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# Zee R. Perry

## *curriculum vitae*

### EMPLOYMENT

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- 2020–Present *Visiting Assistant Professor of Practice in Philosophy*  
Humanities Faculty, NYU Shanghai, Shanghai, People’s Republic of China
- 2020–2020 *Visiting Instructor*  
Department of Philosophy, Rutgers University, New Brunswick
- 2018–2019 *Center Visiting Scholar*  
Center for the Study of Origins, University of Colorado, Boulder
- 2018–2019 *Visiting Instructor*  
Department of Philosophy, University of Colorado, Boulder
- 2016–2018 *Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Associate*  
Department of Philosophy, Rutgers University, New Brunswick

### EDUCATION

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- 2009–2016 Ph.D. in Philosophy, New York University.  
Dissertation: *Physical Quantities: Mereology and Dynamics*  
Committee: Tim Maudlin (chair), Cian Dorr, Hartry Field, Shamik Dasgupta (external, Princeton)
- 2007–2009 B.A. in Philosophy, Rutgers University *Summa Cum Laude*.
- 2005–2007 Moravian College

### AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

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Metaphysics, Philosophy of Physics

### AREAS OF COMPETENCE

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Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Art, Logic

### FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

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- Summer 2019 Early Career Researcher Visiting Fellowship, ANU School of Philosophy and Centre for the Philosophy of the Sciences
- 2018–2019 Visiting Scholarship Award (Project: Origins of Measurement), Center for the Study of Origins, CU Boulder
- 2015–2016 Mellon Dissertation Fellowship, NYU
- 2015 Student Senator’s Council Conference Funding Travel Award, NYU
- 2015 Outstanding Teaching Award, NYU

2014 Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Student Travel Grant, NYU  
2009–2014 MacCracken Fellowship, NYU

## PUBLICATIONS

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Forthcoming “Humean Nomic Essentialism” (with Harjit Bhogal). *Noûs*.  
Forthcoming “On Mereology and Metricality”. *Philosophers’ Imprint* (forthcoming)  
2017 “How to be a Substantivalist Without Getting Shifty About It”. *Philosophical Issues: Metaphysics*. 27, (1). (2017). <http://philpapers.org/rec/PERHTB>  
2017 “What the Humean Should Say about Entanglement” (with Harjit Bhogal). *Noûs*. 51, (1). (2017). <http://philpapers.org/rec/BHOWTH>  
2015 “Properly Extensive Quantities”. *Philosophy of Science*. University of Chicago Press. 82, (5). (2015). <http://philpapers.org/rec/PERPEQ>

## UNDER REVIEW/IN PRESS

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“Explanation, Additivity, and Dynamics”  
“Does Physics Motivate a Dynamic Theory of Quantity?”

## PAPERS IN PROGRESS

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“Nothing in the Rule Book says a Dog Can’t Play Basketball; Two Ways the Laws of Nature Might Govern”  
“Governing Laws and Nomological Modality”  
“There’s no Speed of Light, So What the Heck did Michelson Measure?”  
“What the Humean Should Say About Quantities: A Reply to Bricker”

## PRESENTATIONS AND COMMENTARIES (‘I’=INVITED)

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Nov 2021 “There’s No Speed of Light, So What the Heck did Michelson Measure?” Caltech Philosophy of Physics Reading Group. California Institute of Technology. (I)  
Sep 2021 “There’s No Speed of Light, So What the Heck did Michelson Measure?” Society for the Metaphysics of Science, 6th Annual Conference.  
Feb 2021 “Humean Nomic Essentialism” (with Harjit Bhogal) FraMEPhys workshop on Humean approaches to Quantum Entanglement, University of Birmingham. (I)  
Jul 2020 “There’s No Speed of Light, So What the Heck did Michelson Measure?” Women in Metaphysics (WiM) Summer Works-in-Progress Series.  
Dec 2019 “There’s No Speed of Light, So What the Heck did Michelson Measure?” (Public Lecture) Center for the Study of Origins, Symposium on the Origin of Writing. University of Colorado, Boulder. (I)

- Jun 2019 “Does Physics Motivate a Dynamic Theory of Quantity?” Centre for the Philosophy of the Sciences. Australian National University. (I)
- Jun 2019 “Nothing in the Rule Book says a Dog Can’t Play Basketball” FraMEPhys Workshop on Grounding and the Laws of Nature. Birmingham University. (I)
- May 2019 “Against Quantitative Primitivism: On Mereology and Metricality” Numbers, Minds, and Magnitudes Workshop. New College of the Humanities. (I)
- May 2019 Comment on: “Chance Explanation” by Katrina Elliott at Metaphysics and its History: Regress Arguments. Simon Fraser University. (I)
- Apr 2019 “Nothing in the Rule Book says a Dog Can’t Play Basketball” Society for the Metaphysics of Science (SMS) Group Session at Pacific Meeting of the American Philosophical Association. (I)
- Jan 2019 Comment on: “Terminating Fundamental Determinables and Denying Determinable-Based Accounts of Metaphysical Indeterminacy” by Jannai Shields at Eastern Meeting of the American Philosophical Association. (I)
- Aug 2018 “On Mereology and Metricality” Society for the Metaphysics of Science 2018 Annual Meeting. University of Milan.
- Aug 2018 Comment on: “Machian Comparativism about Mass” by Neils Martens at Society for the Metaphysics of Science 2018. University of Milan. (I)
- Department Talks:**
- Feb 2018 “Motivating a Dynamic Theory of Quantity” Stanford University, Philosophy. (I)
- Feb 2018 “Motivating a Dynamic Theory of Quantity” Cornell University, Philosophy. (I)
- Jan 2018 “Motivating a Dynamic Theory of Quantity” University of Toronto, Philosophy. (I)
- Jan 2018 “Motivating a Dynamic Theory of Quantity” National University of Singapore, Philosophy. (I)
- Oct 2017 “Motivating a Dynamic Theory of Quantity” Society for the Metaphysics of Science 2017 Meeting. Fordham University.
- Dec 2015 “Substantivalism without the Shiftiness: Or, Priority Monism about Spacetime” Early Career Women in Metaphysics Workshop. Fordham University. (I)
- Dec 2015 “How to be a Substantivalist Without Getting all Shifty About it” Causation and Modality Workshop. University College London. (I)
- Dec 2015 “How to be a Substantivalist Without Getting all Shifty About it” Conference on Fundamentality. City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center. (I)
- July 2015 “Substantivalism Without the Shiftiness” Metaphysics of Science Summer School at Helsinki University.
- Fall 2014 “Intensive and Extensive Quantities” Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association. Chicago, IL.
- July 2014 “Intensive and Extensive Quantities” British Society for the Philosophy of Science. Cambridge, UK.
- May 2015 “Additivity and Dynamics” The Metaphysics of Quantity Conference. New York University. (I)
- Spring 2014 “Quantities, Measurement, and Mereology” Yale MAP (Minorities and Philosophy) Speaker Series. (I)
- Fall 2013 Comment on: “Fundamental Properties of Fundamental Properties” by Maya Eddon at NYSWIP Tribute to Ruth Barcan Marcus. (I)

- Spring 2013      Comment on: "Quantum Entanglement, Bohmian Mechanics, and Humean Supervenience" by Elizabeth Miller at NYU-Columbia Graduate Student Conference. (I)
- Spring 2013      "Concatenating Intensive Quantities" New York Metaphysics Bootcamp. Fall 2012. (I) & NYU Dissertation Seminar. (I)
- Spring 2012      "The Counterfactual Account of Interactive Art" NYU Washington Square Circle. (I)

## TEACHING

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### as Instructor

- Fall 2020  
–Spring 2022      Introduction to Logic, NYU Shanghai
- Spring 2022      Great Works in Philosophy, NYU Shanghai
- Fall 2021      Texts and Ideas (General Humanities Course), NYU Shanghai
- Spring 2021      Philosophy of Physics: Quantum Mechanics, NYU Shanghai
- Fall 2020      Philosophy of Science, NYU Shanghai
- Spring 2020      Introduction to Logic, Rutgers University
- Fall 2019      Introduction to Philosophy, CU Boulder
- Spring 2019      Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Seminar, CU Boulder
- Fall 2018      History of Science: Ancients to Newton, CU Boulder
- Fall 2018      Major Social Theories (Social & Political Philosophy), CU Boulder
- Fall 2018      Contemporary Social Issues (Intro to Practical Ethics), CU Boulder
- Fall 2017      Philosophy of Physics: Quantum Mechanics, Rutgers University
- Spring 2017      Philosophy of Physics: Space and Time, Rutgers University
- Fall 2016      Introduction to Symbolic Logic, Rutgers University
- Summer 2013      Metaphysics, NYU
- Summer 2012      Aesthetics, NYU

### as Preceptor (Teaching Assistant)

- Spring 2015      Philosophy of Physics (with Tim Maudlin)
- Spring 2013      Ancient Philosophy (with Johnny Cottrell)
- Fall 2012      Central Problems In Philosophy (with Helen Yetter Chappel)
- Spring 2012      Central Problems In Philosophy (with Katie Elliot)
- Fall 2011      Philosophy of Biology (with Laura Franklin-Hall)

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

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- Summer 2020      Contributor, Women in Metaphysics (WiM) Remote Working Group
- 2019      Organizer, Pacific APA Group Session — Society for the Metaphysics of Science
- 2018      Member, Program Committee — 2018 Annual Meeting  
Society for the Metaphysics of Science
- 2013–Present      PhilPapers.org "Quantities" category editor, 2013–Present

- April 30–  
May 1, 2016      Advisory Committee, Fordham Early Career Women in Metaphysics Workshop  
Organizer: Amy Seymour (Fordham University)  
<http://fordhammetaphysicsworkshop.weebly.com>
- 2015–2016      New York Co-Organizer (with Simona Aimar and Zack Al-Witri), New York Topics  
in Metaphysics (“TiM”) Workshop, NYU/Barnard/Columbia.
- May 1–3  
2015      Co-Organizer (with Erica Shumener), New York Metaphysics of Quantity Conference,  
NYU/New York Institute of Philosophy.      [quantitiesconference.wordpress.com](http://quantitiesconference.wordpress.com)
- 2013–2014      Rutgers Cosmology Project, Graduate Assistant Organizer and Co-moderator of Cos-  
mology Project blog: <http://philocosmology.com/>
- 2011–2013      New York “Metaphysics Bootcamp” Workshop, Co-Founder and Organizer.

Reading Groups Organized or Co-Organized:

Metaphysics (Causation), Metaphysics of Quantity, Philosophy of Science (Space and  
Time), Philosophy of Science (General), Aesthetics

Refereeing for:

*Philosophy of Science, Philosophical Studies, Mind, Synthese, Foundations of Physics,*  
*The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*

## DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

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- 2013–2015      Diversity, Inclusivity, and Climate Committee, NYU
- 2013–2014      Colloquium Committee, NYU
- 2012–2013      Curriculum Committee, NYU
- 2014      NYU Prospective Student Visit, Co-organizer
- 2010      NYU-Columbia Graduate Student Conference, Co-organizer
- 2010–2014      NYU-Columbia Graduate Student Conference, Referee

## GRADUATE COURSES

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Associated Writing (Logic, Ontology and Mathematics) – Hartry Field, NYU

Hyperintensional Metaphysics – Shamik Dasgupta, Princeton.

Aesthetic Psychology – Jesse Prinz, CUNY.

Associated Writing (Quantities) – Ted Sider, NYU

Topics in Metaphysics (Fundamentality) – Karen Bennett, NYU.

Kant’s Critique of Judgement – Beatrice Longuenesse, NYU.

Topics in Philosophy of Physics – Tim Maudlin, Rutgers.

Classical and Non-Classical Logics – Hartry Field, NYU.

Advanced Introduction to Philosophy of Language – Imogen Dickie, NYU.

Philosophy of the High Level Sciences – Michael Strevens, NYU.

Proseminar – Instructors: (Fall) Ted Sider and Hartry Field; (Spring) Paul Horwich  
and Beatrice Longuenesse, NYU.

Classics in Aesthetics – Peter Kivy, Rutgers.

## REFERENCES

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Please contact Anupum Mehrotra (am3565@nyu.edu) to request references.

Tim Maudlin  
Professor of Philosophy  
New York University  
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Cian Dorr  
Professor of Philosophy  
New York University  
am3565+Dorr@nyu.edu

Ted Sider  
Distinguished Professor  
of Philosophy  
Rutgers University  
am3565+Sider@nyu.edu

Hartry Field  
University Professor and  
Silver Professor of Philosophy  
New York University  
am3565+Field@nyu.edu

Shamik Dasgupta  
Associate Professor  
of Philosophy  
UC Berkeley  
am3565+Dasgupta@nyu.edu

Brian Talbot (teaching)  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
University of Colorado, Boulder  
am3565+Talbot@nyu.edu

## Dissertation Summary

Title: *Physical Quantities: Mereology and Dynamics*

Zee R. Perry

Physical quantities—things like length, mass, charge, and volume—are commonly represented in science and everyday practice with mathematical entities, like numbers and vectors. We explain why I cannot reach the iced coffee 3ft away from me on the table by citing the fact that my arm is 2.5ft long and  $2.5 < 3$ . However, we don't think that the ' $<$ ' relation between the numbers 2.5 and 3 is directly explaining anything about my arm and the coffee. Rather, this mathematical fact explains indirectly by representing some directly explanatory *physical* feature of the system *itself*. A satisfactory account of the physical world should give us an understanding of the underlying physical structure in virtue of which these mathematical representations are successful. In my dissertation, I defend a two-pronged account of quantity that analyzes this structure in terms of how that quantity traffics with the rest of the physical world. In the first half (Chapters 1 and 2), I argue that, for some quantities—which I call “properly extensive”—this structure is grounded in their relationship to the *parthood*. The second half (Chapters 3 and 4) concerns the relation between physical quantities and dynamics, and argues that all *other* quantities have their structure only derivatively, in virtue of their dynamical connections to properly extensive quantities according to the physical laws.

There is a commonly accepted distinction between *intensive* quantities (like density or temperature), for which the temperature, say, of a whole is, in general, not the “sum” of the temperatures of its parts, and *extensive* quantities which *are* additive in this way. In Chapter 1, I argue that there are more ways a quantity can impact what parts an object can have, or what those parts must be like, than what's captured by the intensive/extensive distinction, and introduce

the notion of a *properly extensive* quantity. Quantities like mass and charge are extensive but not *properly* so, since they are “additive” but not “subtractive”: *If* an object can be divided into massive parts, then its mass must be the “sum” of the masses of those parts. However, the converse is not necessarily true: A muon, for instance, has a greater mass than an electron but has *no* part as massive as that electron (since they are both fundamental particles). In contrast, length is *properly extensive*: A line’s length is the “sum” of  $l_\alpha$  and  $l_\beta$  if *and only if* it is divisible into two parts of length  $l_\alpha$  and  $l_\beta$  respectively. Quantities like length, volume, and temporal duration are, I argue, properly extensive.

Chapter 2 defends an account of these quantities according to which predicates like “shorter than” and “(not as long as, but) as long as a part of” are not just necessarily coextensive (as established in Chapter 1), they’re expressions of the *same relation*. I call this the Mereological-Reductive (M-R) account of properly extensive quantities, and present the M-R account of volume in formal detail. The account defines the relations that constitute volume’s quantitative structure in terms of mereological relations and the sharing of intrinsic volume properties. I give mereological definitions for volume ordering and summation relations as well as a schema for the many volume *ratio relations*, like “ $n$ -times the volume of”. I show that this definition schema extends to capture even *irrational* volume ratios, like “ $\pi$ -times the volume of”. The M-R account’s definitions necessarily satisfy all the formal features needed to justify representation with real numbers, and they do justice to the intuition that volume ordering, summation, and ratio relations are *intrinsic* to their relata. In contrast, I argue that competing theories of quantitative structure, like those defended by Field (1984) and Mundy (1987), cannot give a fully general account of volume metric relations without giving up intrinsicity.

Chapters 3 and 4 concern quantities which are not properly extensive, like mass, charge, temperature, density, etc. We cannot ground these quantities’ structure in the physical makeup of their instances (as the M-R account in Chapter 2 does for properly extensive ones) because their quantitative structure is not reflected in the parthood structure of their instances: e.g., two massive point particles may stand in the “ $\pi$ -times as massive as”, or the “twice as massive as” or any of countless other mass metric relations, despite both having no proper parts.

Chapter 3 takes this point further, arguing that accounts on which mass’s additivity is *not* dependent on (or otherwise determined by) the *dynamics of massive bodies* are committed to a pervasive explanatory failure. Such accounts, I argue, require widespread unexplained correlations between the mass properties instantiated by composite bodies and those bodies’ law-governed dynamic behavior. For instance, mass additivity explains why a body composed of two particles weighing 2g and 3g, respectively, *instantiates* the property 5g. And the dynamical laws can explain why that same composite body *behaves* roughly like a 5g *simple* particle. But (if additivity is fundamental) these two explanations will have almost *no* overlap, leaving us no means to explain their correspondence. The second half of the chapter extends this explanatory worry, arguing that the very same considerations apply to aspects of mass’s *quantitative structure*, namely mass summation structure (in virtue of which one mass property is said to be the “sum” of two others). This gives rise to a new and powerful worry for certain popular accounts of the fundamental structure of physical quantities—most notably the position of Mundy (1987) and Eddon (2013).

Chapter 4 argues that the best chance for a viable account of non-properly extensive quantities (‘non-’ takes wide scope) requires a hierarchical picture—i.e. one where we define one quantity’s structure in terms of some *other* quantity, whose structure is taken as given. Specifically, I defend

an account which grounds the structure of non-properly extensive quantities in their dynamical connections to the properly extensive ones, as established by the physical laws. Here the difference between cases where, e.g., a pair of point particles stand in “ $\pi$ -times as massive as” and one where they stand in “twice as massive as” is determined by the degree of difference in the accelerations they undergo when impressed by forces of the same strength. I show how this can be done, and respond to arguments like those of McKinsey, Sugar, and Suppes (1953) which purport to show that classical mass cannot be defined in terms of the other primitives of Newtonian mechanics without ruling out or conflating distinct physical possibilities.

## WORKS CITED IN SUMMARY

- [1] Eddon, Maya (2013). “Fundamental Properties of Fundamental Properties”. In Karen Bennett Dean Zimmerman (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics, Volume 8*. 78–104.
- [2] Field, Hartry (1984). “Can We Dispense with Space-Time?” *PSA: Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association 1984*: 33 - 90.
- [3] J. C. C. McKinsey, A. C. Sugar, and Suppes, Patrick (1953). “Axiomatic Foundations of Classical Particle Mechanics”. *Journal of Rational Mechanics and Analysis* Vol. 2, No. 2, 1953
- [4] Mundy, Brent (1987). “The Metaphysics of Quantity”. *Philosophical Studies* 51 (1): 29 – 54. 1987