

### **Realism About Tense and Perspective**

What things are there? Well, there are some things of which I am perceptually aware – a chewed up pencil, a computer screen, the sound of metal scraping against metal from a construction site across the street. But maybe that's just the start of it. Maybe there are further things, things that are *distant* in various ways from these things. For example:

- Things of which I am perceptually unaware, like the cup on the shelf behind me, the quarter in my wallet, and Bob Stalnaker.
- Far-away things, like Seyfert's Sextet, the Crab Nebula and the Large Magellanic Cloud.
- Past and future things, like Joan of Arc, the strike with which Big Ben marked the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the strike with which Big Ben will mark the beginning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century, and the 70<sup>th</sup> American president.
- Things that never have existed or will exist in our world, like the children Joan of Arc might have had if she had not seen visions.

For each of these very different ways of being distant, there are interesting philosophical questions to be asked about the ontological status of things that are distant in this way.

First question: Are there such things? Call people who answer no to this question *eliminativists about distance*.

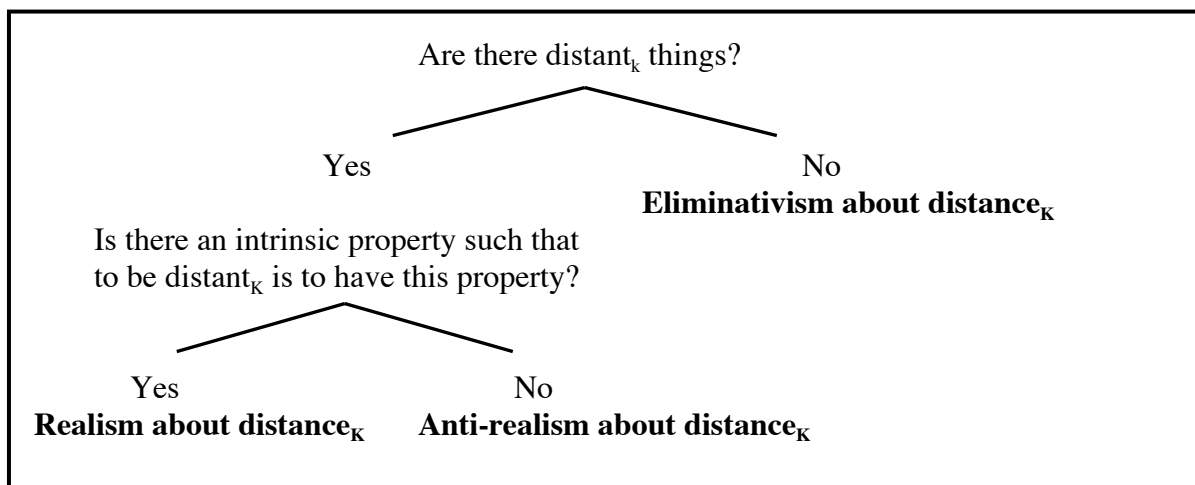
Second question: If there are such things, are they in some interesting way different from proximate things? This question needs some work. Of course distant things are different from proximate things: they are distant! Of course this difference is interesting:

that's why we are asking questions about it! One way to get clearer about what is being asked is to distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic properties. Think of a property as a way for a thing to be. A property is *extrinsic* when being that way involves standing in some relation to some other things, or failing to stand in some relation to some other things, *intrinsic* otherwise. Now we can ask: is there an intrinsic property shared by all and only proximate things, and another intrinsic property shared by all and only distant things? Still this question needs more work. Of course there are such properties! Take the things of which I am perceptually aware. Each of these things is intrinsically unique (nothing else has precisely the mass and shape of this chewed up pencil). So the property of being intrinsically just like the chewed up pencil, or intrinsically just like the computer screen, or intrinsically just like the sound of metal scraping against metal... is shared by all and only the things of which I am perceptually aware. But this is not the sort of property we are interested in. Better: is there an intrinsic property such that to be proximate is to have this property, an intrinsic property such that to be distant is to have this property? Call people who answer yes to this question *realists about distance*, people who answer no to this question *anti-realists about distance*.<sup>1</sup>

So, for any particular kind of distance,  $\text{distance}_K$ , we have the three views in bold:

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<sup>1</sup> A terminological point: With respect to past and future things, eliminativists are commonly known as 'presentists', anti-eliminativists as 'eternalists'. And, following McTaggart (1908), eliminativists and realists are commonly known as species of 'A-theorists', anti-realists as 'B-theorists.' So realism about the past and future, the view I will be calling 'tense realism', is sometimes known as 'eternalist A-theory'. With all due respect to McTaggart's great paper, his choice of terminology was poor – characterless, unmemorable. I will not use it here.



Here's a demographic observation. Some forms of eliminativism and realism about distance have received more attention than others. There are vast literatures on eliminativism and realism about possibilia, and on eliminativism and realism about past and/or future things. Many philosophers defend these views and many more take them seriously. But much, much less has been written on eliminativism and realism about things of which I am not perceptually aware. Almost no philosophers defend these views, and few take them seriously.

Why is this? Well, that is a big question. For present purposes, let's narrow it down to a manageable size. Why is it that so much has been written on realism about the past and future (henceforth *tense realism*), but so little about realism about things of which I am not perceptually aware (henceforth *perspectival realism*)?

In this article I will survey what I take to be the best arguments for and against tense realism and perspectival realism. But my stance will not be entirely impartial. I think that perspectival realism is in many ways a better view than tense realism. I think it a pity that tense realism has received so much more attention. My aim is to explain why. In the first

section I will suggest that the major considerations that support tense realism also support perspectival realism. In the second I will suggest that the major problems that afflict tense realism do not afflict perspectival realism. In the third I will suggest that perspectival realism is a less absurd view than it may appear.

### 1. Why Be a Tense Realist?

Tense realists say that past, present and future entities (where I mean ‘entities’ to be understood very broadly – to include people, material objects, moments, events etc.) exist. They say that some of these entities precede or succeed others. And they say an entity’s being past, present or future consists in its having a distinctive intrinsic property.

What moves them to accept this view? It is not that they think that our best scientific theories posit important intrinsic differences between past, present and future entities. Textbooks on foundational physics don’t mention such differences. It is rather that they think that realism about tense is uniquely capable of making sense of the phenomenology of temporal experience.<sup>2</sup> It represents the world as we perceive it to be, in a way that anti-realism does not.

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<sup>2</sup> I should note that I am focusing on this consideration because I take it to be the *best* reason to be a tense realist. As a matter of fact, tense realism has a long history, and tense realists have been moved by many different considerations. Some of these considerations now seem obsolete. For example, some philosophers have worried that tense anti-realists (eternalists who deny that there are intrinsic tensed properties) cannot account for the content of our tense-involving beliefs and utterances. This worry was famously voiced by A.N. Prior in 1951, in response to Quine’s anti-realist semantics for tensed utterances. Prior had a way with words:

‘One says, e.g. “Thank goodness that’s over!”, and not only is this, when said, quite clear without any date appended, but it says something which it is impossible that any use of a tenseless copula with a date should convey. It certainly doesn’t mean the same as, e.g. “Thank goodness the date of the conclusion of that thing is Friday June 15, 1954”, even if it be said then. (Nor, for that matter, does it mean “Thank goodness the conclusion of that thing is contemporaneous with this utterance”. Why should anyone thank goodness for that?)’

But in subsequent years a number of philosophers, prominently Lewis (see Lewis 1979), Perry (see Perry 1979) and Stalnaker (see, most recently, Stalnaker 2008), have developed, to their own satisfaction, a

There are really two thoughts here. The first appeals to the *non-relational character of temporal experience*. I am watching the Olympic 10,000 meters. Tirunesh Dibaba finishes far ahead of her American rival. Call the event of Dibaba finishing *D*, and the event of her rival finishing *R*. Realists and their opponents agree that *D* happens before *R*, *D* happens at 3:29:54.66 pm on 15 August 2008, *R* happens at 3:30:22.22 pm on 15 August 2008. But this is not what I see. I do not see *D happening before R*, I do not see *D happening in relation to one moment, R happening in relation to another moment*. I see *D happening*, and later I see *R happening*. Generally, we do not only see, hear and feel events happening before other events, events happening at times, objects coming into being before other objects, objects being at times. We also see, hear and feel events happening, objects being. By saying that entities have tensed properties, and that their having them is not matter their standing in some relation to other entities, the realist about tense takes herself to be representing the world as we see, hear and feel it to be.

The second thought appeals to the *experienced passage of time*. This is notoriously difficult to articulate in a precise way. The rough idea is that the anti-realist picture fails to represent time passing in the way that we feel it does. To represent time passing in the way that we feel it does we need to add intrinsic tensed properties to the anti-realist picture, and then stipulate that the distribution of these properties changes. According to a famous metaphor: the present is like a spotlight, illuminating a three-dimensional slice of

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variety of anti-realist theories of the content of tense-involving beliefs and utterances. (These are known as different theories of 'de se content', because they treat tense-involving beliefs and utterances in broadly the same way they treat self-involving beliefs and utterances). If a philosopher wants to say that none of these theories work, the burden is now very much upon her to explain why.

a four-dimensional extended reality, and moving along this four-dimensionally extended reality at a remorseless pace.<sup>3</sup>

All aspects of this second thought are controversial. Some philosophers doubt that the moving spotlight picture makes any sense (what does it mean to say that the spotlight *moves*?). Some others doubt that there is a distinctive experience of a ‘passage of time’ that tense realism is uniquely capable of accommodating.

Let’s leave the second thought for now, and concentrate on the first: tense realism is uniquely capable of vindicating the non-relational character of temporal experience. If this thought moves me to accept tense realism, then a similar kind of thought may move me to accept perspectival realism. You and I are watching the medal ceremony for the 10,000 meters, me in front of the podium, you behind it. Dibaba is to the left of her American rival relative to my point of view. Dibaba is to the right of her American rival relative to your point of view. But neither of us sees this. I do not see *Dibaba to the left of her American rival relative to some point of view*. I see *Dibaba to the left of her American rival*. You do not see *Dibaba to the right of her American rival relative to some point of view*. You see *Dibaba to the right of her American rival*. Now you leave the ceremony, while I stick around. Dibaba is absent in relation to you, present in relation to me. But this is not how either of us experiences it. It is not that, for you, *Dibaba is absent in relation to some person*. For you, *Dibaba is absent*. It is not that, for me, *Dibaba is present in relation to some person*. For me, *Dibaba is present*.

So, if I am concerned to adopt a metaphysical picture that represents the world as I experience it to be, then in the first case I should take it that the Dibaba / American rival

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<sup>3</sup> The metaphor (in its original form a ‘policeman’s bullseye’) is due to C. D. Broad. See Broad (1923) p. 59.

pair has an intrinsic property: *having its faster half to the left*. In the second case I should take it that Dibaba has an intrinsic property: *being present*. This latter property is shared by all and only the things of which I am perceptually aware.

I conclude, then, that a major consideration that supports realism about tense also supports perspectival realism.

## 2. Why *Not* Be a Tense Realist?

There are many worries that you might have about tense realism. I will focus on two important kinds of worry.

First, there are worries from meta-ontology. Maybe the debate between realists and anti-realists about tense is *merely verbal* – maybe it is one of those debates where the source of the disagreement is just one party choosing to use words one way, another party choosing to use words another way. Or maybe it is based on a *conceptual confusion* – maybe it is one of those debates where both parties mistakenly assume that there is a distinction to be made between their respective positions because they are confused about concepts.

If you wish to get a quick feel for this worry, I recommend that you try to explain tense realism to a layperson. This is how the conversation is likely to go:

Philosopher: Tense realists are eternalists who believe in intrinsic tensed properties.

Layperson: What is an eternalist?

Philosopher: Eternalists believe that past, present and future things exist. So, for example, eternalists believe that Joan of Arc exists.

Layperson: They believe that she is up there in heaven?

Philosopher: No. They don't believe that she exists-now. They believe that she exists.

Layperson: You mean they believe that she *existed*.

Philosopher: No. They believe that she exists.

Layperson (after much thrashing around): It sounds like they are using words in a funny way. So when they say 'exists-now' they mean what I mean when I say 'exists'. When they say 'exists' they mean what I mean when I say 'exists or existed or will exist.'

Philosopher: No. Eternalists and their opponents, presentists, agree that you are right to say that Joan of Arc exists or existed or will exist, but they disagree over a further question: 'Does she exist?'

Layperson: I have absolutely no idea what you are talking about.

Philosopher: Okay... Well, maybe we will have more luck with the second component of the view. Tense realists believe that things have intrinsic tensed properties. So, for example, Joan of Arc's trial has the intrinsic property *being past*.

Layperson: Joan of Arc's trial *had* the intrinsic property *being past*?

Philosopher: No. It *has* the intrinsic property *being past*.

Layperson: Again, I have absolutely no idea what you are talking about.

The lesson to be learned from these conversations is that to distinguish realism about tense from other views in its vicinity we need to make use of a notion of tenseless existence, according to which it is not an analytic truth that all things that exist, exist-now, and we need to make use of a notion of tenseless property-instantiation, a notion that allows us to talk of past and future things *having* properties, and to distinguish the properties they *have* from the properties they *had*. These are not notions that laypeople readily comprehend.



This does not show that there is no substantive, interesting question about whether realism about tense is right. Many interesting, substantive questions (in math, for example) take years of training and great conceptual sophistication to understand. But it does raise worries. Some philosophers believe these worries are well-founded, others do not. I will not summarize their debate over the meta-ontology of time here, but I will point out that there are no analogous worries about the realism about the self.

Perspectival realists believe that things of which they are not perceptually aware exist – in the ordinary sense of ‘exist’. They believe that things of which they are perceptually aware have distinctive intrinsic properties that other things lack – in the ordinary sense of ‘have’. Maybe they are right, maybe they are wrong, but they do not need to make use of any suspicious notions to state their view.

The second sort of worry about tense realism concerns the role of *simultaneity* in the view. I watch Dibaba finishing the race. There’s a distinctive intrinsic property that the event of her finishing, call it event D, has, and it is in virtue of having that property that the event occurs now. What other events have the property? Does a supernova in the galaxy M81, call it event S, have the property? That depends, it would seem, on whether S occurs at the same time as D. But the theory of special relativity teaches us that all simultaneity is simultaneity-relative-to-an-inertial-frame-of-reference. It may be that relative to one frame  $F_{\text{Before}}$ , S occurs before D, relative to another frame  $F_{\text{Simultaneous}}$ , S occurs at the same time as D, and relative to yet another rest-frame  $F_{\text{After}}$ , S occurs after D. What, then, can a realist about tense say about whether S occurs now?

Well, she has two basic options. Either she accepts that special relativity tells us everything we need to know about simultaneity, or she denies it. If she accepts it then

there are a couple of ways for her to go. She can say that there is no one distinctive intrinsic property *being-now*, rather a family of extrinsic properties *being-now-in-relation-to- $F_{\text{Before}}$* , *being now-in-relation-to- $F_{\text{Simultaneous}}$*  etc. S has the property *being now-in-relation-to- $F_{\text{Simultaneous}}$* , but does not have the property *being-now-in-relation-to- $F_{\text{Before}}$* . Or she can say that there is a distinctive intrinsic property *being-now*, but the having of properties is a relational matter. S has-in-relation-to- $F_{\text{Simultaneous}}$  the property *being-now*. S does not have-in-relation-to- $F_{\text{Before}}$  the property *being-now*.

Whichever way she goes, the tense realist must back away from the simple claim that events occur now in virtue of instantiating an intrinsic property. And furthermore she must expose herself to a solipsistic worry. She is taking it that, for any frame  $F$ , the measure of whether an event  $E$  has the property *being-now-in-relation-to- $F$*  (or, thinking about it the second way, the measure of whether an event  $E$  has-in-relation-to- $F$  the property *being-now*) is whether  $E$  occurs simultaneously with  $D$ , relative to  $F$ . But there is no frame relative to which  $D$  is not simultaneous with  $D$ . So, for any frame  $F$ ,  $D$  has the property *being-now-in-relation-to- $F$*  (thinking about it the second way,  $D$  has-in-relation-to- $F$  the property of *being now*). This is not true of  $S$ . So there is a deep asymmetry in the universe between events that occur close to me, like  $D$ , and events that occur far from me, like  $S$ . The former events are now-relative to all frames (are, relative to all rest frames, now – thinking the second way), the latter are not. This is not the kind of asymmetry that tense realism was designed to generate.

The tense realist's other option is to deny that special relativity tells us everything there is to know about simultaneity. In addition to facts about frame-relative simultaneity,

given by special relativity, there are facts about absolute simultaneity. Event D, and all events absolutely simultaneous with it, have the intrinsic property *being-now*.

Of course it may be (tense realists don't have to say this, but it is a natural thing to say) that there is a connection between absolute simultaneity and the frame-relative simultaneity described by special relativity. It may be that there is a frame, call it the *Super Frame*, such that two events are absolutely simultaneous if and only if they are simultaneous relative to it. But special relativity doesn't tell us which frame is the Super Frame. Indeed, it doesn't tell us that one frame is the Super Frame. These are extra facts.

Is it awkward for the tense realist to posit such extra facts? Perhaps not. After all, tense realists were always committed to extra facts of a kind. Tense realists don't think that it is the business of a theory of physics to tell us whether an event has the intrinsic property being now, or even that some events have the intrinsic property being now. But you might worry that the tense realists' motivating idea about the phenomenology of temporal experience does not support such ontological profligacy. We started with the idea that certain events (e.g. Dibaba's finishing the 10,000 meters, the passage of your eyes across this section of text...) were special, unlike other events, and we have somehow ended up with the idea that a certain inertial frame of reference is special, unlike other inertial frames of reference. That's a big jump.

Again, I will not say that these worries are deadly for tense realism. But I will point out that there are no analogous worries for perspectival realism. Perspectival realism does not invoke the notion of simultaneity, or indeed any notion borrowed from physics.

### 3. What Perspectival Realists Can Learn From Tense Realists

Let's review where we are. In the first section of this paper I suggested that a significant consideration that supports tense realism also supports perspectival realism. In the second I suggested that two significant problems that afflict tense realism do not afflict perspectival realism.

If you wish to pursue the problems further, I can recommend some reading.<sup>4</sup> In any case, I hope that I have said enough so far to make one question salient: Why has tense realism received so much attention and perspectival realism so little?

Part of the answer may have to do with what perspectival realism entails. My adopting the view commits me to a kind of solipsism – not the kind of solipsism according to which only I exist, but a kind of solipsism according to which I am surrounded by a sphere of intrinsic privilege. There is a distinctive intrinsic property had by all and only the things of which I am aware. It is in virtue of their having this property that they are things of which I am aware. I will not win many friends by adopting this view. Outside of philosophy departments the word 'solipsism' serves interchangeably as the name of a *doctrine*, the name of a *vice*, and the name of a *psychological ailment*.

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<sup>4</sup> On meta-ontology: Ted Sider gives a robust defense of the idea that there is an interesting question about which of tense-eliminativism, tense-realism and tense-anti-realism is right in Sider (1999) and Sider (2006). To get a sense of why it may be difficult to distinguish the views, I recommend Zimmerman (2005). The debate here is embedded in a more general debate about the status of questions about what exists. This more general debate first came into focus in exchanges between Quine (see especially Quine (1948) and (1951)), and Carnap (see especially Carnap (1936), (1956) and (1969)). Chalmers, Manley and Wasserman eds. (2009) provides a wide-ranging overview of its current state. On special relativity: Arthur Prior (1996) and Dean Zimmerman (2007) argue for reconciling tense realism and tense eliminativism with special relativity by supplementing special relativity with facts about absolute simultaneity. Brad Skow (forthcoming) suggests a way to reconcile tense realism with special relativity without doing so.

But if we cared about winning friends we would not have become philosophers. Are there good philosophical reasons to avoid adopting perspectival realism? What's so bad about the view?

First pass: Perspectival realism is absurd. The goal of philosophical writing is persuasion. Philosophical writers try to persuade us to believe what they believe. Here's a book about perspectival realism by *Penny the Perspectival Realist*. Penny believes that there is a sphere of intrinsic distinction surrounding herself, Penny. Does she really expect me to believe the same? Am I to put her book down, go off to my class and announce: "Penny the Perspectival Realist has convinced me that she is special, that there is a sphere of intrinsic distinction surrounding her, that all and only the entities of which she is aware bear the intrinsic property being-entities-of-which-I-am-aware"? Surely not. And if this writer doesn't expect me to believe all that she believes, then why should I take her seriously?

But this worry, if it is a worry at all, would appear to apply with equal force to tense realism. Here's a book about tense realism, written in 1975 by *Timmy the Tense Realist*. Timmy believes that events of 1975 are intrinsically distinguished. Does he really expect me to believe the same? Am I to put his book down, go off to my class and announce: "Timmy the Tense Realist has convinced me that the events of 1975 are special, that those events alone have the intrinsic property being-now." Surely not. And if this writer doesn't expect me to believe what he believes, then why should I take him seriously?

Second pass: Perspectival realism is absurd in a way that tense realism is not. If I adopt tense realism then there is a way in which I can embrace all of Timmy the Tense Realist's beliefs and he can embrace all of mine. I can insist that Timmy was right to

believe and assert that the events of 1975 had the intrinsic property being-now, because it was the case, back then, that the events of 1975 had the intrinsic property being-now.

Timmy can insist that I will be right to believe and assert that the events of 2009 have the intrinsic property being-now, because it will be the case that the events of 2009 have the intrinsic property being-now. Timmy and I can agree that when we are assessing what past and future people should believe and assert, the question is not whether the world *is* the way that they believed and asserted (will believe and assert) it to be, but rather whether the world *was* the way that they believed and asserted (will believe and assert) it to be. But there seems to be no analogous way for me to adopt perspectival realism and embrace all that Penny the Perspectival Realist believes. When we are assessing what other people should believe, the question is not whether the world *is* the way they believe it to be, but rather whether the world... what? There seems to be nothing for the perspectival realist that can play the role that how things *were* or *will be* plays for the tense realist. So the perspectival realist, unlike the tense realist, must think that all other people, including other perspectival realists, are fundamentally mistaken about the distribution of interesting intrinsic properties.

Let's go over this worry more carefully. As a tense realist, I embrace what Timmy the Tense Realist believed and asserted by making two moves. First, I add a further layer of facts to the simple tense realist picture. I say that, in addition to facts about what properties things *have*, there are facts about what properties things *had*. The events of 1975 *have* the intrinsic property being-past, *had* the intrinsic property being-now.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> What does the tense realist mean by saying that 'events of 1975 *had* the intrinsic property being-now'? Maybe she takes this to be primitive fact, inexplicable in more basic terms, or maybe she doesn't. Maybe, for example, she says that there is a second temporal dimension – hyper-time. Events may exist at different

Second, I say that these extra facts have a peculiar bearing on the correctness of belief and assertion. We should not think of, e.g., Timmy's beliefs and assertions as mistaken, because things were just as Timmy believed and asserted them to be.

Of course, it is not enough for me just to say this. I will need to spell out the general view of the correctness of belief and assertion in detail. And I will need to explain how the correctness of beliefs and assertions relates to their contents – where the *content* of an assertion / belief is what is asserted / believed.

There are various ways of doing it. Here's one. I say that beliefs and assertions are correct if and only their contents are true, incorrect if and only if their contents are false. But I say that beliefs and assertions have content only if they have the property being-now. So, e.g., Timmy's 1975 brain states (which exist, I remind you) are not beliefs with content, and the events of Timmy moving his mouth and tapping away at his typewriter (which exist, I remind you) are not assertions with content. So it is no good asking "Is Timmy right? Are his beliefs and assertions correct or incorrect?" They are neither. If we are interested in assessing Timmy we must instead ask "Was Timmy right, thirty five years ago? Were his beliefs and assertions correct or incorrect, thirty five years ago?" And the answer is yes. Thirty five years ago, Timmy's beliefs and assertions had the property being-now, so they had content. And thirty five years ago the content (*that events of 1975 have the property being-now*) was true. So, thirty five years ago, Timmy's beliefs and assertions were correct.

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moments in hyper-time. Events may have different properties at different moments in hyper-time. She means that, at some hyper-moment in the hyper-past, events of 1975 have the intrinsic property being-now.

Here's another way of doing it. I say that beliefs and assertions are correct if and only if their contents are true, incorrect if and only if their contents are false. I concede that Timmy's 1975 beliefs and assertions have content. But I say that their content has changed over time. Thirty five years ago, their content was *that events of 1975 have the property being-now*. Their content is *that, thirty five years ago, events of 1975 had the property being-now*. Thirty five years ago, their content was true, so thirty five years ago, they were correct. Their content is true, so they are correct.

Here's yet another way of doing it. I deny that beliefs and assertions are correct if and only their contents are true, incorrect if and only if their contents are false. I say that past and future beliefs and assertions are correct if and only their contents were (will be) true when they had (will have) the property being-now. So, e.g., Timmy's 1975 beliefs and assertions have false content, but they are correct because, back when they had the property being-now, their contents were true. When I look back at what Timmy believed and said, I should think: "False – but rightly so."

Whichever way I choose to go, I can embrace all that Timmy believes. Can I embrace all that Penny the Perspectival Realist believes by making similar moves? The worry is that I can't.

But I can. My first move is to add another layer of facts to the simple perspectival realist picture. I say that, in addition to facts about how things are, there are facts about how, from other people's points of view, things are. So the Dibaba-American rival pair has the property of having its faster half to the left. (Note that this remains an intrinsic property of the pair. It does not have this property in virtue of standing in any relation to anything else. In particular, it does not have this property in virtue of standing in any



relation to me.) But from your point of view the Dibaba-American rival pair has the property of having its faster half to the right. (Again, the property is intrinsic. From your point of view it does not have this property in virtue of standing in any relation to anything else. In particular, it does not have this property in virtue of standing in any relation to you). My second move is to say that these extra facts have the familiar bearing on the correctness of belief and assertion. I should not think of, e.g., Penny's beliefs and assertions as mistaken, because from Penny's point of view things are just as Penny believes and asserts them to be.

Again, I will need to explain how, in general, the correctness of beliefs and assertions relates to their contents. And there are different ways to do it. I could say that beliefs and assertions are correct if and only if their contents are true, but deny that Penny's beliefs and assertions have content – it's rather that from Penny's point of view Penny's beliefs and assertions have content. So there's no point my asking "is Penny correct or incorrect?" She is neither. The relevant question is "from Penny's point of view, is she correct?" And the answer is yes.

Or I could say that beliefs and assertions are correct if and only if their contents are true, but say that from different points of view, their contents are different. The content of (e.g.) Penny's assertions is *that from Penny's point of view Dibaba is to the right*. From Penny's point of view the content of Penny's beliefs and assertions is *that Dibaba is to the right*. So Penny is correct, and from her point of view she is correct.

Or I could deny that beliefs and assertions are correct if and only if their contents are true. I could say they are correct if and only if from the point of view of the believer / asserter their content is true. So the contents of Penny's beliefs and assertions (e.g. *that*

*Dibaba is to the right*) are false, but the beliefs and assertions are correct, because from her point of view their contents are true. Confronted with Penny's beliefs and assertions, I should think "False – but rightly so."<sup>6</sup>

But, whichever way I flesh out my view of the correctness of belief and assertion, have I not incurred a cost? My first move was to add some facts to my simple perspectival realist picture: facts about how, from other people's points of view, things are. Isn't that a major departure from the central perspectival realist idea?

I don't think so. I find myself surrounded by other people, outwardly very like me, and I must in some way acknowledge the reality of their alternative points of view. I cannot, on pain of abandoning my perspectival realism, do it by saying that all perspectival properties are relational – e.g. *Dibaba is to the right* in relation to my point of view, to the left in relation to other people's points of view. I must insist that *Dibaba is just to the right*. So I admit some extra facts. *Dibaba is just to the right*, but from other people's points of view *Dibaba is just to the left*. It is a very natural move.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Perspectival realism shares many of the virtues and lacks many of the vices of tense realism. The central tense realist idea is to take appearances seriously, to take it that the world has certain perspectival features that we represent it to have in experience. If you find yourself sympathetic to this idea then I recommend that you consider going the whole hog, and becoming a perspectival realist.

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<sup>6</sup> I should mention that I discuss both moves in detail in my new (2009) book.

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