

# Replies

LYNNE RUDDER BAKER

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

I am grateful to Dean Zimmerman, Michael Rea, and Derk Pereboom for their close criticism and helpful suggestions for *Persons and Bodies*. My ideas—especially about the definition of ‘constitution’—have been significantly improved by their comments.

## Dean Zimmerman

I appreciate Zimmerman’s concise summary of the notion of constitution as I construe it. I also appreciate Zimmerman’s correction of my definition of ‘constitution.’ I accept both his (initial) revision of the definition of ‘constitution’ and his diagnosis of how I went wrong. Letting ‘F\*’ (or ‘G\*’) stand for the property of having F (or G) as one’s primary kind, the definition ought to read as follows:

$x$  constitutes  $y$  at  $t =_{df}$  There are distinct primary kinds  $F$  and  $G$ , and  $G$ -favorable circumstances  $D$ , such that:

- (1)  $x$  has  $F^*$  and  $y$  has  $G^*$ ;
- (2)  $x$  and  $y$  are spatially coincident at  $t$ ;
- (3)  $x$  is in  $D$  at  $t$ ;
- (4) It is necessary that:  $\forall z[(F^*zt \ \& \ z \text{ is in } D \text{ at } t) \rightarrow \exists u(G^*ut \ \& \ u \text{ is spatially coincident with } z \text{ at } t)]$ ;
- (5) It is possible that:  $(x \text{ exists at } t \ \& \ \sim \exists w[G^*wt \ \& \ w \text{ is spatially coincident with } x \text{ at } t])$ ;
- (6) If  $y$  is immaterial, then  $x$  is also immaterial.

My paltry defense for poorly formulating the definition is that I was trying to make it easier for the reader; this defense is paltry because the ‘easier’ definition led to me say that constitution is nontransitive. And, as Zimmerman shows, constitution is transitive. Transitivity makes the notion of

constitution more elegant than my notion of a chain of constitutionally-related objects from, e.g., human persons “down” to aggregates of particles: If a human body constitutes a person at *t*, and an aggregate of organs constitutes the human body at *t*, then the aggregate of organs constitutes the person at *t*; and so on. There’s nothing like a good argument to change one’s intuitions.

Zimmerman’s main objection to the Constitution View of the natural world (and of human persons) is that the notion of parthood is needed to explicate ‘constitution’. To illustrate the need for appeal to parthood, Zimmerman offers a counterexample to my definition. The counterexample (along with an earlier one offered by Anil Gupta) is designed to show that things not wholly material satisfy the definition of ‘constitution.’ Suppose that in certain circumstances, living human bodies generate “ghosts” made of (immaterial) “ectoplasm” that is located just where the bodies are. I responded to this counterexample (pp. 208-12), but Zimmerman says that I didn’t get to the root of the problem. He produces variations on the original counterexample (and on Gupta’s counterexample as well). Need I accept these counterexamples?

Although it is not in the spirit of contemporary metaphysics to reject outré examples, it seems to me that we have no reason to think that the counterexamples describe metaphysically possible scenarios. (Peter van Inwagen, for example, argues for modal skepticism with respect to matters unrelated to the concerns of everyday life.<sup>1</sup>) If one is skeptical about the possibility of such scenarios as the one in which blue ectoplasm generates a happy ghost and a sad ghost, then she has no reason to alter the definition of ‘constitution’ to accommodate the (putative) counterexamples.<sup>2</sup>

But, Zimmerman persists: It would do no harm to replace the last clause of the definition with one concerning parts. He generously offers a revised last clause—he labels it ‘(f\*)’—that would avoid the counterexamples:

(6\*) Every part of *y* has a part in common with some part of *x*, and vice versa.

Zimmerman asks: “Why not just jump on the mereological bandwagon, and admit that sharing of parts is crucial to the notion of constitution?” I have two main reasons for objecting to this seemingly-innocent friendly amendment. The first is that mereological theories, in my opinion, have

---

<sup>1</sup> Peter van Inwagen, “The Problem of Evil, the Problem of Air, and the Problem of Silence,” in *God, Knowledge and Mystery: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995): 84. By the way, van Inwagen, like Zimmerman, has pressed me to appeal to mereological language in my construal of constitution.

<sup>2</sup> Theodore Sider offers a similar (putative) counterexample to show that in a world with different laws and interpenetrating matter, a lump, say, would constitute too many things at once. See Sider’s review of *Persons and Bodies* in the *Journal of Philosophy* 99 (2002): 45-48.

rendered the word 'part' hopeless for philosophical purposes. The second is that appeal to parts points in the wrong direction in the case of persons.

(1) To begin with, I am dubious that there is a single part-whole relation for there to be a theory of. The way in which philosophy is part of the curriculum is different from the way in which the Supreme Court is part of the Judiciary, or the way in which losing gracefully is part of the game or the way in which owning a home is part of the American dream. Even for material objects, 'part' is not univocal. Intentional objects—objects that could not exist in a world without propositional attitudes—have intentional properties essentially. And things that have intentional properties essentially have parts in two different ways. One way that part of your \$10 check to me would be missing is that you forgot to sign it; without the signature, part of the check is missing. Another way that part of your \$10 check to me would be missing is that you absent-mindedly tore off the part of the paper where the signature is. The signature and the part of the piece of paper where the signature is are parts of the check in different ways. Since I do not think that there is such a thing as *the* part-whole relation, I am reluctant to import talk of parts into my definition of 'constitution.'

In philosophical contexts, the word 'part' is not the ordinary English word. It has taken on the coloration of a formal theory of "the" part-whole relation, which has two prominent versions: the Calculus of Individuals of Leonard and Goodman, and the Mereology of Lesniewski.<sup>3</sup> On both these versions, "the" part-whole relation is extensional. Since I obviously reject the thesis of mereological extensionality—along with mereological essentialism, mereological supervenience, mereological universalism, and every other thesis that I know of with a title of the form 'mereological x'—I want to steer clear of mereological ideas. There is nothing wrong with the word 'part' in ordinary discourse; but in philosophical contexts, it has acquired meanings that I do not intend. [It's enough to drive one into the arms of Wittgenstein.]

(2) The second reason that I resist the apparently friendly amendment—(f\*)—is that I want to use the notion of constitution to understand the relation between persons and their bodies, and I do not think that that relation is illuminated by considering parts. The property of being a person, unlike the property of, say, being a steam engine, has nothing to do with parts or the relations among parts.<sup>4</sup> The behavior of a person—e.g., her perjuring herself—is not even describable in terms of the behavior of her parts. (For intentionally-defined objects in general (like passports or drivers' licenses), the properties of their parts are largely irrelevant to what such objects are or

<sup>3</sup> Peter Simons, *Parts: A Study in Ontology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987): 1.

<sup>4</sup> I share Roderick Chisholm's view that being a human person cannot be understood in terms of having such-and-such parts; but, unlike Chisholm, I do not conclude that persons must be simples.

to their causal properties.) What is fundamental to the relation between human persons and their bodies is that it is a relation between kinds—in this case, a psychological kind and a biological kind. To focus on parts diverts attention from that fact.

If I were convinced that Zimmerman's counterexamples described genuine metaphysical possibilities, I would accept the replacement of (6) by (6\*) in the definition of 'constitution.' However, I prefer to stick with (6) and appeal to modal skepticism to ward off the (putative) counterexamples that motivate replacement of (6) by (6\*). As I have mentioned, my central interest is in the basic conception of constitution as it contributes to a nonreductive view of the natural world. The details are negotiable.

### Michael Rea

Rea raises several objections to my definition of 'constitution.' I want to respond to three of these: (1) That the characterization of G-favorable (or K-favorable) circumstances is not coherent; (2) That the definition of 'constitution' does not guarantee that constitution is asymmetric; (3) That constitution is just co-location.

(1) Rea says that the concept of K-favorable circumstances is "not coherently characterized." Moreover, he says, "on what appears to be the most faithful reconstruction of this concept, the definition yields the result that constitution is neither symmetric nor asymmetric." I demur on both counts: K-favorable circumstances are, I admit, underdescribed—but hardly "not coherently characterized." And what Rea takes to be "the most faithful reconstruction of this concept" is faithful neither to what I meant nor to what I said.

Although I did make a slip in characterizing G-favorable circumstances, it was clear that I intended to characterize G-favorable circumstances in such a way that the presence G-favorable circumstances by themselves do not entail instantiation of a G. As I explicitly said in *Persons and Bodies*: "For any particular place and time, the presence of G-favorable circumstances is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the property G to be instantiated then and there." (p. 42) I admit that I should not have also said that G-favorable circumstances "entail instantiation of every property, *except for primary-kind properties*, that must be exemplified for something to be a G." Rather, I should have said that G-favorable circumstances "entail instantiation of every property, *except for the primary-kind property being a G (and properties that entail being a G)*, that must be exemplified for something to be a G." Although this seems a rather easy correction to make, I'm afraid that my error here seriously misled Rea about the general idea of G-favorable circumstances.

For example, Rea says that ice-block favorable circumstances include the presence of  $H_2O$  molecules, and hence includes an aggregate of  $H_2O$  molecules that has a primary kind property, being  $H_2O$ .<sup>5</sup> He goes on to say that “since the presence of ice-block-favorable circumstances in [a region] R entails the presence in R of an aggregate of  $H_2O$  molecules, it also entails the presence in R of a block of ice. Hence, the bare presence of ice-block favorable circumstances provides a sufficient condition for the existence of a block of ice.” This is mistaken. Ice-block favorable circumstances are those circumstances such that if you put an aggregate of  $H_2O$  molecules in them, you would have a block of ice. Ice-block favorable circumstances (in a freezer, say) surely exist in the absence of an aggregate of  $H_2O$  molecules, and hence in the absence of a block of ice.

Rea also takes issue with the example of an ice sculpture. I think that Rea is mistaken about the social conventions that are among ice-sculpture-favorable circumstances. An ice sculpture is made for display, and is typically not displayed in a freezer, but rather, e.g., on a buffet table at a party, where it slowly melts, and lasts—so the host hopes—for the duration of the party. Being in a low-temperature environment is not an ice-sculpture-favorable condition at all.

Rea concludes this section by offering a definition that he says “seems to be in the right spirit.” He says: “An object is in K-favorable circumstances just in case it exemplifies whatever properties are necessary for the exemplification of K, or whatever properties count as those by virtue of which an object coincides with a K.” This is certainly not in the spirit of my view: K-favorable circumstances do not include an object that is a K (or that has whatever properties are necessary for the exemplification of K). Rather, K-favorable circumstances are the circumstances such that if something of the right sort were put in them, there would be a K.<sup>6</sup> Again: pace Rea, the mere existence of K-favorable circumstances does not entail that there is a K in them.

I did not offer a definition of ‘K-favorable circumstances’ at all. There are wildly different K-favorable circumstances for different primary kinds—an artwork is among the statue-favorable circumstances; roles in biological reproduction are among gene-favorable circumstances. For this reason, a *definition* of K-favorable circumstances seems less illuminating than a broad characterization accompanied by examples.

---

<sup>5</sup> Rea asks, What is the primary kind of the aggregate of all the organs in your body? It is a composite of the primary kinds of all the organs. The organs in your body are most fundamentally heart/liver/kidneys/skin, etc. Put that aggregate in human-body-favorable circumstances and you have a human body. [This raises a number of theoretically interesting questions that are beyond the limitations of this Reply.]

<sup>6</sup> Dean Zimmerman helpfully suggested characterizing G-favorable circumstances by means of open sentences.

By way of summary, let me respond to the following statement of Rea's: "I do not see how the definition of K-favorable circumstances can be revised so as to avoid all of these problems [about the ice block and the ice sculpture] while preserving the basic idea that the notion was supposed to express." First, I did not offer a definition of K-favorable circumstances. Second, the cases as Rea discusses them [the ice block and the ice sculpture] are not really problems at all. Third, Rea did not say what he thinks is "the basic idea that the notion [of K-favorable circumstances] was supposed to express," whatever he thinks that it is, I doubt that I would recognize it as mine.

(2) I'm afraid that the misunderstanding about K-favorable circumstances reaches into Rea's discussion of asymmetry. Let Alice be a person and Body be her body. By the definition of 'constitution,' Body constitutes Alice. Does Alice constitute Body, according to the definition? I say no; Rea says yes. Rea thinks that clause (c) is satisfied for 'Alice constitutes Body' on the following grounds: "Assuming, as Baker does, that persons are never identical to bodies, it is surely necessary that any person in human-body-favorable circumstances—any person who exemplified (or coincides with something that exemplifies) all of the properties by virtue of which something counts as a human body—will coincide with a human body."

But the part of the just-quoted sentence within the dashes is *not* what I mean by being in human-body-favorable circumstances. A Martian person (constituted not by a human body, but by a green-slime body) in human-body-favorable circumstances would not thereby coincide with a human body. So, clause (c) is not satisfied for 'Alice constitutes Body.' Asymmetry stands.

The same point emerges from Rea's generalization of his claim about G-favorable circumstances. Rea says that (2) does not follow from (1):

- (1) Possibly: a G exists that is not constituted by an F,
- (2) Not necessarily: every G in *F-favorable circumstances* coincides with an F.

I can illustrate the connection between (1) and (2). Imagine two machines: Machine #1 has as output pieces of the special paper used for paper money in the U.S., and Machine #2 takes the output from Machine #1 as input. The output of the Machine #2 is a dollar constituted by a piece of paper. Take a silver dollar and put it into Machine #1. The silver dollar is in piece-of-special-paper-favorable circumstances (Machine #1 usually turns out pieces of special paper), but the silver dollar does not thereby coincide with a piece of paper. (The silver dollar would probably break the machine.) 'Possibly a dollar exists that is not constituted by a piece of special paper (e.g., a silver dollar)' is an instance of (1), and 'Not necessarily every dollar (e.g., the silver dollar) in piece-of-special-paper-favorable circumstances coincides with a piece

of special paper' is an instance of (2). In this example anyway, we can derive (2) from (1).<sup>7</sup>

In any case, no technical problem with the definition of 'constitution' would induce me to give up the asymmetry of constitution. Indeed, asymmetry could be guaranteed by defining, first, 'constitution\*', which is just like constitution without the claim of asymmetry. Then, I could define 'x constitutes y at t' as 'x constitutes\* y at t & y does not constitute\* x at t.' Asymmetry is at the heart of my idea of constitution, and I would modify the definition of 'constitution' in whatever way required to insure that constitution is asymmetric.

(3) Rea says that the definition of 'constitution' "(C) provides no basis for the claim that constitution is a relation intermediate between identity and separate existence that is not already provided by the simpler coincidence theory of constitution." This is simply not so.

In the first place, as we have seen, constitution is asymmetric and co-location is symmetric. In the second place, the idea of derivative properties—parasitic on the idea of constitution—helps account for the unity of a constituted object. (It's inaccurate to say, "Her own account of having properties derivatively could as easily be adopted by a standard coincidence theorist as by someone who endorses Baker's view." Reference to constitution occurs in the *definiens* of 'having a property derivatively.') In the third place, co-location seems to be a matter of two separate things that happen to coincide. Constitution is not a matter of two separate things that happen to coincide. The definition of 'constitution' puts constraints on which primary kinds can be related by constitution. It's not just an accident that you don't find fire-plugs constituting bulldogs.

Indeed, I can show that constitution is neither identity nor separate existence. Define 'separate existence' in terms of constitution: x and y have separate existence at t if and only if (i) x and y exist at t, and (ii) There are no F and t' such that F can be had derivatively at t' and x and y are the same F at t'. (I have a definition of 'x and y are the same F at t' in terms of constitution.)<sup>8</sup> Now it is obvious that constitution is neither identity nor separate existence in the sense defined. Since constitution is like identity in some ways (constituteds and their constituters share many properties), and constitution is like separate existence in other ways (constituteds and their constituters have different persistence conditions), it is reasonable to say that constitution is a relation intermediate between identity and separate existence.

---

<sup>7</sup> Derk Pereboom has shown that the definition requires an addition to the antecedent of clause (c), but that's another story. See Pereboom's comment "On Baker's *Persons and Bodies*." For the accommodation, see my Reply to Derk Pereboom.

<sup>8</sup> "On Making Things Up: Constitution and its Critics" presented at the Chapel Hill Colloquium, Oct. 26, 2001 and forthcoming in *Philosophical Topics*.

The idea of constitution, with the attendant notions of primary kinds and of derivative properties, is a much richer idea than mere co-location.

### Derk Pereboom

Pereboom has written a probing critique of *Persons and Bodies*. Along with sympathetic suggestions, for which I am grateful, he has two objections to my definition of 'constitution' and an objection to my understanding of persons in terms of a first-person perspective.

1. The first objection concerns the clause in the definition that begins 'It is possible that....' (This is clause (d) in the original definition, which is clause (5) in the revised definition.) On my view, constitution is not identity. The clause in question says, in effect, that *x* could exist without being spatially coincident with anything whose primary kind is *G*.

- (d) It is possible that: (*x* exists at *t* &  $\sim\exists w[G$  is *w*'s primary kind at *t* & *w* is spatially coincident with *x* at *t*]).

Since I take identity to be classical identity (strict, necessary, Leibnizian), clause (d) of my definition of 'constitution' guarantees that if *x* constitutes *y*, then *x* and *y* are non-identical.

Pereboom says that clause (d) is too strong. He says that "there could be cases—given Baker's general position—where *x* constitutes *y* and where *x* could exist without being spatially coincident with *y* but not without *x* being spatially coincident with something of the same primary kind as *y*." He takes me to hold that belief tokens are constituted by neural tokens, and gives an example: Assuming that the primary kind of belief tokens is *belief*, consider a token belief that water is wet, constituted by a neural token. Given externalism, this case does not satisfy clause (d): Although the neural token could exist without there being a spatially coincident token belief that water is wet (on, say, Twin Earth), it is plausible to suppose that that neural token could not exist without a spatially coincident token belief of some sort or other. So, Pereboom says, here is a case which I would claim is one of constitution but which does not satisfy the definition of 'constitution.'

I have two responses, either of which would deflect the charge that clause (d) is too strong. First, I think that clause (d) escapes unscathed from Pereboom's externalist "belief-token" example. We could deny—as I have denied<sup>9</sup>—that neural tokens constitute particular mental tokens. Pereboom rightly says that I am an "externalist" about belief individuation. But I am not an externalist of the sort who think that there is an isomorphism between "belief tokens" and "neural tokens." I think of beliefs as properties, not as

<sup>9</sup> See my *Explaining Attitudes: A Practical Approach to the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and "Are Beliefs Brain States?" in *Explaining Beliefs: Lynne Rudder Baker and Her Critics*, Anthonie Meijers, ed. (Stanford: CSLI Publications, 2001).



concrete individuals or as particulars at all. Indeed, I think that beliefs that are properties of persons, not entities in brains. Properties are not related to the constitution relation as I have developed it.

Pereboom rightly says that I think that, although I am constituted by this body, I might not have been, and that this shows that constitution is not identity. But as I see it, this observation has nothing to do with mental states. I am a concrete individual constituted by this body, a concrete individual that is not identical to me. My belief at this moment that I am thinking about constitution is not a concrete individual constituted by anything. So Pereboom's "belief token" example does not count against clause (d) as originally stated.

If I did believe that there were "belief tokens," however, I would be the sort that Pereboom is thinking of.<sup>10</sup> I do think that the Constitution View profitably could be developed to apply to this (putative) relation between mental tokens and neural tokens, even though I would not hold the resulting view.

There is a second response that also deflects the charge against clause (d). If I were going to develop the Constitution View to apply to (putative) mental and neural tokens, I would take the primary kind of my belief token that water is wet to be a belief that water is wet. That is, instead of taking *belief* to be a primary kind, I'd take *belief that such-and-such* to be a primary kind. Doing so would leave clause (d) intact. Suppose (pace my own view) that your token belief that water is wet is constituted at *t* by a neural token, *N*. Then the relevant instance of clause (d) would be the following: It is possible that: Neural token *N* exists at *t*, and no spatially coincident thing that has being a belief that water is wet as its primary-kind property exists at *t*. As Pereboom implies, this is exactly what an externalist would want to say—on Twin Earth, the neural token *N* would constitute a belief that twin-water is wet. If one applies the Constitution View to the putative relation between mental and neural tokens in this way, clause (d) as I originally formulated it is not too strong, after all.

2. Pereboom's second criticism concerns the clause that begins 'It is necessary that....' (This is clause (c) in the original definition of 'constitution,' which is clause (4) in the revised definition.) I argued that constitution, on my definition, is asymmetric. Assuming that *x* has being an *F* as its primary-kind property and *y* has being a *G* as its primary-kind property and that *x* constitutes *y*, then I argued that *y* does not constitute *x*. There are two cases:

---

<sup>10</sup> See Derk Pereboom and Hilary Kornblith, "The Metaphysics of Irreducibility," *Philosophical Studies* 63 (1991): 125-45. (I may have misled Pereboom years ago by saying how important I thought this article was and how much I liked it.)

Case 1: Necessarily, everything of primary kind G is constituted by something of primary kind F. I pointed out that in this case, if x (whose primary kind is F) constitutes y (whose primary kind is G), then y does not constitute x—because clause (d) is not satisfied for ‘y constitutes x.’ Because Pereboom thought that I needed to weaken clause (d) in response to his belief-token example, he says that I would no longer have an argument for asymmetry in Case 1. But, as I just showed, I do not need to weaken clause (d).

Case 2: Not necessarily everything of primary kind G is constituted by something of primary kind F. In this case, I said, clause (c) in the definition of ‘constitution’ would be violated by ‘y constitutes x’—still assuming that x has being an F as its with primary-kind property and y has being a G as its primary-kind property and that x constitutes y. Suppose that a piece of marble constitutes a statue. If the statue also constituted the piece of marble, then by clause (c), for *any* statue in piece-of-marble-favorable circumstances, there would be a spatially coincident piece of marble. But since, as in Case 2, not every statue is constituted by a piece of marble, we may put a *bronze* statue in piece-of-marble circumstances, and it would still be a bronze statue, with no spatially coincident piece of marble. So clause (c) would not be satisfied for ‘the statue constitutes the piece of marble.’

Pereboom has a clever counterexample, which I’m afraid does force a revision of clause (c).<sup>11</sup> He asks: “If a statue can be a bronze statue even when it is in piece-of-marble-favorable circumstances, why can’t a lump be a plant-pot even when it is in statue-favorable circumstances?” I’d answer: it can. But, Pereboom goes on, “And if this is possible, then the statue won’t be constituted of the lump, by Baker’s definition.” Pereboom is right: According to clause (c), if a lump constituted a statue, then anything whose primary kind is a lump and is in statue-favorable circumstances would constitute a statue—even if in fact that lump already constituted a plant pot.

I think that I can avoid the counterexample by revising the antecedent of clause (c). The revision requires the notion of a ‘higher-order primary-kind property.’ We can understand higher-order primary kinds in terms of higher-order causal powers. (We’re familiar with the notion of higher-order causal powers from discussions of ‘downward causation.’)<sup>12</sup> Then:

(HO) G is a higher-order primary kind than F iff:

- (i) F and G are both primary kinds, and

---

<sup>11</sup> John Hawthorne offered a similar counterexample.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Jaegwon Kim, “The Nonreductivist’s Troubles with Mental Causation,” in *Supervenience and Mind: Selected Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 336-57. Whereas many philosophers (but not Pereboom) think that higher-order causal powers are reducible to lower-order causal powers, I do not.

- (ii) The property of being a G confers on its bearers higher-order causal powers than the property of being an F.

Now add the following to the antecedent of clause (c):

There is no primary kind H such that:

- (i) H is a higher-order primary kind than F &
- (ii) Being an H does not entail being a G, &
- (iii) Hzt

That is, for any primary kind H, if H is a higher-order primary kind than F, and being an H does not entail being a G, then z does not have H at t. Now we should replace clause (c) with (revised-c), which differs from (c) by the addition of clause (ii) to the antecedent:

(revised-c) It is necessary that:  $\forall z \forall t \{ [(i) z \text{ has } F \text{ as its primary kind \&}$

(ii)  $\forall H (\text{Being an } H \text{ is a higher-order primary-kind property than being an } F \& \text{ Being an } H \text{ does not entail being a } G) \rightarrow \sim Hzt) \&$

(iii)  $z \text{ is in } G\text{-favorable circumstances at } t \} \rightarrow$

$\exists u (u \text{ has } G \text{ as its primary kind \& } u \text{ is spatially coincident with } z \text{ at } t \}$

I think that (revised-c) will avoid Pereboom's counterexample. If the lump that constitutes a pot at t is put in statue-favorable circumstances at t, the lump does not thereby come to constitute a statue at t. Clause (ii) of (revised-c) is not satisfied in this case. Thus, there is no threat to asymmetry.<sup>13</sup> This amendment is messy but not ad hoc. It adds detail to the general thrust of constitution—namely, that there is an ontological hierarchy in nature.

3. Pereboom has several worries about the notion of the first-person perspective. (A) A human person comes into existence when a human body acquires the capacity for a first-person perspective. As Pereboom points out, a first-person perspective, as I explained it, is very sophisticated. Exercise of it requires use of a first-person way of thinking of myself, and it is implausible to suppose that infants have the conceptual equipment for such first-person thinking. I agree, but (1) developmental psychologists do attribute to

<sup>13</sup> Another response to Pereboom's counterexample would be (i) to leave clause (c) as it is, and (ii) to take definition (C) to define 'x constitutes\* y at t,' and then (iii) to define 'x constitutes y at t' like this: 'x constitutes\* y at t and y does not constitute\* x at t.'

neonates a rudimentary self-concept,<sup>14</sup> and (2) my definition of 'person' only requires a (narrowly-construed) capacity for a first-person perspective in order for an organism to constitute a person.

The sophisticated first-person thinking that adult persons engage in is beyond the reach of infants; but infants do have a *capacity* for a first-person perspective, where *x* has a capacity for a first-person perspective at *t* if and only if *x* has the structural properties at *t* required to support a first-person perspective and either (i) *x* has manifested a first-person perspective at some time before *t*, or (ii) *x* is in an environment at *t* conducive to the development and maintenance of a first-person perspective. (p. 92) This allows that a fetus without a developed brain clearly does not constitute a person; but a newborn human organism in an ordinary environment does constitute a person—even though the newborn has never actually manifested its first-person perspective.

I am offering a metaphysical criterion of personhood, not an epistemic one. The moment at which a human organism comes to constitute a person (if there is such a moment) is not discernible. I suggest pegging the beginning of a person at birth for two reasons. (i) That's a reasonable time to suppose that a human organism has the capacity for a first-person perspective in the intended sense, and (ii) that's the traditional time for thinking of a person's beginning. (Traditionally, age is determined by birthdays.) So, I do not see that I have counterintuitive consequences to countenance. The picture that emerges from the Constitution View seems extremely intuitive to me.

(B) Pereboom notes that primary kinds are to make the difference between merely gaining a new property and coming to constitute a new thing. Although I lamented the fact that I had no theory of primary-kinds—if I did, I'd have a theory of everything (p. 40)—I mentioned that one mark of the difference (between merely gaining a new property and coming to constitute a new thing) is that if *x* constitutes *y*, then *y* has whole classes of causal powers that *x* would not have if *x* had constituted nothing. (p. 41) I did not mean to suggest that new classes of causal properties was sufficient to distinguish between coming to constitute something new and just acquiring new properties. I agree with Pereboom that an individual "can acquire new causal properties while remaining the same individual." But I do not agree that "we're no further ahead if we're unclear about what the primary kinds are." I think that we have some clear examples of primary kinds (e.g., human animal and person are two) even if we lack a theory of primary kinds.

(C) I did not altogether understand Pereboom's charge that "Baker's conception inspires the view that we are constituted of more kinds of things than one might find plausible." I think that worms and monkeys and chimpanzees are identical to their bodies—whether they are world-representers or

---

<sup>14</sup> E.g., see Daniel N. Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

mind-representers. Neither Lowly the worm nor Curious George the monkey has a first-person perspective. (It is my understanding that monkeys can't even pass the "mirror test.")<sup>15</sup> In that case, neither monkeys nor worms are constituted by their bodies.

Suppose that being a mind-representer or a world-representer is crucial to certain primary kinds. I do not see why that should concern me. To have a first-person perspective, what is crucial is not just the ability to represent one's mental states, but the ability to represent mental states *as one's own*, from the first person. [This is tantamount to being able to think I\*-thoughts.] If chimpanzees can represent their mental states as their own, from the first person, then chimpanzees have first-person perspectives. In that case, they would be persons and I would be mistaken to say otherwise. But if chimpanzees are mere mind- or world-representers that can represent their mental states, but not represent them as their own, from the first person, then they are identical to their bodies—and not constituted by their bodies. Again, I do not see any counterintuitive consequences here.

I simply disagree that "it may be more likely that I am a mind- or even a world-representer than that the permanent loss of Baker's first-person perspective alone would entail my nonexistence." If I permanently lost the capacity to think of myself *as myself*, in this elusive first-person way, there would then be no "me." There may remain a human animal that is a mind- or world-representer, but if that animal had no capacity to think of its own properties *as its own*, or of itself as itself, from the first-person, there would be no person. The Constitution View of human persons is an attempt to spell out this intuition in significant detail.

---

<sup>15</sup> See Gordon Gallup, Jr., "Self-Recognition in Primates: A Comparative Approach to Bidirectional Properties of Consciousness" (*American Psychologist* 32 (1977): 329-38) for a description of the mirror test.