What's in a perspective? Social Perspectives, Interpretation, and Inquiry[1]
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Much of epistemology is concerned with what beliefs are, and what we ought to believe. Yet, we are guided toward many of our beliefs by our perspectives. A perspective, in both ordinary talk and philosophy, denotes a psychological orientation. Our perspectives influence how we see and think, including how we form our beliefs. Rather than being constituted by our beliefs, perspectives explain our broader interpretive inclinations.

Like belief talk, perspective talk is ubiquitous in social life. We take it that lots of people have perspectives—*I have my perspective and you have yours*—and that these perspectives can be more or less similar. In this paper, I take an interest in perspective ascriptions and comparisons in social life. In particular, I focus on a practice ordinary speakers engage in whereby they treat perspectives as a social currency—a generally accepted metric by which they can meaningfully categorize and compare people's epistemic orientation.

As part of this practice, ordinary speakers ascribe perspectives to people (such as a feminist perspective or a privileged perspective), and they take it that their perspective ascription reveals epistemically significant commitments of the perspective holder. Furthermore, they rely on the perspective ascription to predict whether individuals' perspectives will interact in complementary or adversarial ways. While some perspectives will be allied, others will clash. I call the notion of perspective that treats perspectives as a currency in social life 'social perspectives'.

Unlike beliefs, philosophers of mind and epistemology have not studied extensively what perspectives are, and which perspectives we ought to adopt. One notable exception to this status quo is the work of Elisabeth Camp, where she appeals to perspectives to explain how a way of thinking is implemented psychologically, expressed linguistically, and transmitted socially.[2] Camp's account of perspectives identifies perspectives with mental

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[2] For Camp's discussion on perspectives see: Elisabeth Camp, "Two Varieties of Literary Imagination: Metaphor, Fiction, and Thought Experiments," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 33, no. 1 (2009): 107–130, https:// doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4975.2009.00186.x; , Elisabeth Camp, "Slurring Perspectives," *Analytic Philosophy* 54, no. 3 (2013): 330–349, https://doi.org/10.1111/phib.12022; Elisabeth Camp, "A Dual-Act Analysis of Slurs," In *Bad Words*, ed. David Sosa (Oxford University Press, 2017); Elisabeth Camp, "Perspectives in Imaginative Engagement with Fiction," *Philosophical Perspectives* 31, no. 1 (2017): 73–102, https://doi.org/10.1111/phpe.12102; Elisabeth Camp, "Why metaphors make good insults: perspectives, presupposition, and pragmatics," *Philosophical Studies* 174, no. 1 (2017): 47–64, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-015-0525-y; Elisabeth Camp, "Insinuation, Common Ground, and the Conversational Record," In *New Work on Speech Acts*, ed. Daniel Fogal, Daniel W. Harris, & Matt Moss (Oxford University Press, 2018); Elisabeth Camp, "Perspectives and Frames in Pursuit of Ultimate Understanding," In *Varieties of Understanding*, ed. Stephen R. Grimm (Oxford University Press, 2019); Elisabeth Camp, "Imaginative Frames for Scientific Inquiry," In *The Scientific Imagination*, ed. Arnon Levy and Peter Godfrey-Smith (Oxford University Press, 2020); and Elisabeth Camp, "Perspectival complacency, open-mindedness and amelioration," In *Open-mindedness and Perspective*, ed. Wayne Riggs and Nancy Snow

dispositions that individuals voluntarily or involuntarily rely on to arrive at interpretations of an object, event, or state of affairs in a given domain. Camp's account has been influential in recent years and employed by philosophers working in different areas from philosophy of mind, language, ethics, to aesthetics.[3, 4]

To model a social perspective, I take Campian perspectives as a starting point. I argue that while successful in explaining the personal experience of having a perspective, Camp's account is unable to make sense of this social function of ordinary perspective talk. To capture social perspectives, we need an account that emphasizes different features of perspectival experience and imposes new constraints on what counts as a social perspective. I focus here on the features of perspectives that most directly contribute to the epistemic, hermeneutic, and practical roles that we find in ordinary speakers' treatment of perspectives as a social currency. My aim is simply to clarify what these features are.

To this end, I focus on a central example we should want a theory of perspectives to analyze: feminist perspectives. Using feminist perspectives as core target of analysis, I propose a new understanding of social perspectives.

Rather than characterizing social perspectives as tools of interpretation, I take social perspectives to be structured around questions. In my account, social perspectives are sets of inquiry-structuring questions, and as such, they actively guide our inquiries into the world.

My view has two important upshots. First, someone has a social perspective if and only if they have an inquiry-structuring question that sets their epistemic orientation in different domains. (Therefore, individuals who accept some principles of feminism can still fail to count as having a feminist perspective.) Second, this theory explains what having a

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(Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

[3] E.g., David Beaver and Jason Stanley, "Neutrality," *Philosophical Topics* 49, no. 1 (2021): 165–185, https://www.jstor.org/stable/48652166; Alex King, "Reasons, normativity, and value in aesthetics," *Philosophy Compass* 17, no. 1 (2021): 1–17, https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12807; Paul-Mikhail Catapang Podosky, "Gaslighting, First- And Second-Order," *Hypatia* 36, no. 1 (2021): 207–227, https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2020.54; Jacob Smith and Georgi Gardiner, "Opacity of Character: Virtue Ethics and the Legal Admissibility of Character Evidence," *Philosophical Issues* 31, no. 1 (2021). 334–354, https://doi.org/10.1111/phis.12192; and Ella Whiteley, "Harmful salience perspectives," In *Salience: A Philosophical Inquiry*, ed. Sophie Archer (Routledge, 2022).

[4] Political philosophers have taken an interest in a 'social perspective' before; however, they consider social perspectives not as psychological phenomena, but rather properties of social groups that can be represented in political discourse. As I'll explain below, Iris Marion Young's treatment of perspective is a well-suited (albeit coincidental) progenitor for my view. I'll say more on this below. Cf., Melissa S. Williams, *Voice, trust, and memory: marginalized groups and the failings of liberal representation* (Princeton University Press, 1998); Iris M. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford University Press, 2000); and Ryan Muldoon, *Social contract theory for a diverse world: beyond tolerance* (Routledge, 2016).

Another precedent for my view can be found in the works of Sally Haslanger and her use of the notion of a 'schema'. Haslanger theorizes most extensively about Sewellian social meanings in this context but also mentions the internalization of these meanings (e.g., Sally Haslanger, "Distinguished Lecture: Social structure, narrative and explanation," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 45, no. 1 (2015): 1–15, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26444360; Sally Haslanger, "What is a Social Practice?" *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 82 (2018): 231–247, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246118000085; and Sally Haslanger, "Cognition as a Social Skill," *Australasian Philosophical Review* 3, no. 1 (2019): 5–25, https://doi.org/10.1080/24740500.2019.1705229.).

social perspective commits one to. Social perspective holders are committed to a set of questions that unify their perspective. Perspectival interactions such as alliance or opposition are thus explained by reference to these commitments. Social perspectives are allied when two people share inquiry-structuring questions and clash when two people are invested in different inquisitive pursuits.

The paper is structured as follows. In section one I draw a distinction between personal and social perspectives, and identify my target of analysis—a social perspective. In section two, I introduce 'a feminist perspective' as a social perspective. In section three, I analyze the dominant account of perspectives in contemporary philosophy due to Elisabeth Camp. In section four, I argue that Camp's view can reveal what's shared between two perspective holders, but it cannot predict clashes of social perspective, for example, the perspectival clash between the feminist and the anti-feminist. In section five I present my alternative proposal: the agenda view and conclude with some suggestions about how we can make use of the theory of social perspective in social life.

§1 Two kinds of perspective talk

In ordinary language, some of the most associated words (what linguists refer to as 'collocates') with 'perspective' are, 'my', 'different', and 'your'.[5] Ordinary people often talk about perspectives using a possessive to point to a social position or experience that bins them with some people and sets them apart from others. Consider the following example obtained from a corpus of ordinary speech:

> (1)   From ***my perspective*** as someone who has been an employer, I would say this: All service jobs that are not professions are "demeaning" if you insist on looking at them that way. But they aren't demeaning if you just get a grip.

This example features a speaker who avows a particular perspective—the perspective of someone who has been an employer. Ordinary speakers often avow a perspective using the locution 'from my perspective'. I call these avowals perspective reports. Perspective reports, like belief or emotion reports, have the function of expressing (with some veracity) what someone's perspective is. These reports show that we utilize a notion of perspectives according to which perspectives—mental and therefore private as they are—can be made public by these reports.

Perspective reports are used to mark our differences. (1) is a perspective report made by a speaker who thinks that there are two ways to look at the same phenomenon (service jobs), and uses perspective talk to call attention to this difference by avowing one interpretation and disavowing the other. While people who have not been employers might characterize service jobs as demeaning, the speaker suggests that they disagree with this

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[5] The Corpus of Contemporary American English lists 'my', 'different' and 'your' as the most frequent collocates of perspective that precede 'perspective'. The following three sentences (1) – (3) come from an online corpus: Mark Davies, "The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).". The sentences are edited for clarity and emphases are added by me.

interpretation.[6] In fact, the second most common collocate used with 'perspective' is 'different' as in:

> (2) It's better to think of V14 as representing a temporary conceptual barrier for women than it is to think that it defines an athletic leap. Admittedly, I have a ***different perspective*** on these things than many commentators here, perhaps because I've spent some time at the higher levels of the sport.

Here, too, the speaker uses perspectival language to compare and distinguish themselves from other people—in this case, from other rock climbers who might share many aspects of the speaker's perspective but differ in their interpretation of V14 (a difficulty level in a climbing task).

The speaker's use of the phrase 'perspective on these things' communicates that they take themselves to have a coherent way of thinking in this domain (not just a different belief) which sets them apart from other commentators. Unlike other commentators, they bring into interpretive play a way of thinking that prioritizes mental work over physical strength when it comes to assessments of difficulty levels within a sport.[7]

In both of these examples from ordinary perspective talk speakers treat perspectives as modes of interpreting a phenomenon or situation that can be compared to one another. I call this use of perspective a 'social perspective'. In ordinary speech we regularly (though not exclusively) use perspectives as a social currency in this manner. When we do, we presuppose that these ways of thinking have some internal unity. This is because, in order to evaluate two perspectives as allied or clashing, we need to measure them against each other. We do that by stipulating a unifying feature internal to each perspective.

The criterion of internal unity is most obvious when we talk of political perspectives. Here's another example, from the same corpus, where an ordinary speaker refers to a 'feminist perspective':

> (3) I have always unconsciously looked at the world from a ***feminist perspective***, but it wasn't until I studied Gloria Jean Watkins, who wrote under the pen name of bell hooks, that I began to refer to myself as a feminist.

Reading Gloria Jean Watkins, this speaker suggests, helps them realize that they have a feminist perspective—that their perspective instantiates the properties associated with this social perspective. In other words, they claim that they unknowingly had a perspective in common with other feminists. They thereby endorse a view on which this perspective, 'the feminist perspective', can be shared between people in virtue of some properties intrinsic to

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[6] As an anonymous reviewer notes, in (1), it might also be the case the speaker is seeking to signal their epistemic authority. Even this reading of the utterance, though, is perspectival: they would take it to be the case that their epistemic authority is derived from an epistemic privilege awarded by their perspective (qua interpretive capacities and inclinations).

[7] I'm thankful to many bouldering enthusiasts for helping me dissect (2).

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'the feminist perspective'. These properties unify the perspective. (The unifying feature also allows us to find a feature that opposes it—a feature that would unify an anti-feminist perspective. I'll say more on this in the next section.)

This particular use of ordinary perspective talk—whereby perspectives are assumed to have some internal unity and can be shared suggests a notion of a perspective that departs from the traditionally operant understanding of perspectives in philosophy. In philosophy, a perspective is often understood to be unique to an individual and composed of other attitudes including beliefs and emotions. I refer to this notion of perspective as 'personal perspective'.[8] Philosophers, compelled by skeptical worries, have appealed to personal perspectives to make the point that an individual's experience is colored uniquely by their own subjectivity. This insight motivates the philosophical problem of explaining how different individuals can come to have a shared experience of the world. In this vein, we can point to works by philosophers such as Leibniz and Dennett as historical precedents for a theory of personal perspective.[9] Having sought to understand subjectivity, consciousness, and the limits of our access to reality, Leibniz and Dennett have engaged in explanatory projects that differ greatly from the cases I have presented.

The ordinary uses of perspective talk that I place at the center of a theory of social perspective don't refer to the condition of a limited knower. Instead, they refer to an orientation that different individuals, such as employers and feminists, can share in virtue of having certain psychological attitudes. These ordinary speakers care about whether or not others share this orientation, and how their own orientations will interact with others. Unlike personal perspectives, social perspectives play a distinctive role in explaining interpersonal alliances and clashes of points of view.

A more thorough examination of perspective talk would take us too far afield. What I hope to have shown is that we can draw a preliminary distinction between two characterizations of perspectives: one in which perspectives are private and idiosyncratic, and another in which perspectives have social purchase due to their interactions with other perspectives. People who can bring their perspectives into alignment can cooperate towards achieving certain epistemic and practical goals, whereas perspectival clashes can impede cooperation and mutual understanding. Therefore, a theory of social perspective should individuate perspectives by social categories like a feminist perspective or an employer perspective and explain interactions between the features of these perspectives. This way, we can see that some perspectives are intrinsically opposed (such as the perspective of a feminist

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[8] I prefer 'personal' to 'individual' because social perspectives are also held by individuals.

[9] For example, Leibniz's famous town analogy in the *New Essays* puts forth the idea that our world is like a town that different drawings, all from different perspective, can represent. See: G. W. Leibniz, Leibniz: New Essays on Human Understanding, ed. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett, 2nd edition (Cambridge University Press, 1996). By using this analogy, Leibniz seeks to reveal how perceivers each observe one aspect of reality. Another representative example of this tradition is Dennett's discussion of how someone's perspective changes if they come to know they're a brain in a vat. To this end, in his provocative essay "Where am I?" an envatted Dennett chronicles several shifts in perspective that can happen when one gets connected, disconnected, reconnected with their brain-in-a-vat (See: Daniel Dennett, *Brainstorms* (MIT Press, 1978). Both the form and the content of Dennett's essay, lay bare the philosopher's enchantment with an individual's unique perspective—their private, individualized, mediated experiences of what the world is like.

and the perspective of an anti-feminist, or the perspective of an employer and an employee).

§2 Feminists, their allies, and their adversaries

Feminists have different experiences of the world and thus different interpretations of reality, but they can often point to when and how they developed a distinctly feminist perspective. For feminists in the '70s in the United States, this development was often facilitated by a practice called consciousness raising.[10] Feminist Vivian Gornick, for instance, describes how a feminist perspective is cultivated at a consciousness-raising session: "[L]ooking at one's history and experience in consciousness-raising sessions is rather like shaking a kaleidoscope and watching all the same pieces rearrange themselves into an altogether other picture," writes Gornick, "one that suddenly makes the color and shape of each piece appear startlingly new and alive, and full of unexpected meaning".[11] Gornick thus affirms that developing a feminist perspective has interpretive significance.

Several women are profiled in Gornick's piece. Take Jen, an actress who participates in a consciousness-raising group. Jen's perspective is marked by many inclinations. Her dispositions that realize these inclinations include:

- attending to how other women are treated in the workplace,

- characterizing someone's unwelcome sexual attention as sexual harassment, and

- finding a fear response upon hearing about sexual harassment at the workplace fitting.

These dispositions allow Jen to gather information in a selective way and use this information to interpret the context she is placed in. Armed with this perspective, Jen reaches some substantive conclusions about the social world: Jen finds that harassment is normalized on the set (her workplace). She understands that she is a victim of harassment.

Describing what's shared between each participant in the consciousness raising group, Gornick writes, "Each of [the participants], without specific awareness, is beginning to feel the effects of the consideration of woman's personal experience in a new light—a political light".[12] But having the same perspective qua feminist doesn't imply having identical modes of thought. Another feminist, Susan Brownmiller, writes about the movement's inevitable

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[10] Juliet Mitchell characterizes the method of consciousness-raising as a middle-class American reinterpretation of the "speaking bitterness" practice of peasants in pre-revolutionary China (See: Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's Estate* (Verso Books, 1971)). This method was later used by the Chinese Communist Party as part of the land reform process. Unlike consciousness-raising groups, these meetings were confrontational and were designed to publicly humiliate landowners for their past wrongs.

[11] Vivian Gornick, "Consciousness," *The New York Times*, January 10, 1971, https://www.nytimes.com/1971/01/10/archives/consciousness-consciousness.html.

[12] Gornick, "Consciousness".

splits, "New York Radical Women's split in perspective—was the ultimate oppressor Man or Capitalism? — occupied endless hours of debate at the Thursday evening meetings," Brownmiller wrote, "Two warring factions emerged, dubbing each other 'the feminists' and 'the politicos'".[13] Despite huge disagreements, both factions in the group were feminist in character and their members embodied a feminist perspective according to Brownmiller.

Characterizing perspectival interaction presents theoretical challenges. Even though each feminist might respond to a given situation with their unique set of dispositions, they share an orientation towards the world. When they share this orientation, despite their differences, we recognize that they share a feminist perspective. Capturing the alliance between different feminists is the first theoretical challenge.

A second theoretical challenge arises from the following observation: some interpretive tools that are available to Jen can easily be shared by individuals who are adversarial to feminism altogether. Consider the scenario in which the interpretive tools that I attributed to Jen concerning her patterns of attention, evaluation of states of affairs, and emotional appraisals are shared by a serial harasser. Call this person This Serial Harasser.

When we consider what modes of thinking Jen and This Serial Harasser employ, we find a serious amount of overlap. This Serial Harasser is attuned to the same facts that a feminist is attuned to. After all, a feminist like Jen and a serial harasser like This Serial Harasser can share an interest in understanding the politics of accountability for sexual harassment despite their opposing motivations. Consequently, they can share a lot of attentional dispositions, such as noticing the changing cultural tides around acceptability of certain actions.

In what way, then, is This Serial Harasser an adversary to Jen? This Serial Harasser and Jen have conflicting interests (e.g., in subjecting Jen to sexual attention) and they have opposing beliefs (e.g., about whether men are entitled to women's sexual attention). These interests and beliefs provide distinct causal pathways to adopting their overlapping modes of thought as well as different sorts of justification for employing them. But neither the causes nor the grounds of their dispositions are constituents of their perspectives. So, we cannot point to these features to explain the clash between their perspectives. A theory of social perspectives ought to explain the opposition between Jen and the Serial Harasser's perspective at the level of the perspective itself rather than passing the buck to interests and beliefs. This is the second and more difficult theoretical challenge. I will suggest that this challenge can only be met by identifying a unifying commitment that every feminist would manifest, and that every anti-feminist would stand in opposition to.

§3 Perspectives as filters

What ingredients do we need to develop a theory of social perspective? In this section I consider Elisabeth Camp's approach. In some respects, Camp's writings on perspectives are in tune with the social turn. Camp's view connects perspectives in language—a social representational medium—to perspectives in psychology—an individual embodiment. As

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[13] Susan Brownmiller, "Sisterhood Is Powerful." *The New York Times,* March 15, 1970, https://www.nytimes.com/1970/03/15/archives/sisterhood-is-powerful-a-member-of-the-womens-liberation-movement.html.

such, her works present a natural starting point for a theory of social perspective. However, I will argue that new ingredients are needed to capture social perspectives.

Camp defines perspectives as "open-ended modes of interpretation", and more precisely, as ways of "gathering, remembering, and explaining a range of social phenomena, on an ongoing basis".[14] For Camp, perspectives necessarily involve dispositions to interpret information or dispositions that aid interpretation. Several types of dispositions fall under this category:

- Dispositions related to attention: dispositions to notice, dispositions to see as more or less salient, dispositions to ignore.

- Dispositions related to cognition: dispositions to treat as central, dispositions to evaluate as fitting, dispositions to seek a particular explanation, dispositions to activate a particular concept.

- Dispositions related to affect: dispositions to impose an emotional valence.

Camp does not clarify whether having any particular type of interpretive disposition is a necessary or contingent condition of having a perspective.

There are several features of the view that are important: First, Campian perspectives are clusters of interpretive dispositions that lack any underlying unity. I'll return to this issue in my evaluation of her view. Second, Campian perspectives are tools for thought rather than thoughts themselves.[15] They aid in interpretation, but they are not representational states. As such, they lack contents.[16]

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[14] Camp, "Slurring Perspectives, 335–336. In earlier work, Camp refers to a perspective as an "intuitive, holistic principle for organizing our thoughts about some topic" (see: Camp, "Two Varieties of Literary Imagination: Metaphor, Fiction, and Thought Experiments", 110). Although Camp characterizes perspectives (and characterizations) as intuitive, I've omitted this feature in my reconstruction of her framework. It seems to me that Camp has a choice here: (i) explain the intuitiveness of a disposition as being due to their involvement in a perspective, (ii) or explain the involvement of a disposition in a perspective by appealing to its intuitiveness. If intuitiveness is what's basic, Camp would have provided an account of intuitiveness across her writings in over a decade. Because she hasn't, I'm treating the notion of perspective as basic. In later works, she says, perspectives are open-ended because they are not tied to a particular subject, lack contents, and can be updated over time (see: Camp, "A Dual-Act Analysis of Slurs," Camp, "Perspectives and Frames in Pursuit of Ultimate Understanding," and Camp, "Imaginative Frames for Scientific Inquiry").

[15] Regarding the relation between beliefs and perspectives Camp says:

> [O]ne can retain a perspective while adopting or abandoning any particular propositional claim; there need be no proposition whose endorsement or absence is essential. Further, explicitly entertaining, even endorsing, a certain set of propositions—including higher-order structural propositions concerning prominence and centrality—is neither necessary nor sufficient for actually 'getting' a perspective. (Camp, "Slurring Perspectives," 336)

[16] However, they are closely tied to complex and context-sensitive representational structures that Camp calls 'characterizations'. Characterizations represent people, objects, places, events, and types. Perspectives generate and update these characterizations. The paradigmatic example of a characterization is a stereotype, such as the stereotype of a suburban mom. Someone who goes around Westchester encountering suburban moms can deem more and more features central to being a suburban mom. They can learn that certain behaviors are typical

Camp is interested in perspectives because she seeks to understand how perspectives can be communicated, bringing moral and political effects in their wake. For instance, slurs, she claims, communicate a derogatory perspective, and hence bolster social injustice.[17] Perspectival language also has more modest harmful effects: metaphors can make good insults because they communicate and transmit ways of thinking that offend their targets.[18]

Perspective communication functions differently than the communication of truth-conditional content—this is why the term, 'perspective', is useful. Crucially, the meaning of expressive utterances goes beyond the propositional. Take an example of metaphorical speech:

(4)   George is a tailwagging lapdog of privilege![19]

To interpret this sentence, the reader must put on a perspective. This can only be done by reconfiguring one's entire way of thinking about George in this context and seeing George through a particular frame. It cannot be done by thinking that the proposition that <George is a tailwagging lapdog of privilege> is true.

Metaphorical speech requires more than simple counterfactual thought and generates more understanding than simple counterfactual thought. We can understand the metaphor in (4) to the extent to which we have an intuitive understanding of the way of thinking associated with perspective expressed by it. On the flipside, thinking of George through this perspective can explain more of his behavior than the mere fact that he has had a privileged

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suburban mom behavior (such as complaining about the students that are bussed in from the city to attend the suburb's well-funded public school). This new information becomes part of their characterization of a suburban mom. Consequently, these complaints become salient to them in social settings. When they incorporate this information into their characterization of a suburban mom, their disposition to find these complaints salient becomes part of their perspective.

The relationship between characterizations and perspectives can be easily problematized and requires a deeper discussion than what I'm able to provide here. Here's why: under one interpretation, we could think of Campian perspectives as sets of propositional and nonpropositional attitudes, combined with a dispositionalist account of belief. Dispositionalists about belief treat belief as Camp treats perspectives (cf. Dennett, *Brainstorms*; David Lewis, "Radical interpretation," *Synthese* 27, no. 3/4 (1974): 331–344, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20114928; Eric Schwitzgebel, "A dispositional approach to attitudes: Thinking outside the belief box," *New Essays on Belief,* ed. Nikolaj Nottelmann (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)).

The notion of characterizations poses problems for this reading, however. Characterizations are representational even when they're not propositional. Elsewhere, Camp also endorses representationalism about both sentential and nonsentential thought, which she argues has map-like content. See: Elisabeth Camp, "Thinking with Maps," *Philosophical Perspectives* 21, no. 1 (2007): 145–182, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1520-8583.2007.00124.x, and Elisabeth Camp, "Why maps are not propositional," In *Non-Propositional Intentionality*, ed. Alex Grzankowski and Michelle Montague (Oxford University Press, 2018).

[17] See: Camp, "Slurring Perspectives"; Camp, "A Dual Act Analysis of Slurs".

[18] As explained in: Camp, "Why metaphors make good insults: perspectives, presupposition, and pragmatics".

[19] Camp, "Why metaphors make good insults: perspectives, presupposition, and pragmatics, " 48. This example is originally from Richard Moran. See: Richard Moran, "Seeing and believing: Metaphor, image and force," *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 1 (1989): 87–112, http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/448527.

upbringing.

Putting on a perspective is a distinct mode of cognition. Perspectives are realized not by taking some higher-order proposition to be true but by implementing a cognitive structure. Because of this fact about perspectives, perspectives appear in Camp's work as a solution to several puzzles regarding expressive speech like the imaginative resistance one feels when asked to imagine a certain state of affairs to be true, or the wrongness of slur use even in contexts where the speaker doesn't intend to endorse a derogating stance towards a social group, as in:

(5) She could have married a * instead.[20]

According to Camp, slur-use is perspectival transmission par excellence. To understand sentences like (5), one ought to put on the perspective of someone who sees the social group as subordinate. This seeing does not necessarily involve accepting the proposition that members of that social group are subordinate; rather, it causally activates a whole host of evaluative judgments and perceptions regarding the target. Slurs thus communicate and impose a psychological endorsement of a derogating perspective regarding a social group.

Similar mechanisms are involved in transmitting perspectives via telling details, thick terms, and other modes of expressive speech. Even though perspective taking does not necessarily involve simulation, it necessarily has experiential features. When someone implements the cognitive structure associated with a perspective, they see an object as salient or having a particular emotional reaction towards an object.[21] The experiential involvement of the perspective-taker invokes a desire to resist (or react badly to) seeing the world *thusly* (as depicted by that perspective).

Perspectives show up in a variety of other settings as well. According to Camp, scientific modeling and understanding fiction, too, requires use of perspectives. For example, the Lotka-Volterra equations of population distribution that describe the effects of predator-prey dynamics, and the computational model of the mind invite us to put on particular perspectives to understand the relevant phenomena.[22] These scientific models highlight or explain certain features of their target phenomena in terms of other explanatory frameworks. Likewise, in fiction, we follow a character's (or narrator's) expressive choices and take note of how they apply different modes of thinking to the narrated events.[23] Once we get a handle on the perspective, we can put on the perspective and understand the meaning of the story.

Based on these observations, I propose that we think of Campian perspectives as filters organizing information (which often function implicitly or habitually):

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[20] This example is from Camp, "A Dual Act Analysis of Slurs," 36. I omitted the slur.

[21] Camp, "A Dual Act Analysis of Slurs."

[22] Elisabeth Camp, "Imaginative Frames for Scientific Inquiry," In *The Scientific Imagination*, ed. Arnon Levy and Peter Godfrey-Smith (Oxford University Press, 2020).

[23] Camp, "Perspectives in Imaginative Engagement with Fiction."

> *The filter view*: Perspectives are idiosyncratic interpretive dispositions that organize information.

Every individual has stable filters that are shaped throughout their life experience and are therefore as complex as the individual's biography.[24] One's own set of filters determines their idiosyncratic way of processing and integrating information into their knowledge base. (They can also put on others' filters temporarily.) With each filter, an individual's access to facts is further mediated. Perspectives both aid the individual by shaping their understanding of the world and impede them by corrupting their interpretations of reality with false characterizations.

This reading captures the richness of Camp's account, and it is supported by Camp's writings, in which studies of perspectives are presented that take an individual in a particular context, enumerate their interpretive dispositions, and name the set of dispositions that they have as their perspective. Across her papers, Camp employs her account of perspectives to:

1. describe the way we actually think and psychological constructs we deploy in tandem;[25]

2. justify our use of this psychological mechanism to understand our world despite the partial viewpoint it awards us;[26]

3. articulate norms of perspectives such as informational and functional aptness to give us tools to better shape our perspectives.[27]

These are theoretical feats of the filter view of perspectives.[28] All of the projects associated with Camp's research program take an individualistic approach to the study of (personal) perspective whereby a perspective is unique to an individual (while possibly sharing aspects with others' perspectives). Although we can socially transmit Campian

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[24] Camp does not claim that we should think of perspectives as indexed to individuals. Perspectives, for Camp, are sets of interpretive dispositions that are potentially idiosyncratic. I characterize the ecumenical nature of the view as idiosyncrasy because Campian perspectives do not display internal unity. Thanks to Elisabeth Camp for discussion on this point.

[25] See: Camp, "Slurring Perspectives"; Camp, "A Dual Act Analysis of Slurs"; and Camp, "Why metaphors make good insults: perspectives, presupposition, and pragmatics".

[26] Demonstrated by: Camp, "Perspectives and Frames in Pursuit of Ultimate Understanding"; Camp, "Imaginative Frames for Scientific Inquiry".

[27] Found in: Camp, "Perspectival complacency, open-mindedness and amelioration".

[28] It should be apparent that this view faces challenges when it comes to evaluating whether someone has successfully understood the meaning of a perspectival piece of language. Every individual will employ different interpretive dispositions to understand a metaphor or a slur, or when it comes to accounting for perspectival change. These issues are tangential to those brought up in this paper.

perspectives, everyone incorporates a set of interpretive dispositions into their filter in their own way. In this theory, what we share linguistically and what we implement psychologically are personal perspectives qua modes of interpretation, made up of a set of dispositions.

On the whole, the filter view thus presents a rich account of perspectives.[29] According to the filter view, the most mundane dispositions like the disposition to see red cars as salient are part of one's perspective qua their idiosyncratic collection of interpretive inclinations.[30]

§4 The feminist perspective as a filter

Can the filter view illuminate the interactions between Jen's perspective and This Serial Harasser's perspective? Using a Campian schema, we can ascribe to Jen the following filter:

> D_F =
> - a disposition to pay attention to how other women are treated in the workplace,
> - a disposition to characterize someone's unwelcome sexual attention as sexual harassment, and
> - a disposition to find a fear response upon hearing about sexual harassment at the workplace fitting.

We might think that the filter view captures what it's like to have a feminist perspective. After all, D_F represents a distinctive (and political) way of seeing social reality. Before she became a feminist, this way of seeing was not accessible to Jen. D_F is a short list. By characterizing Jen's filter more fully we can capture more accurately what other dispositions figure in her feminist perspective. The filter view has the resources to provide a richer characterization of Jen's filter.

However, the filter view lacks a unifying component of the sort I argued a theory of social perspective needs. This is because, ultimately, the causes of each of these dispositions is irrelevant to the filter view.[31] D_F, which constitutes Jen's feminist perspective, can easily

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[29] The idea that perspectives are filters has broader acceptance than Camp's work. For instance, Ryan Muldoon's call to expand Rawlsian public reason appeals to perspectives. Muldoon writes, "Perspectives provide us with filters on the world – they tell us what is important, and what we can ignore" (Muldoon, *Social contract theory for a diverse world: beyond tolerance*, 24). In Muldoon's account perspectives are representational states that provide justification for beliefs.

[30] Despite Camp's claim that "the decision whether to even attempt to cultivate an alternative perspective [is] especially difficult," it follows from her account that changing one's perspective is a matter of having a new disposition (Camp, "Perspectives in Imaginative Engagement with Fiction," 94).

[31] Due to space constraints, I do not entertain the charge of superficialism at length. While relevant, this charge is distinct from my focus (on the criterion of internal unity) in this paper. The shortcomings of Camp's account in this regard mirror the challenge of explanatory depth levied against other dispositional views by various authors (Cf., Jake Quilty-Dunn and Eric Mandelbaum, "Against dispositionalism: belief in cognitive science," *Philosophical Studies* 175, no. 9 (2018): 2353–2372, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-017-0962-x). For instance, we can criticize the dispositionalist by pointing to causal-mechanical or structural explanations that involve perspectives. We attribute causal powers to someone's perspective at the psychological level when we say Jen's perspective caused her to identify her experience as sexual harassment. Perspectives also figure into structural

be shared by individuals who are adversarial to feminism altogether. As I suggested, This Serial Harasser, too, manifests D_F.

Regarding perspectival difference and sameness, Camp remarks, "Rather than seeking to identify absolute sameness and difference in perspectives, it is often more accurate to speak only of relative overlap and stability".[32] But even granting this point, an explanatory lacuna remains. Any overlap between a feminist and a serial harasser's perspectives is different in kind from the overlap in dispositions between two feminists. I'll argue that, to analyze the differences, we ultimately need to go beyond Camp's account to consider what unifies clusters of dispositions, not just which dispositions can be found in a cluster.

Of course, Jen and This Serial Harasser might have other dispositions that set them apart. They will attach different emotional valences to the same phenomenon or regard as central different considerations. Let's consider how a proponent of the filter view might explain the differences between Jen and This Serial Harasser.

Camp holds that while perspectives qua filters can be deployed as tools for thinking without committing the subject to the truth of any claim, they need not be thoroughly non-committal. Some perspectives can commit the subject to a way of thinking that reliably supports certain beliefs.[33] Could we not say that feminists fall on the committal side of this spectrum?

Admitting that perspectives can commit one to beliefs sacrifices an attractive feature of the filter view. According to the filter view, as originally stated, perspective-holders implement an interpretive cognitive structure that we can characterize as 'feminist,' even if their interpretive dispositions are not derived from the same (or any) doctrinal principle. Giving up on this feature would run against the spirit of the view.[34] Feminism is a perspective ascribed to individuals that have various levels of doxastic commitment to a variety of propositions. Perspectival opposition should ideally be explained without reference to beliefs (conscious or unconscious).[35]

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explanations. When someone claims that the workers' class-conscious perspective won their union, they claim that a perspective can effect structural change.

[32] Camp, "Perspectives and Frames in Pursuit of Ultimate Understanding," 26.

[33] For example, Camp says, a self-professed evangelical Protestant and a rational choice theorist fall on the committal side of this spectrum (See: Camp, "Perspectives and Frames in Pursuit of Ultimate Understanding"; Camp, "Perspectival complacency, open-mindedness and amelioration"). Camp's other example of this range is the liberal and the conservative. The conservative, in Camp's example, has a non-committal perspective because their interpretive dispositions are not supported by a particular belief: when they hear about a proposal to build a mosque at Ground Zero, Camp explains, they simply diagnose the proposal "as a fitting exemplar of the encroaching dangers" (Camp, "Perspectives in Imaginative Engagement with Fiction," 15). The liberal, on the other hand, finds it fitting that a "politician who advocates for laws supporting a traditional definition of marriage turns out to be a homosexual or unfaithful" without being able to point to a set of 'liberal' beliefs to support their mode of thinking (Camp, "Perspectives in Imaginative Engagement with Fiction," 15).

[34] The belief that would be less costly to admit as central to having a feminist perspective would be the belief that there exists gendered oppression. However, even this belief might not be explicitly endorsed by some people who still exhibit a feminist perspective (it might be merely presupposed by the question on their agenda). Even if it is endorsed by most feminist, according to the view defended in this paper, it is not sufficient to have a feminist perspective.

[35] An anonymous reviewer asks whether emotional responses, which are also part of Campian filters, provide a

How about the overlap between the filters of a feminist and their allies? Much like This Serial Harasser and Jen, feminists in these factions might share some components of D_F. At the same time, they might have drastically different dispositions due to their beliefs regarding the source of women's oppression. D_F might overlap with This Feminist's filter, That Feminist's filter, The Other Feminist's filter by virtue of sharing a different disposition with each and every one of them. How can the overlap between the pairs be leveraged to provide an account of what it means to have a feminist perspective? It's logically possible that each of these individuals will share only a few dispositions with every other feminist without sharing any disposition as a group. This logical possibility speaks against identifying the feminist perspective as the overlap between feminist filters.[36] The filter view can at best reveal what's shared between each pair but cannot explain what deems each perspective a 'feminist perspective'.

The filter view populates perspectives with too many dispositions without giving us a sense of what unifies them. Without making sense of the unity of each feminist perspective, we cannot make sense of what makes a perspective feminist and how a feminist perspective clashes with an anti-feminist perspective. Our interpretive filters are simply too idiosyncratic to be used as a social currency. The filter view at best obscures features that are essential to a theory of social perspective. Though I have given considerations that point towards a criterion, I have not yet identified what criterion could play this role. In the next section, I identify this criterion and sketch a novel view of social perspective.

§5 To have a perspective is to have an agenda

Political theorists have occasionally used the term 'social perspective' in the context of a theory of perspective representation in politics. In *Inclusion and Democracy* by Iris Marion

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way out of this problem. However, Camp holds that many perspectives are entirely devoid of emotion. She writes, "And even those [perspectives] that do motivate emotions need not cause emotional responses on every occasion" (Camp, "Slurring Perspectives," 337). Although Camp might categorize a feminist perspective or a liberal perspective or an employer's perspective as the kind of perspective that does tend to motivate emotions, I think we would grant that any particular individual lacking attendant affective proclivities could still count as a holder of the perspective in question. A feminist who doesn't get angry at patriarchal figures would still count as holding the feminist perspective. Thanks also to Zachary Irving for discussion on this point.

[36] My critic might ask me to consider a view in which each filter is constructed by the long list of dispositions that all the feminists in the world instantiate in relevant settings and ask why that long list can't be the social perspective. Even with such an account, we would still run into problems when we try to differentiate between perspectival alliance and clashes. By conjuring this list, we could perhaps find the most common disposition for a feminist. What type of disposition could this be? Say that the disposition to remember whether someone is a harasser is the most common interpretive disposition that a feminist has. Any time someone mentions that someone they know is a harasser, they retain this information. Not only is this disposition not particularly helpful in inferring anything else about what a feminist would bring to the table in a social setting (like the consciousness raising group), we can think of causal pathways that have nothing to do with feminism that award one a knack for harasser names. Suppose sexual harassers tend to seek legal advice from a particular law firm. The secretary at this law firm might write down and remember names of harassers who contact an attorney at the firm without having any knowledge of the fact that people whose names they are disposed to remember are harassers. In addition, we can also imagine that a serial harasser can retain the same information for other purposes. The worry arises because the dispositional account has no story to tell about why particular pieces of information are gathered: what use this information serves and where the disposition to gather this information has come from.

Young, we find the most developed view of social perspective in this key. Young sought to introduce a concept that would justify the inclusion of a member of a particular social or political group in a deliberative body. She found that the existing notions of belief and interest were too focused on what conclusions people would draw rather than how they would pick starting points for inquiry. Furthermore, beliefs and interests were easily hijacked by motivated reasoning and levied for discriminatory purposes. So, seeking the representation of all persuasions or interests would not necessarily further the goal of democratic deliberation. Rather, we ought to seek the inclusion of something else. As a solution, she proposed the notion of 'social perspective'. This notion, she argued, would correspond to the starting points for discussion rather than its conclusions.[37] Consequently, representation of perspective, Young maintained, promoted diversity in starting points of discussion, and achieved the inclusion of a set of realities that a deliberative body would otherwise not consider. Including the feminist perspective, for example, ensured that participants in a deliberation were attuned to issues that mattered to feminists.

One of Young's central examples concerned how different parties reacted to an early case of a serial harasser's public trial—the trial of US Senator Robert Packwood. It was an open secret that Senator Packwood had what was then called a 'skirt problem'. Yet, not only had allegations against Packwood not been investigated, but he had also convinced the Washington Post to hold off a news story about him by providing false information until after the day of his election. In response to accusations and lawsuits that followed, many of Packwood's colleagues had rushed to his defense and argued that it was not worth the Senate's time to discuss this matter. However, they faced resistance to their attempt at sweeping Packwood's harassment under the rug when nearly all women legislators in Congress—from both parties—united around one demand: that the Senate hold hearings into the matter. These women staked out a feminist perspective by setting a certain starting point for discussion. Young described the feminist perspective as follows:

> These women did not agree on political values and they had many divergent interests; they did not agree in their opinions of whether Packwood was guilty of harassment. Their purpose was to influence the Senate's agenda, and in doing so they expressed a similar perspective on the meaning and gravity of accusations of sexual harassment, a perspective that many of the men seemed not to understand, at least at first.[38]

As Young explains, the similarity in the feminists' perspective was not about what conclusions the feminists were drawing, but their way of seeing things, whereby the harassment suffered by Packwood's aides was salient and central. Their attunement to sexual harassment as a mode of gender-based oppression marked them as feminists and committed

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[37] A social perspective, Young claimed, "does not contain a determinate specific content", much like Campian perspective and the view I'll go on to introduce. Instead, it "consists in a set of questions, kinds of experience, and assumptions with which reasoning begins, rather than conclusions drawn" (Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 136–7).

[38] Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 140.

them to shared goals.

In this case, the feminist legislators' interpretive lens is best analyzed by considering what questions a feminist is guided by. Feminist legislators wanted to know the truth about what Packwood did. This characterization can also help us identify the broader epistemic orientation that these legislators share with other feminists.

Feminist legislators, like feminists who manifest D_F, are attuned to answers to the question, Q_F = How can we stop gendered oppression?[39] Even if the feminists disagree about what practical goals should unite them as feminists, Q_F defines an epistemic orientation that each and every one of them is committed to.

Some feminists might not explicitly pursue answers to Q_F. Still, this question will structure a feminist's everyday inquiries at least in the following sense: Once a feminist discovers a discrepancy in the treatment offered to people of different genders, these acts will become salient to them. The salience or centrality of these things means that Q_F has purchase on their psychology. It directs what information they gather.[40]

In fact, Gornick, in her piece about consciousness raising, describes the practice as one that pursues perspectival change by getting women to ask certain questions. She says, "We gave people sentences with which to frame questions about their lives they would not otherwise have been able to ask".[41]

Call this proposal the agenda view:

> *The agenda view:* Social perspectives are inquiry-structuring questions that form an agenda.

The agenda view no doubt needs further precisification.[42] For the purposes of this

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[39] In a recent paper, Camp suggests that maps, word clouds, and diagrams might better represent perspectives rather than declarative sentences (as we do with propositions) or pictures (as we do for analog representations) (See: Camp, "Perspectival complacency, open-mindedness and amelioration"). My view very much in the spirit of this new suggestion by Camp. Representations like maps, word clouds, and diagrams are designed in a task-relative manner to aid the user to find answers to a set of questions. Likewise, in philosophy of attention, some have suggested that a cognitive process is deemed task-congruent if the possible outputs of the process assign focus on a possible answer to question within that task (See: Philipp Koralus, "The erotetic theory of attention: Questions, focus and distraction," *Mind & Language* 29, no. 1 (2014): 26–50, https://doi.org/10.1111/mila.12040).

[40] I elaborate elsewhere on the distinction between questions we have chosen to pursue answers to, and those we find ourselves attuned to answering (See: Ege Yumuşak, "Perspectival Clashes: Salience as a Site of Contestation."). Some questions that an individual is guided by flow directly from beliefs or desires they hold. Others might be explained by their social position even if they are not mediated by beliefs they hold.

[41] Vivian Gornick, "Who says we haven't made a revolution? A feminist takes stock," *The New York Times*, April 15, 1990, https://www.nytimes.com/1990/04/15/magazine/who-says-we-haven-t-made-a-revolution-a-feminist-takes-stock.html.

[42] My analysis here should not be taken to speak against the inclusion of zetetic dispositions in a personal perspective or in the filter view. An enthusiast of the filter view can, for instance, propose to add a disposition to the filter view that captures that a feminist perspective holder must be attuned to answering Q_F. This view would be an agenda-theoretic version of the filter view. As a reviewer points out, Camp's view itself speaks of holistic principles by which we organize information. Some of these holistic principles might very well be principles concerning evidence-gathering. While personal perspectives can express zetetic commitments, they would not be lacking as a personal perspective for not expressing such commitments. It is not essential for a personal

paper, I will elaborate on one aspect of this view: the relationship between guidance by an inquiry-structuring question and the activity of inquiry.

The notion of an agenda captures how some questions play a structuring role in our mental lives because they are closely connected to what we pay attention to and what we take to be central in thought. When a feminist is guided by Q_F, they do not single-mindedly seek an answer to this one question. Rather, each salience experience stimulates a feminist to ask further questions and form intentions to pursue related inquiries. When they find out about experiences they share with other women in their consciousness-raising group, they refine their mental habits to become attuned to certain sources of information. They participate in whisper networks to learn about cases of harassment or about institutional mechanisms for recourse. These diverse set of activities all part of their guidance by Q_F.

Therefore, we can say that Q_F is on a feminist's agenda because of the functional role it plays in their epistemic life. According to the agenda view, inquiry-structuring questions endow us with a social perspective in a domain. To formulate versions of this view, we should heed the developments in a burgeoning field of epistemology where theorists are renegotiating the divide between the epistemic and the practical. Jane Friedman has identified the 'zetetic' as 'pertaining to inquiry', and asked whether our traditional epistemic norms are zetetic norms.[43] The debate regarding norms of belief or the bounds of the epistemic notwithstanding, Friedman's writings have inspired a more expansive study of our inquisitive practices. Philosophers have distinguished between inquiring and other inquisitive attitudes such as curiosity and wonder and have taken an interest in psychological research into phenomena such as exploratory search and mind-wandering.[44]

The agenda view—a zetetic view of social perspective—proposes that someone has the perspective they do in virtue of the set of questions by which they are guided. The unity within the feminist perspective, according to this view, is not achieved by an overlap in interpretive dispositions; rather, it is achieved by having an orientation towards evidence-gathering—a zetetic commitment.

Being charged with questions is unlike the influence of one's moral character or core beliefs. Still, these questions play an important role in our psychology and our epistemic life.

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perspective to be united under any commitment, let alone a zetetic one.

[43] Jane Friedman, "The epistemic and the zetetic," *The Philosophical Review* 129, no. 4 (2020): 501–536, https://doi.org/10.1215/00318108-8540918; cf. Arianna Falbo, "Should epistemology take the zetetic turn?" *Philosophical Studies* 180 (2023): 2977–3002, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-023-02016-3.

[44] Perhaps most relevantly, Susanna Siegel has argued that "lines of inquiry are extended through the practice of *treating things as zetetically relevant to questions*" (Susanna Siegel, "How do lines of inquiry unfold? Insights from journalism," *Oxford Studies in Epistemology: Special Issue on Applied Epistemology, (*Oxford University Press, forthcoming)). Cf. Dennis Whitcomb, "Curiosity was framed," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 81, no. 3 (2010): 664-687, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41057498; Jane Friedman, "Question-directed attitudes*," *Philosophical Perspectives* 27, no. 1 (2013): 145–174, https://doi.org/10.1111/phpe.12026; Peter Carruthers, "Basic questions," *Mind and Language* 33, no. 2 (2018): 130–147, https://doi.org/10.1111/mila.12167; Chandra Sripada, "An exploration/exploitation tradeoff between mind-wandering and task-directed thinking," In *Oxford Handbook of Spontaneous Thought,* ed. Kieran C. R. Fox and Kalina Christoff, (Oxford University Press, 2018); Yumuşak, "Perspectival Clashes: Salience as a Site of Contestation," and more.

A feminist's agenda, for instance, endows them with a feminist outlook by guiding how they gather and organize information along the lines of these inquiries. Even when someone is not committed to any principles of feminism or affective responses associated with it, they will have a feminist perspective by being epistemically oriented towards answering Q_F. This zetetic commitment picks out what's committal in having a social perspective.

How do some patterns of attention and cognition come to play an inquiry-structuring role while others don't?[45] There is a dialectical relationship between some of our patterns of attention and questions that we pursue. Which questions we ask are greatly influenced by what's salient to us. They influence, in turn, what's salient to us. When salience experiences embody questions, they serve the function of putting the subject on the path of a particular inquiry. In cases where salience experiences do not structure inquiry, we don't find this dialectical relationship.[46]

What's the relation between questions on someone's agenda and their interpretive dispositions? The agenda view states that each social perspective is identified with an agenda, but it does not disregard the role that cognitive or affective interpretive dispositions play. Interpretive dispositions—an individual's tools of thought—help the individual find answers to questions on the individual's agenda. By ascribing a social perspective to someone we rationalize these tools of thought. In this view, a feminist's guidance by questions on Q_F is realized by the interpretive dispositions that enable them to see relevant information as salient and central and certain responses as fitting. Interpretive dispositions like those in D_F determine the particular way in which an individual feminist holds a feminist perspective.[47] Agendas, as such, are explanatorily prior to interpretive dispositions even though one's

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[45] I reserve the notion of 'being guided by a question' for cognitive dispositions that structure an agent's inquisitive orientation. Someone can act in line with certain patterns of experience and attention at a moment in time without being guided by a question. An anonymous reviewer raises a further important question in this vicinity, regarding granularity in question assignments. Different candidate agenda views can spell out different standards for agenda ascription. Some of these views would likely point to historical, social, and material forces that construct socially meaningful question sets. While question assignments pose a surmountable challenge, the agenda view draws a controversial distinction between people who have a perspective in a domain and people who don't. Because not every set of interpretive dispositions that someone has relates to questions, some sets of interpretive dispositions do not endow one with a perspective. Sitting on the ridge of a mountain and looking at the sunset, for example, does not endow one with a perspective. Likewise, being closedminded, understood as not having any live questions in a domain, also does not count as having a perspective in this view. Lastly, having a set of quirks such as remembering yellow-colored things people have also does not count as having a perspective. Despite their influence on one's patterns of attention or evaluation, these sets of dispositions are not inquiry-structuring. My view allows us to see that failing to cultivate a social perspective on a subject matter is a distinct epistemic failing.

[46] The strength of one's zetetic commitments can be related to different features: number of attentional and cognitive dispositions one has that realize their commitment, or the number of questions on their agenda. While an agenda-theoretic view can accommodate degrees of commitment, even the weakest form of commitment would meet the internal unity constraint.

[47] A reviewer asks about a mundane interaction in which someone with a feminist perspective evaluates a man's contribution to a discussion as sexist. Does this interaction involve an inquiry? The agenda view characterizes this person's perspective as feminist because they see information regarding the man's behavior as salient. Furthermore, they rely on this information to make inferences that are in line with the broader zetetic commitment spelled out by Q_F such as asking whether a particular interaction is an instance of sexism. Being attuned to instances of sexism is a way in which a feminist can be guided by Q_F.

agenda and their interpretive dispositions mutually reinforce one another.

According to the agenda view, a serial harasser, when they oppose the investigation of sexual harassment, is guided by a question that is altogether adversarial to someone in pursuit of Q_F, such as the question, 'How can I undermine mechanisms of recourse for sexual harassment?'. The serial harasser and the feminist might be attuned to the same sorts of information—if this information can help them answer subsidiary questions on their agenda—without thereby sharing a perspective. The overlap between their interpretive dispositions explains the shared aspect of their orientation towards the world without losing sight of what causes their clash: their zetetic commitment to opposing inquiry-structuring questions.

The agenda view also explains how people can be guided by the same questions and still have opposing beliefs in the same domain.[48] For instance, the disagreement between feminists regarding the roots of gendered oppression is compatible with their shared investment in figuring out what the root of gendered oppression is. Members of these factions share a perspective because of their zetetic commitment. This alignment reflects these feminist's starting point, in virtue of which they have the same perspective. From this starting point, they arrive at divergent conclusions.

§6 Conclusion

Philosophers have been interested in Campian perspectives, a view in which perspectives act like filters. The theory I've sketched follows an insight from Wittgenstein, much like Camp's theory: "When I have a perspective on a domain, I 'know my way about' that domain".[49] Knowing one's way about the social world, I've argued, requires standing in a relation to a set of questions. Accordingly, our theory of perspectives in the social domain should place primacy on how perspectives direct inquiry and steer our thoughts towards answers to certain questions.

Social perspectives, in my view, are inquiry-structuring questions that form an agenda. Having a social perspective involves manifesting a variety of interpretive dispositions that embody our guidance by these questions. What makes it the case for someone to have the feminist perspective, the working-class perspective, or the professional managerial class perspective is their guidance by a set of questions associated with these social or political positions. In this view, social perspectives' distinctive contribution to our epistemic life is shaping our inquisitive practices.

We can now return to the ordinary speakers we've encountered in the beginning.

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[48] A reviewer asks about beliefs' (or interests') role in determining one's attentional patterns might cast doubt on the explanatory priority of agendas to beliefs (or interests). For the purposes of this paper, I'm interested in uncovering what makes a feminist and anti-feminist perspective opposed to one another. I'm not interested in the causal determinants of one's social perspective. The agenda view identifies an epistemic commitment that is shared by everyone who holds a certain social perspective such that we can point to this commitment to ascribe a social perspective to them, predict what information will stand out to them, and criticize them for holding one social perspective rather than another or holding a social perspective badly.

[49] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Basil Blackwell, 1968), quoted in Camp, "Perspectives and Frames in Pursuit of Ultimate Understanding," 30.

Regarding these perspectives as *social* perspectives requires that we take them to be unified under an agenda. When the speaker of (1), for instance, avows the social perspective of an employer, they avow a commitment to an agenda. Thus, they give us license to criticize them for this agenda. For example, we can criticize an employer for *not* being zetetically oriented to answer a question like 'How are the workers in this profession treated?'. (1)'s utterance, this criticism would press, gives away the fact that they neglect the experience of those who work service jobs.

My claim is not that perspective reports by agents report agendas. Rather, my claim is that we have to treat agents' perspective reports as expressions of their zetetic orientation to make sense of the internal unity they presume. We can leverage the theory of perspectives I laid out to expose the role that their zetetic orientation plays in endowing individuals with a social perspective.

Similarly, we can make sense of (2) by associating the perspective of a high-level athlete with an investment in the question 'How does mental work figure into success?'. This agenda ascription proposes a particular way of understanding the social perspective of a high-level athlete—one according to the internal unity of the perspective is captured the athlete's zetetic commitment to this question.[50] In this light, it makes sense to say that the speaker in (3) is attuned to the oppression of women by having Q_F on their agenda, even if they have not yet formed the views that they later found in bell hooks's work.

Why should we care to have an account of social perspective? For one, predicting scenes of perspectival clash and alliance can be pragmatically and epistemically productive. We might make use of these predictions when designing a subway system that considers wheelchair users' perspectives or when we seek to pass a controversial resolution to boycott a certain company at our food cooperative.

Furthermore, we might seek to change our social perspective so that we are aligned with others. People who can bring their social perspectives into alignment can cooperate towards achieving certain epistemic and practical goals.

We might also seek to develop a more sophisticated language for criticizing each other's perspectives. With my analysis of the clash between the feminist and anti-feminist perspectives in particular, I've sought to show that recognizing that what's perspectival about the opposition between two people can be useful. I argued that what's perspectival about their opposition has to do with how the questions on their agendas interact. Their beliefs are merely instrumental to the formation and maintenance of these agendas. As Daniela Dover argues, excavating conflict is the work of interpersonal criticism, enabling us "to explore our initial reactions to one another, rather than merely expressing them".[51] Uncovering why our perspectives clash can tell us more about the way we think and how it interacts with the way

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[50] As an anonymous reviewer points out, it's worth acknowledging that not every perspective that displays internal unity is socially resonant. Some perspectives I mention such as the perspective of the employer or the high-level athlete, or other perspectives such as the perspective of an optimist might not be associated with recognizable agendas in a particular historical or conversational context. Still, they can be treated as a social perspective and analyzed as essentially expressing zetetic commitments.

[51] Daniela Dover, "Criticism as conversation," *Philosophical Perspectives* 33, no. 1 (2019): 24, https://doi.org/10.1111/phpe.12125.

others think. A deeper understanding of social perspective enables this mode of criticism.

Going beyond social interactions, we might also find it individually emancipatory to gain more self-knowledge about our social perspectives. One's recognition of their own agenda can transform their guidance by certain questions into an active project that they pursue.

Agenda, in politics and ordinary life, is often a bad word. The agenda view puts agendas in the right place by characterizing one's perspectival commitments as zetetic (rather than doxastic) commitments and thus makes sense of ordinary perspective talk in social life. Even if we don't subscribe to the view that the study of inquiry should take primacy in epistemology, we can recognize that theorizing about our practices of gaining knowledge through interacting with other epistemic agents requires that we make room for social perspectives—like the feminist perspective.[52]

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[52] For a defense of the primacy of inquiry in epistemology cf. Christopher Hookway, "Epistemology and Inquiry: the Primacy of Practice." In *Epistemology Futures*, ed. Stephen Hetherington (Oxford University Press, 2006).

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