distracted. Upon learning this, you recall your memory of her coming into class last week and failing to speak to you. But as you recall her behavior you now associate with it a sense of empathy rather than a sense of foreboding. Recalling the memory in the context of your present knowledge and affective state has altered the memory to reflect your present perceptions and interests. Recalling the memory therefore causes it to become indexed to your present perspective, though the perceptual representational content derives from a past experience. Though you are *ex hypothesi* the same subject who experienced the event the memory represents, your perspective has changed significantly and under this altered perspective the act of recalling the memory has altered the representational content of the memory. Hence the act of recalling a recently consolidated memory results in its becoming non-veridical according to Burge's criteria.

Burge asserts that being "any kind of memory is constitutively and necessarily to preserve a past representational state that is the rememberer's own" (Burge, 293). The cases I have considered have involved agents remembering what are *ex hypothesi* their own memories, but in those cases the interpretive process of recall causes the subjects' memories to be altered to reflect the interests of the rememberers, with the result that the memories cease to 'preserve' past representational states. When the content of a memory is altered to reflect a reinterpretation of an event, that memory ceases to have the same representational content as the experience from which it originally derived. Hence Burge's view seems to commit him to the claim that the process of recall results in a memory's ceasing 'to be any kind of memory' at all. Yet, most (if not all) cases of recall

will involve some adulteration of memory through reinterpretation, at least insofar as the rememberer's perspective, needs, and aims differ from those of the subject of the remembered experience. So it seems Burge's requirement that memory preserve a past representational state may exclude too many cases of what we intuitively want to consider memories. Whether or not the rememberer is conceived as being the same subject as the subject of the remembered experience, a recalled memory will fail to meet Burge's requirement. This argument does not show Burge's conception of memory to be incoherent, but it does cast Burge's conception in sufficiently unfavorable light as to warrant considering the view implausible and hence in need of revision or replacement.

Before moving on I would like to quickly reply to a possible response to this line of reasoning. It could be argued that the notion that interpretive recall alters representational content (thereby making a match with a past representational state impossible) fails to entail that veridical *de se* presumptions cannot be retained after a memory is recalled, as *de se* presumption could be retained via a match between a later memory and the representational state of remembering. This line of argument would entail considering a past instance of remembering to be a representational state which may serve as the referent of a later instance of remembering (i.e. one may remember remembering the content of a past representational state). Representational content could change upon recall, but the requirement that memory refer to an actual past representational state would still be upheld, as the later memory would be a memory of a past representational state of remembering. But memory of the sort suggested here would be distinct in kind from experiential memory, which refers to past actions or events. Such memories would be memories of memories, or meta-memories. But such memories

would lack the sort of representational content (i.e. content referring to past actions or events relevant to the present perspective of the agent) which Burge takes to be necessary in order for a representational state to play a legitimate role in directing intentional action, inference, and perception with use. Such memories would not have the representational content Burge needs them to have.

It may not be clear at this point why the conception of quasi-memory I am arguing for is *non-de se* quasi-memory, rather than simply *non-veridical de se* quasi-memory. This arises from the fact that on this view relevant *de se* form is not recalled *as it is* (veridical or no) from memory, but is instead created in the process of memory recall. Since *de se* form is a product of an interpretive cognitive process, such form is not an aspect of memory but something which is attached to it through recall. Since memory lacks intrinsic *de se* form, it cannot properly be said to possess *de se* form. To put the point another way, on this view *remembering* has *de se* form (courtesy of interpretive recall) while *memory* does not. This conception of non-*de se* quasi-memory will be crucial in the arguments pertaining to intentional agency which will be the subject of the following section.

6. Intentional agency and memory

Burge's argument for the view that possession of *de se* memory capability is a prerequisite of exercising intentional agency can be rendered as follows:

- (1) Intentions are of *de se* form.
- (2) Exercising intentional agency requires having intentions.
- (3) From 1 and 2: Exercising intentional agency requires having intentions of *de se* form.

(4) In order for an agent to have intentions of *de se* form, *de se* memory must retain those intentions together with their *de se* form over time.

(5) From 3 and 4: Exercising intentional agency requires having *de se* memory.

Burge states premise (1), that intentions are of *de se* form, without argument:

“[Intentions] are *de se* at the second grade” (Burge, 293). Burge clarifies what he means by this: “If I intend to listen to all of Bruckner’s symphonies, I am committed to my doing the listening. Someone else could not carry out my intention” (Burge, 293). This elaboration is purely descriptive; he gives no argument in support of this notion.

However, some notion of Burge’s thinking here may be gleaned from the reasons he provides in support of premise (4), the claim that having *de se* intentions depends upon having those intentions retained in *de se* memory. The notion operative in each of these reasons is that intentions must persist through time in order to serve their functions: “intentions are not point events...[most] require working out over time” (Burge, 294). In order to serve their functions, intentions must be retained by memory over time. Two such functions of intentions are suggested in the three primary claims in support of (4) that can be discerned in Burge’s discussion of the dependence of intentional agency on *de se* memory:

(a) In order for an intention to guide intentional activity, the intention must be retained by memory through the period of that activity.

(b) In order for a creature to have a psychological basis for not repeating an act it has already carried out, the *de se* form of its intention to perform that act must be retained over time so that memory can record a match between that intention’s *de se* form and the *de se* form of the memory of performing the act.

(c) In order for a creature to have a psychological basis for not repeating a series of actions in the intended order which it has already carried out in the intended order, it must retain the *de se* form of its intention so that a match can be recorded with the *de se* memory of carrying out the intended acts in the intended order.

The two functions suggested for intentions by these claims are: 1) Intentions function to guide intentional activity over time; 2) The *de se* form of intentions functions to permit a match with the intended action (or series of actions), thereby marking the intention as fulfilled for the agent's future reference. If an individual lacks the capacity to guide his activities in a manner which accords with his intentions or the capacity to recognize which of his intentions he has already fulfilled, that individual will be incapable of exercising intentional agency.

I will not contest the notion that intentions serve these two functions. Instead, I will attempt to show that the *de se* form Burge attributes to intentions is superfluous through arguing that non-*de se* intentions can be substituted for their embellished counterparts to no effect. To be clear, my aim will not be to show that intentions lack *de se* form, but to show that it is not *necessary* that intentions have *de se* form in order for them to perform the functions Burge attributes to them. If such form is not necessary for these functions, then Burge's stated supposition that intentions possess *de se* form at the second grade is an unsupported assumption (as it will lack the support of any reasons provided by Burge). If this key premise in Burge's argument is thus shown to be an assumption, then Burge's argument will be undermined insofar as this assumption needn't be accepted. If this assumption is not accepted, the argument fails to go through. If Burge has not provided arguments sufficient to establish the truth of the claim that intentions

have *de se* form, then his account will have failed to establish that intentional agency depends upon *de se* memory.

Unless exercising intentional agency depends on having intentions with specifically *de se* form, there is no function in relation to intentional agency that requires *de se* memory. Hence by aiming to show that it is unnecessary to posit *de se* form for intentions in order to explain the functions of intentions in intentional agency, I intend to show that Burge has failed to demonstrate that *de se* memory is a necessary prerequisite for at least one of the core competencies of personhood.

Burge claims that intentions are *de se* at the second grade. By this he means that intentions are marked as having been formed by a particular agent and as entailing an element which requires as a condition of the fulfillment of that intention that that agent and no other must be the agent to carry out the action which is the content of the intention. As Burge puts it in a line already quoted, “if I intend to listen to all of Bruckner’s symphonies, I am committed to my doing the listening. Someone else could not carry out my intention” (Burge, 293).

Given the presumption that Burge intends an endurantist reading of his same-subject constraint, it follows that by Burge’s definition subjects as conceived on the perdurantist view are incapable of forming and subsequently fulfilling intentions. On the perdurantist view of persons, there is not a single enduring subject who both forms the intention to *x* and carries out that intention. Rather, on the perdurantist view the ‘I’ who originally forms the intention to do *x* and the ‘I’ who eventually does *x* are distinct momentary subjects. So on the perdurantist view, ‘someone else’ does carry out the intention of the subject who originally formed it. What makes this unproblematic on the

perdurantist view is that these distinct momentary selves are parts of the same temporally extended person. The act of forming the intention and the act of performing the action that is the object of that intention both belong to the same temporally extended person. Hence when the later momentary self performs the relevant action, that action becomes properly predicated of the temporally extended person. As the formation of the intention became properly predicated of the temporally extended person at the time that intention was formed, it may be said that both the formation of the intention to do x and the act of doing x may be properly predicated of the same temporally extended person. And, in this sense, the fulfillment of the intention to do x may also be properly predicated of the temporally extended person.

So on the perdurantist view it is not necessary that the ‘Burge who forms the intention to listen to all of Bruckner’s symphonies’ be identical with the ‘Burge(s) who listen to all of Bruckner’s symphonies’ in order for Burge to be considered to have carried out his intention upon completing the listening. For it to be true of Burge that he formed and fulfilled an intention to listen to all of Bruckner’s symphonies, it need only be true that the person ‘Burge’ comprises a series of causally connected person-stages who formed the relevant intention and carried out the series of actions comprising the content of that intention. Hence on the perdurantist view of persons, Burge’s stipulation that the ‘subject who forms the intention’ and the ‘subject who performs the intended act’ must be identical is an unnecessary and false constraint on the fulfillment of intentions *if Burge intends an endurantist construal of that stipulation*. On the perdurantist view, it is only necessary that the ‘Burge who forms the intention’ and the ‘Burge(s) who listen to all of Bruckner’s symphonies’ be the same in respect of being person-stages in the same

perduring person; what is not necessary is that there be a subject ‘Burge’ which retains the same identity *qua enduring person* in order for Burge to form an intention and fulfill that intention at a later time.

This strips intentions of Burge’s second grade of *de se* form⁹: an intention is not marked as having to be fulfilled by the same subject who originally formed it. Of course, the momentary selves who participate in forming an intention to do *x* and in performing the act of doing *x* must be psychologically continuous and causally connected in the right way. Without this caveat, stripping intentions of *de se* form at the second grade would imply that entirely unrelated subjects could fulfill one another’s intentions. So distinct subjects may be involved in the forming and fulfilling of an intention, given that those distinct subjects both comprise parts of the same temporally extended person.

As to the first grade *de se* form of intentions, it is of course true that when an intention is formed it is formed by a particular agent. It is this first grade *de se* marking which marks the authorship of an intention and which makes coherent the requirement that subsequent selves who participate in actions pursuant to that intention must be causally connected in the right way to the subject who originally formed the intention. If intentions were not marked as belonging to a particular agent, then it would be proper to say that an intention is fulfilled even when an unrelated agent carries out the action which is the object of that intention (or, possibly, there would be no coherent sense in which an intention could be ‘fulfilled’ at all). But intuitively this seems not to be right. It seems that

⁹ This would only follow if Burge stipulated that *de se* form must be individuated by reference to an enduring person. The discussion of second grade *de se* form just completed actually assumes a variety of *de se* form, albeit *de se* form individuated by reference to a perduring person rather than an enduring person. This would not turn out to be Shoemaker’s *de se** form because – as will be discussed in Section 5 – *de se** form is individuated by reference to a particular *quareer* whereas *de se* form individuated by reference to a perduring person would be *de se* form individuated by reference to a particular *career*. This is because a perduring person *just is* what Shoemaker calls a ‘career’.

the first grade *de se* marking of an intention needs to be maintained over time in order to index the agent who originally formed the intention as being its author. If such an index were absent, there could be no coherent requirement that an intention must be fulfilled through the action of some agent causally connected in the right way to the agent who originally formed the intention.

A difficulty for the account I have been advancing may seem to arise at this point. If the *de se* elements which appear to be attached to memory are created through the interpretive process of memory recall, then in what sense can the first grade *de se* marking of intentions be said to be preserved by memory over time? The proper response for the perdurantist is to suggest that memory does not need to play such a role. The first grade *de se* marking of an intention is not *de se* content which must be preserved by memory. Rather, an intention has *de se* marking simply in the sense that there is a fact of the matter as to its having been authored by a particular agent. Such *de se* marking cannot be separated from an intention, and hence it need not be preserved in memory in order to be retained. The fact of the matter regarding the authorship of the intention is established when it is formed and it does not change over time. And it is this fact which is relevant to the requirement set on the fulfillment of that intention.

If at t I form an intention to x , then it is a fact about that intention that my 'self at t ' authored it. This fact about the intention does not change over time and is unaffected by whether I remember forming the intention or by whether I retain any cognitive element which indexes the intention to my perspective. If my 'self at t ' forms an intention to do x and my 'self at $t+1$ ' performs the action x then at $t+1$ I will have fulfilled my intention to do x . If someone else unrelated to me does x at $t+1$, but I do not, then my intention to do x

will not have been fulfilled at $t+1$. An intention is fulfilled if and only if an agent causally connected in the right way to the author of that intention performs the action pursuant to that intention. There is nowhere in this requirement a stipulation as to the agent's psychological state regarding the intention or its content. The first grade *de se* marking of an intention is a matter fully determined by the circumstances involved in its formation, rather than an aspect of its content which must be preserved by memory over time. The restriction on an intention's fulfillment is grounded in there being such a fact of the matter as to the authorship of the intention. Hence memory has no necessary role to play regarding the requirement on the fulfillment of intentions, nor is it necessary to posit a role for memory in conceiving of the first grade *de se* marking of intentions.¹⁰ First grade *de se* marking so conceived may have no functional role in human psychology, but it nonetheless is involved in the conditions governing whether an intention is fulfilled. Hence the intuitive notions that intentions require authorship by a particular agent and that there are restrictions on the fulfillment of intentions may be accommodated without appeal to memory.

Burge suggests there are two functions of intentions which they can perform only if their content and *de se* form are preserved by memory over time. First, Burge claims that "retention of intentions in memory is necessary for guiding and controlling intentional activity" (Burge, 2003, p. 293). This claim is consistent with the account I

¹⁰ It is necessary at this point to include a note concerning a contrast between the sense in which first grade *de se* marking is built into intentions and the sense in which Burge maintains a person may have *de se* form intentions. In order for an intention to exist it must be formed by some person, so any intention must have *de se* marking at the first grade—i.e. it must be true of that intention that it is authored by a particular person. By contrast, Burge's *de se* form intentions are intentions which are preserved in memory together with *de se* content indicating the authorship of the intention by the agent who retains it. Any intention is *de se* at the first grade, but to be *de se* by Burge's meaning is for an intention to be accompanied in memory by some cognitive element which functions as a record of its being formed by the agent who retains it. I use *de se* 'marking' rather than *de se* form to avoid ambiguity on this point, as well as to imply that the *de se* element associated with an intention is not a matter of its content or substantive nature ('form') but merely a fact about it which is relevant to the truth conditions involved in its fulfillment.

have been advancing, with the addendum that on this account 'intentions' must be taken to refer only to the intention and its representational content (or, more precisely, a state of the form 'intending to do x ', together with content entailing specification of x) rather than to the intention and (as Burge intends) both its content and its *de se* form. Understood in this way, there is no difficulty for my account in supposing non-*de se* quasi-memory could retain intentions.

A representational state of the form 'intending to do x ' need not entail a cognitive element which fixes that state to the perspective of its author. The relevant state of affairs concerning the formation of the intention is sufficient to fix the conditions for its fulfillment. As to the functional role of intentions in guiding action, the retention of the intention and its representational content by the agent is sufficient to entail that that intention is endorsed by the agent who retains it: there is no need to posit a further cognitive element which indexes the state to the agent. The retention of such states over time entails their relevance to the agent's perspective, making superfluous the retention of additional content which indexes the state to the agent's perspective. If a state of the form 'intending to do x ' is true of an agent, that agent must perform the actions required for the completion of x when those actions become necessary. Choosing not to perform such an action entails choosing to abandon the intention which requires the performance of that action, at least in the moment of choice (the intention may be renewed following such failure, but choosing against the direction of the intention entails rejecting the intention as a guide to action, which is tantamount to rejecting it as an intention). Hence the manner in which an intention guides action may be understood without reference to *de se* content which must be retained in addition to the intention itself. Further, it would be an

inefficient use of cognitive resources to retain content indexing a state to an agent's perspective when retention of the state and its representational content is in itself sufficient to mark that content as relevant to the agent's perspective.

In his third premise Burge introduces a further matching function for memory. According to Burge, memory must preserve the *de se* form of an intention from the time it is formed to the time the action pursuant to that intention is carried out, so that memory can record a match between the *de se* form of the intention and the *de se* form of the memory of the action. If an animal were incapable of recording such a match between the *de se* forms of its intention and action, it would lack any psychological basis for not attempting to carry out an intention it had already fulfilled. This is the sense in which Burge thinks the *de se* form of intentions guides intentional action: *De se* form lets the agent know *his* action has fulfilled *his* intention. If the perspective indexed in the intention matches the perspective indexed in the memory of the action, the agent remembers having fulfilled his intention. If the *de se* form is missing from either the intention or the memory of the action, the formation of such a memory is not possible. Without such a memory, the agent does not know to cease attempts at carrying out his intention. But this requirement also seems to me to be unnecessary.

It seems the mere *appearance* of *de se* matching between intention and action is sufficient to play the role Burge here posits for actual matching between relevant *de se* forms. Whether legitimate *de se* form exists or not is not crucial to guiding intentional agency, because the mere illusion of such form may serve the same purpose just as well. What is needed for the agent to have a 'psychological basis' for not pursuing an intention he has already carried out is for the agent to be under the impression that he has

performed the action pursuant to his intention. Hence whether or not the perspective under which he formed the intention is identical to the perspective under which he performed the action is not crucial, so long as he believes both the intention and the action were his own. This may be achieved as well by a mere disposition to regard recalled states as his own as by an inefficient mechanism for storing cognitive content which marks each state as his own.

Taking a different tact, one might consider the question in terms of adaptiveness. Evolution would seem to favor the development in a self-aware creature of a disposition to regard recalled past representational states as being its own and as being indexed to its present perspective. Such a disposition would be more adaptive than it would be for such a creature to devote additional cognitive resources to indexing every state to the creature's perspective. One might tell an evolutionary story along these lines, with the climax being the conclusion that the illusion of continuity in *de se* perspective (i.e. the illusion of an enduring self) evolved for exactly this purpose. Self-awareness yields the ability to reflect on past actions and to consider their origin. A self-aware creature which lacked the disposition to assume the states it recalls somehow belong to it may waste time wondering where or from whom remembered states issued. Such a creature likely would not have lived long. The illusion of identity with the past authors of remembered actions may serve to prevent unnecessary vexation or concern from arising from such reflection. Such an illusion could simultaneously provide the creature with a psychological basis for continuing on after having performed the action pursuant to its intention. Just such a story may fit perfectly into the perdurantist account of persons, while also providing an adequate response to Burge's puzzle.

Burge also emphasizes the role of preservative memory in intentional agency. In order for an intention to guide action its content and force must be preserved over time, and Burge suggests that “the mere retention of the force and content of an intention from its onset to the time when it is acted upon is an exercise of purely preservative memory” (Burge, 294). As I have been arguing, an alternative account of memory is available to the perdurantist in the form of non-*de se* quasi-memory. Non-*de se* quasi-memory retains the representational content of representational states. It does not retain the *de se* content of such states, as an aspect of the memory recall process is to interpret the representational content of past states in terms of the perspective, needs, and aims of the rememberer. Burge might argue that while this may account for the retention of content over time, the maintenance of the *force* of a representational state over time requires that its *de se* form must be retained over time. This too is not a problem for the perdurantist.

What is necessary to ensure the force of the intention is preserved over time is that the reasons in support of this intention are preserved. If the *de se* content of the intention were preserved (i.e. an index suggesting the intention belongs to the agent at the time the action is to be carried out) but the original reasons in support of the intention were not, then the intention would not be carried out because the agent would lack any reason to reaffirm the intention. Yet if only the content of the intention is preserved and the *de se* index is lost, upon recalling the intention the agent will interpret it as his own. And given he retains the reasons upon which the formation of the intention was based, he will reaffirm the intention and proceed to perform the intended action. So the presence of *de se* content neither guarantees nor is necessary for the agent to carry out his intention. What is necessary is that the content of the intention be preserved along with the reasons

in support of it, and that the agent interpret the intention as his own upon recalling it. The act of interpreting the intention as his own is an act of reaffirming the intention, and such reaffirmation will occur only if the agent retains the reasons in support of the intention. The *de se* marking of the intention which was imparted to it at the time of its formation is relevant only in indexing the original author and thereby setting the relevant requirement on its fulfillment. No *de se* content needs to be retained over time if the retention of the representational content together with the reasons in support of the intention are preserved. Hence retention of *de se* content would be superfluous.

The foregoing arguments comprise an attempt to demonstrate that there are available to the reductionist practical analogues of Burge's conceptualizations of intentions and intentional agency which do not depend upon his veridical *de se* memory construct but which nonetheless account for the essential functions of intentional agency. Non-*de se* quasi-memory is capable of retaining the content and force of intentions, and the guiding role of intentions in intentional activity may be accounted for in terms of the retention of intentions as states of the form 'intending to x '. Finally, the mere appearance of *de se* matching between an intention and the memory of performing the intended act is sufficient for providing the agent a psychological basis for not repeating past intentional activity.

However, there are two important faults present in this account as it stands. First, Burge might suggest that this account has simply begged the question with regard to the retention of intentions in memory: intentions, he might argue, are partly *individuated* in terms of *de se* form, so the representational states which I have called 'intentions' and which I have claimed could be retained in non-*de se* quasi-memory without any *de se*

content, would not actually be intentions at all. Since it is a truism that in order for an intention to be an intention it must be the intention *of someone in particular*, we cannot claim that a representational state preserved in memory would be an intention even if the *de se* form of that state were not preserved as an aspect of it. So non-*de se* quasi-memory could not preserve intentions without *de se* form, because without *de se* form a representational state could not be an intention.

There are two points I want to make in reply to this possible rebuttal. The first has already been alluded to in the preceding account. *De se* form need not be built into the substantive nature of an intention as a part of the mental content which comprises it in order for an intention to be marked or ‘indexed’ as being the intention of a particular person. Rather, *de se* marking may consist in the simple fact of the matter as to the authorship of the intention. The intention need not carry this marking on its face in order for it to be true that that intention *is the intention of someone in particular*. The issue is over whether or not some part of the substantive content of the intention is what makes it *de se*. If what makes an intention *de se* is a part of its substantive content, then that *de se* content must therefore be preserved by memory in order for the intention to remain *de se*, i.e. to remain an intention. But if what makes the intention *de se* is simply the fact of the matter as to its being authored by a particular agent, and therefore being the intention of that agent, then there is no substantive *de se* content for memory to preserve. The state simply is *de se* by virtue of this metaphysical marking; and this marking consists in the facts about the intention, not in its content. Burge has presented no argument to establish that intentions must have *de se* form rather than *de se* marking.

Second, if we claim that in order to actually be preserved in memory *as an intention* a particular representational state must have preserved with it as a part of its content the *de se* form which was attached to it upon its formation, then we may find ourselves on a slippery slope at the bottom of which there is the conclusion that *de se* form cannot possibly be the special ingredient in intentions by which they are differentiated as intentions from other forms of representational content retention. For what is to stop us from considering that the full range of representational states which are marked as being the states *of a particular person*, and therefore as being *de se*, must have their *de se* form preserved with them as an aspect of their content in order for those states to be retained as the particular types of states that they are? That is, what is to stop us from saying that desires and hopes and fears and so on all must have preserved with them in memory the *de se* form which they possessed upon their formation in order for them to be retained *as* desires and *as* hopes and *as* fears, and so on? Just as an intention is only an intention insofar as it is the intention of a particular person, so a desire is only a desire insofar as it is the desire of a particular person. And so on. If we claim that preservation of original *de se* form is necessary in order for an intention to be preserved *as an intention* in memory, then it seems there would be no clear grounds to prevent the same claim about all *de se* states. And if this is the case, then it becomes difficult to see how it could be that there is something about *de se* form which makes it the special ingredient which must be retained to preserve a particular representational state as the particular type of representational state that it is. It seems there must be some further aspect of what it is to be an intention, or what it is to be a belief, or what it is to be a hope, beyond *de se* form, which marks out these sorts of representational states as being the sorts of

representational states that they are. And it seems that it is this further aspect in each case – the further aspect that makes a belief a belief, the further aspect that makes an intention an intention, and so on – which must be preserved by memory in order for that state to be retained not as some ambiguous ‘typeless’ representational state but as the specific type of representational state it is. If *de se* form is common to all types of representational states by virtue of their being indexed to the particular agents who form them, then it cannot be *de se* form which must be retained in memory in order for a given representational state to be differentiated from others as the particular type of state that it is.

But if *de se* form does not play this unique differentiating role, then it becomes unclear why *de se* form in particular must be preserved by memory through time. Mere *de se* marking is sufficient to mark out the facts of the authorship and fulfillment of a particular intention (or of a particular desire, or of a particular hope, and so on). Retention over time is sufficient to mark the fact that the content of the state has not been disavowed by the person to whom it belongs. The specific relevance to the rememberer of various aspects of a recalled memory could, as I have argued earlier, be due to the interpretive nature of memory recall. So it is not clear what functional purpose is left for the retention in memory of *de se* form to perform. And it is for this reason unclear why we should accept Burge’s claim that *de se* aspects of states are aspects of their substantive content which must be preserved by memory over time.

The second difficulty with this account is the more difficult to navigate of the two. This difficulty concerns how the foregoing account engages the epistemic strand of Burge’s argument, particularly the question of how series of momentary selves can

possess the entitlements essential to veridical exercise of the core competencies of personhood. I will include a few remarks here which may engage this issue in some manner, but I will then defer on this point to the arguments Shoemaker (2009) has presented to rebut Burge's attack on reductionism.

On Burge's account, the reliability of memory is crucial to the agent's possession of the relevant entitlements. Only if memory can be relied upon to present *de se* indices in memories just in case those memories represent a past representational state of the rememberer can those indices be taken to be relevant to the agent's possessing entitlements. An agent who recalls an intention with a particular *de se* form is only entitled by that *de se* form to take that intention to be an intention he previously formed – and therefore to be an intention which he can now fulfill – given his memory can be relied upon as having maintained the *de se* form of that intention from the time at which the agent initially formed it, and as having not illicitly attached false *de se* form to this intention despite it not having previously been formed by the agent. For instance, the agent's memory must be relied upon not to blend a memory of being told by a friend that she intends to buy a particular book with a memory of himself considering but not deciding to buy that book to yield the illusion of remembering having himself intended to buy that book. The *de se* form of the memory of forming such an intention would be non-veridical, and hence the agent would not be entitled in this case to fulfill the intention in question. Hence, on Burge's view, entitlements derive from *de se* form only insofar as the mode by which that form is retained over time is reliable.

The same may be said on an account which suggests memory plays no role in retaining *de se* form. Instead of suggesting that it is the retentive aspect of memory which

must be relied upon to ensure the *de se* form which is attached to recalled states is veridical, it might be suggested that rather it is the process of recall which must be relied upon to attach *de se* indices to recalled states if and only if those states were actually formed by the remembering subject. The reliance of entitlements on the proper functioning of memory – whether in its retentive aspect or in its recall aspect – is present in both cases, so it is unclear how *de se* aspects derived from recall could not possess the same normative force as *de se* aspects retained from the time of formation to the time of recall. If recall can be relied upon to only attach *de se* form to states marked *de se* (in the non-substantive sense) which the agent previously formed, then the appearance of *de se* form in such recalled states will be veridical (because such form will indicate the state as being indexed to the agent only if the agent actually did form that state). Hence despite the absence of retention of substantive *de se* content in memory the agent would possess the relevant entitlements by virtue of the veridicality of the *de se* form attached to the state via memory recall.

Despite these comments, the issue of engaging with the epistemic strand of Burge's argument in a substantive manner remains a weak point in the preceding account. Hence I will adduce Shoemaker's (2009) arguments, as these take a different tack in rebutting Burge and hold more promise for revealing a way out of the explanatory difficulties pertaining to entitlements which Burge's arguments occasion for perdurantists/reductionists.

7. Quareers and careers, plus *de se form**

Sydney Shoemaker (2009) presents two distinctions in his response to Burge's argument against reductionism in "Memory and Persons". The first is between a 'career'

and a 'quareer'. A career is an ordinary life history, as of a person like us: it is comprised of the stages of a non-branching psychologically continuous series of states (i.e. person-stages; momentary selves). A quareer is very much like a career, except that it contains one episode of fission wherein "a person's body divides into two exactly similar bodies, and each of the bodies is the body of a person psychologically continuous with the original person" (ibid, 88). The creatures whose lives comprise quareers rather than careers are called 'Parfit people', and it is the custom among these Parfit people to put to death painlessly one of the products of each case of fission. So there is one surviving fission product which inherits all of the intentions, commitments, and so on of the original person. As to the psychological continuity between the original person and the surviving fission product, Shoemaker says, "his or her [the surviving fission product's] psychological life after the fission is related to that of the original person in a way that is as much like the relation between temporally adjacent phases of the life of an ordinary person as is compatible with the occurrence of an episode of fission" (ibid, 89). Yet, because of the fission, the fission product is not identical with the original person: since there are two fission products and it cannot be the case that both are identical with the original person, it follows by the transitivity of identity that neither is. So the stages that make up the original person's career plus those that make up the surviving fission product's career do not together comprise a career; they comprise a quareer.

Shoemaker's contention is that despite the non-identity between the pre-fission person and the post-fission person, the post-fission person can be correct in thinking "that the warrant of beliefs is preserved across episodes of fission, ... that actions done after an episode of fission can count as executions of intentions formed prior to it" (ibid., 91), and

so forth. In short, Shoemaker claims that the entitlements relevant to the core competencies of personhood can be preserved and passed on from the pre-fission person to the post-fission person. Since the pre-fission and post-fission persons are not identical, they cannot possess attitudes with veridical *de se* form and presumptions. Hence Burge is committed to saying the Parfit people are mistaken in thinking that entitlements can be preserved through fission in the manner Shoemaker has envisioned for them.

Shoemaker's response here is to introduce a distinction between *de se* form and *de se** form. Whereas attitudes with *de se* form or presumptions are indexed to the possessor's career or to the possessor of the attitude, *de se** attitudes are indexed to the possessor's quareer. *De se** attitudes are just like *de se* attitudes in that they "carry all of the same sorts of commitments to action as *de se* attitudes, except that the commitments may be carried out by the successor self of the person who originally formed the attitude, the attitude and commitments having been passed on to that person in the way our attitudes and commitments are passed on to our future selves" (ibid., 90). In order to maintain his objection to reductionism and his claim that the relevant entitlements can be maintained over time only by the preservation of *de se* elements in memory, Burge would of course be committed to rejecting Shoemaker's alternative *de se** form.

Burge does include a short paragraph in "Memory and Persons" addressing cases which appeal to fission examples and *de se**: "The claim that *de se**-marked capacities enter into the same cognitive dynamics [as *de se*-marked capacities] is mistaken. ... The issue is whether the individuals act from their own perspective coordinating with their own needs and aims. If they do, they exercise explanatorily relevant *de se* memories. Then reductionism falls into explanatory circularity..." (Burge, 324). Shoemaker says

“his response begs the question” (Shoemaker, 95): “This assumes that the only intelligible application of the notions of perspective, needs, and aims is one on which an individual’s having a perspective, a need, or an aim is explicated in terms of how its states relate to its *career*, and not in terms of how they relate to its *quareer*” (Shoemaker, 94). If we assume that the states involved in the perspective, needs, and aims of an individual are individuated by relation to their possessor or their possessor’s career, then we’ve committed ourselves to Burge’s conceptual framework, and in particular to the supposition that those states must possess *de se* form in order to contribute to coordinating action. And in order to account for the preservation of this *de se* form over time, we would have to appeal to a veridical *de se* memory competency; and if we’re reductionists, our account would then fall into circularity. But Shoemaker points out that Burge has given no reasons to accept his claims pertaining to the individuation conditions of these states.¹¹ Hence there is nothing in Burge’s paper which prevents Shoemaker from offering an alternative conception of egocentric indexing which is more amenable to reductionist accounts.

As Shoemaker points out, “a good deal of what [Burge] says about the importance of *de se* forms in the individuation of intentional states and mental activities could be expressed by saying that possession by these states and activities of *de se* forms is essential to the playing of their functional roles” (Shoemaker, 93). Importantly, Burge claims that *de se* forms are necessary in intentional states and mental activities in order for those states to contribute to the “coordination of the subject’s activities and

¹¹ Shoemaker is not mistaken in this: Burge begins his paper by setting out a descriptive account of *de se* memory forms which he then goes on to utilize in explicating the function of the core competencies and their relations to *de se* memory. He neither argues for the descriptive account of *de se* memory which he presents nor presents arguments to show that alternative conceptions of egocentric indexing would be incoherent.

achievement of its aim” (Shoemaker, 93). But Shoemaker points out that “functionally *de se** forms are just as efficacious as *de se* forms in satisfying the needs and furthering the achievement of goals” (Shoemaker, 93). In order to rebut this claim, Burge would need to show why only having attitudes with *de se** form would incapacitate a creature from engaging in the exercise of the core capacities of personhood. Again, for Burge to return to base a rebuttal on “his claims about memory and *de se* attitudes, would be blatantly question-begging” (Shoemaker, 93).

If we assume that an agent could only be rationally warranted in thinking of himself as fulfilling an intention formed at an earlier time if that agent’s identity were preserved over the interval between the formation of the intention and its execution in action, then we would be committed to the notion that veridical *de se* form is essential in the individuation of intentions, and that therefore entitlements associated with those intentions require transtemporal identity. But this is precisely the assumption Shoemaker has indicated that Burge has not justified. If we do not accept this assumption, then Burge’s arguments pertaining to the reliance of the core competencies on *de se* memory do not go through because in accounting for those competencies we could substitute Shoemaker’s *de se** form in every instance in which Burge claims *de se* form is required with the consequence that a veridical *de se* memory competency would not be required to account for the preservation of the attitudes essential to these competencies.

In order to finish disrupting the explanatory circle in which Burge has attempted to trap the reductionists, Shoemaker suggests quasi-memory can be employed to describe the psychological continuity between stages of a quareer, and that a personal career can then simply be characterized “as a quareer that does not involve a certain kind of

branching, for example, the sort of fission that occurs in the quareers of the Parfit people and [we could then] say that the persistence of a person over an interval just is the existence of a personal career that spans that interval” (Shoemaker, 99).

8. Conclusion

The account presented in Section 5 and Section 6 may fail as a stand-alone rebuttal to Burge’s attack on reductionism and the perdurantist view of persons due to its failure to adequately address the epistemic strand of Burge’s argument. However, even if this were the case the arguments contained therein nonetheless may be taken to support the notion that the *de se* form of intentions and other representational states need not be construed as possessing a fundamental role in the functional aspects of intentional agency and the other core psychological competencies. And to the extent that the arguments of those sections are successful under this construal, they may be taken to support Shoemaker’s contention that Burge has provided no grounds for considering that *de se* form plays a unique explanatory role concerning the core competencies which *de se** form could not perform as well. Though Shoemaker’s Parfit people could not display intentional agency insofar as such agency is individuated in part by relation to *de se* intentions, they could nonetheless possess a functionally equivalent form of agency called ‘intentional agency*’, which would differ from intentional agency only in being partly individuated in terms of *de se** intentions rather than *de se* intentions. Parfit people would possess entitlements which differ from the entitlements we possess insofar as their entitlements would derive from the possession of *de se** states, but Burge has provided no argument to suggest that this difference would render the Parfit people incapable of carrying out inference, engaging in intentional agency, or making use of past perceptions.

The only difference between persons and Parfit persons concerns the conditions and nature of their entitlements, not their functional capacities. Burge's metaphysical arguments have not established that states with veridical *de se* form are necessary for these functional capacities, and I believe the arguments of Sections 5 and 6 go some way to suggest it is implausible to suppose that the fact that differing metaphysical identity conditions are involved in *de se* form and in *de se** form is in itself any reason to suppose creatures with states possessing the former could exercise the core competencies while creatures with states possessing the latter could not exercise such competencies, or functionally equivalent *de se** analogues.

Hence Shoemaker's presentation of *de se** form provides the reductionist with a manner of accounting for the entitlements entailed in the exercise of the core competencies which does not appeal to memory, and the arguments presented in earlier sections bolster his suggestion that Burge would bear a heavy burden of proof if he were to assert that *de se** form could not operate in a functionally equivalent role to *de se* form. Burge's argument, then, fails to undermine the reductionist position in the manner he has envisioned. These arguments do not show to be false Burge's claim that *de se* form plays a unique role of the sort he has suggested, but they do show that Burge's arguments in "Memory and Persons" have failed to demonstrate this assertion. I believe the arguments of this paper suggest that a more promising route for Burge to take in forming a rebuttal would be to attempt to show that rather than considering *de se* form to possess some functional role which *de se** form could not possess, we must consider *de se* form to possess a sort of normative force which *de se** form could not. That is, Burge might suggest that *de se** states may not be adequate normative guides in the exercise of the

core competencies, or even in the exercise of the functional analogues of those competencies which Shoemaker suggests the Parfit people exercise.

But to give up the functional strand of the argument in favor of the pursuit of this normative strand would entail the disavowal of a claim Burge states repeatedly throughout “Memory and Persons”, viz. the claim that “memory, with its *de se* presumptions and its presuppositions of trans-temporal identity—deriving from the individuation of exercises of basic sorts of agency—is a condition on the possibility of an individual’s having a representational mind” (Burge, 306). This is a metaphysical claim pertaining to the function of *de se* form in the individuation of mental states; to accept that the rebuttal to reductionists must be recast in normative terms would be to accept that this central claim in Burge’s essay is incorrect. The arguments contained in the present paper may not have touched the normative question, but they have provided grounds for considering Burge to have overstated the metaphysical implications of his account, particularly with regard to this central claim about the conditions entailed in possessing a representational mind. Nothing Burge says in “Memory and Persons” would support the assertion that creatures whose lives involve an episode of fission could not possibly possess representational minds.

Nonetheless, it must be stated that the arguments I have presented in this essay have been thoroughly exploratory in nature and only touch on a part of the vast range of issues Burge deals with in “Memory and Persons”. Though I consider this essay to have provided some considerations which support a reductionist account of persons, a much more thorough and more fully considered analysis would be necessary in order to ground

any definitive conclusion regarding the debate between reductionists and anti-reductionists.

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