

Abstract: On one formulation, epistemological disjunctivism is the view that our perceptual beliefs constitute knowledge when they are based on reasons that provide them with factive support. Some would argue that it is impossible to understand how perceptual knowledge is possible unless we assume that we have such reasons to support our perceptual beliefs. Some would argue that it is impossible to understand how perceptual experience could furnish us with these reasons unless we assume that the traditional view of experience is mistaken. For reasons explained here, I think that the epistemological argument for metaphysical disjunctivism rests on mistaken assumptions about reasons and their rational role. Neither disjunctivist view is needed to understand how perceptual knowledge is possible.

Clayton Littlejohn: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2126-6169>

11

Neither/Nor

Clayton Littlejohn

1. Introduction

On the formulation discussed here, epistemological disjunctivism is the view that in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge, a thinker's perceptual beliefs constitute knowledge when they are based on reasons that provide them with factive support (i.e., the complete description of the thinker's reason for believing, say, that it is Agnes curled up on the sofa entails that Agnes is curled up on the sofa). A thinker is in a position to know that p perceptually if the thinker sees that p . It is the seeing that p that constitutes the thinker's reason for believing p and provides the requisite support for that belief. This perceptual relation between a thinker and a fact guarantees that the thinker is in a position to know things about things in her surroundings. Without this kind of support, perceptual knowledge isn't possible.

Some philosophers accept epistemological disjunctivism because they think that alternative accounts of the rational basis of perceptual belief lead to scepticism. Some accept metaphysical disjunctivism because they think that this epistemological proposal requires it. The guiding idea seems to be that on the traditional view of experience (i.e., a view on which the experience we have in the good case is of the same fundamental kind as the experience we have in the bad), it wouldn't be possible for experience to provide a different basis for perceptual belief in the good case and the bad. However, the epistemological disjunctivist proposes that in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge, experience provides us with reasons that provide factive support for some perceptual beliefs about the external world. We cannot have such support for our beliefs in the bad case if, say, our perceptual beliefs are mistaken. Thus, there is a *prima facie* plausible line of argument from epistemological to metaphysical disjunctivism.

As someone who has, if anything, too much sympathy for naïve realism, I don't have any problem with the idea that the experience we have in the good case might provide a kind of contact that some indistinguishable

experiences could not hope to provide. As someone who has just the right amount of sympathy for the idea that our evidence just is our knowledge ('E=K' hereafter), I have no problem with the idea that the evidence we have in good cases is different from and better than the evidence we have in the correlative bad cases. I don't object to epistemological disjunctivism on the grounds that it clashes with the idea that our reasons for believing what we do couldn't be better than the reasons we would have if we were BIVs, say. My main concern with the disjunctivist account of perceptual knowledge under consideration is that it tries to account for positive epistemic standing in terms of the support provided by the thinker's reasons. Our non-inferential beliefs do not attain positive standing because of the support provided by our reasons for holding these beliefs because, I have argued, there is nothing that is our reason for forming a non-inferential belief. Things go off the rails when we start with this mistaken claim about the rational role of the thinker's *reasons* and then use this mistaken claim about reasons to motivate or justify claims about the nature of perceptual *experience*. If you think that these non-inferential beliefs are justified because of the support some thinker's reasons for forming these beliefs provides, you have to adopt an account of experience on which experience is sufficiently belief-like to make it possible for the non-inferential beliefs to be based on reasons in much the same way our inferential beliefs are. Bad epistemology paves the way for mistakes in the philosophy of mind.

Because I accept E=K and think that a thinker's knowledge just *is* her evidence, I don't think that cases of non-inferential knowledge are helpfully modelled on cases where a thinker has some evidence, sees what it supports, and judges that something is so in such a way that the facts that constitute the evidence constitute the thinker's reasons for judging what she does. Because a thinker's evidence just is her knowledge, we shouldn't describe processes by which non-inferential knowledge is acquired as processes that take pieces of evidence as input and give us non-inferential knowledge as an output.

After I explain the key features of the disjunctivist approach to perceptual knowledge under discussion, I shall argue for two points. The first is that the disjunctivist cannot give us a suitable account of the reasons that support our perceptual belief. If the disjunctivist were right that such reasons were needed for knowledge or for justification, this would be an unfortunate result. Luckily, the claim that we need these reasons for justification and knowledge turns out to be unmotivated. Once you recognise that a belief's justification turns on whether it constitutes knowledge, you should see that a belief's justification doesn't turn on whether the thinker's reasons provide sufficient support for that belief.

2. Two Ways to Stand in the Space of Reasons

According to McDowell (1998, 2002), knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons, in two senses:

1. For McDowell, knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons in the sense that a thinker who believes what she does not know lacks *standing*. If she believed only what she knew to be true, she would have standing, but not if she doesn't:

Normativity of Knowledge: If S believes p without knowing p , she should not believe p .

The situation of the thinker who believes what she doesn't know isn't all that different from the situation of someone who is standing on property that they mistakenly believe is theirs. They try to exclude someone from it who they don't realise has the authority to be there. It might seem that they have standing to exclude (at least, to people who don't know where the property lines should be drawn), but they don't. However good their reasons might be for believing they have this right, they lack the right to exclude. However reasonable they might generally be, there is a decisive reason for us to not assist them in trying to exclude others from this property. However reasonable our thinker might be, if she believes what she doesn't know, there is a decisive reason for our thinker not to use their belief in theoretical reasoning as a tool for excluding or ruling out possibilities. Just as the right to property had better come with ancillary rights (e.g., the right to exclude, to use, to sell, etc.), the right to believe had better come with ancillary rights (e.g., the right to use that belief in deliberation). Once we know that the belief cannot be properly used to rule out possibilities, we know that the apparent right to believe is only that, no more.

2. For McDowell, knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons in the sense that a thinker's response (in this case, belief) attains the standing it does because it is backed by the thinker's reasons:

Knowledge-Reasons: If S knows that p , S's being in a position to know supervenes upon the reasons she possesses, and her belief is properly based on sufficient reasons.

One of the questions that I want to try to answer here concerns the relations between these two claims. Let's suppose for the time being that knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons in the first sense. Should we say that knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons in this second sense?

The first question is a question about motivation. Why should we accept that knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons in the second sense? Without the Knowledge-Reasons thesis, it isn't at all clear why we should accept the version of epistemological disjunctivism under consideration. If we don't need support from the thinker's reasons for perceptual knowledge, we surely don't need reasons that provide entailing support for our perceptual beliefs to be knowledge. And if we don't need these entailing

reasons, we lose the epistemological motivation for accepting McDowell's metaphysical disjunctivism.

The second question is a question about the tenability of the proposal. Is there any reason to think that there are reasons that can do what McDowell wants them to do? Because he thinks knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons in two senses, he needs the thinker's reasons to do two things. The thinker's reasons have to ensure that the thinker's response is appropriate or justified. In so doing, they have to ensure that the thinker is in a position to know.

I don't think that the proposed account is tenable or well motivated. I'll explain why later in this chapter. Before I do that, I'll need to explain why McDowell thinks that epistemological considerations support his metaphysical disjunctivist view.

3. The Epistemological Argument for Metaphysical Disjunctivism

Our epistemological disjunctivist thinks that in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge, the thinker's reason for believing p is that she sees that p . Because this reason is the thinker's reason for believing p , the thinker's reason provides factive support for her belief. Because it provides such support, the thinker's reason is supposed to ensure that the thinker is in a position to know p . For this proposal to work, McDowell thinks that we need to embrace a relational and representational view of experience, one that's incompatible with the traditional conception of experience that characterises experience as the factor that's common to perception and indistinguishable hallucination. Otherwise, it is hard to see how perceptual experience could provide us with reasons that provide the required rational support.

In combination, McDowell's two commitments concerning knowledge imply that a thinker doesn't have the right to believe what she doesn't know and could only have this right if her beliefs were based on reasons the possession of which entailed that the thinker was in a position to know (and not merely in a position to justifiably believe where justification is understood as compatible with error). Most epistemologists would dismiss this kind of infallibilism out of hand.

One reason most epistemologists reject this is that they see in McDowell's infallibilism an impossibly easy route to scepticism:

The strongest view one could take regarding the truth connection is that taken by Descartes. The Cartesian view is that justification logically entails truth. To put it schematically: It is a conceptual truth that, if conditions C justify belief B for subject S, then C logically entails that B is true. . . . The legacy of the Cartesian view is scepticism. Descartes

demonstrated this in the first meditation that no such connection is forthcoming. . . . Given any plausible specification of C for any S, it will always be logically consistent to suppose that not B. That is what the evil demon argument shows. Where, e.g., C comprises facts about sensory data, and where B is a belief about the truth of some empirical proposition, it is always logically possible that the evil demon has arranged for C to obtain where B is false.

(Cohen 1984: 281)

McDowell knows why this view is so gripping. People in the grips of it think that our best reasons leave it open whether our beliefs about the external world are true. Recall Conee's argument for this kind of fallibilism:

Suppose you have the belief that someone is speaking. You infer this from your justified belief that Mr. Jones is speaking. Thus, your external world belief that someone is speaking is a belief for which you have an entailing justification, your justified belief that Jones is speaking. However, it is quite plausible that your belief that Jones is speaking must itself be justified in order to justify any other belief. . . . When we consider candidate justifications for entailing justifiers like the belief that Jones is speaking, it becomes plain that at some point there is always a proposition that is justified without being entailed by its justification. In the present instance, the non-entailing justifier may well be your justification for the belief that Jones is speaking. This belief may be justified by the experience of its seeming to you that you hear what you seem to recall to be the sound of Jones' voice. This experience does not necessitate that Jones, or anyone else, is speaking. But it may be all that you have, and all that you need, in favor of the belief that Jones is speaking. Exactly how this justification works is another matter. . . . [I]n any plausible view, at some point in the justification of each external world belief that is justified, there is justification without entailment. When this further assumption is added to the assumption that the entailment account is correct, we have a valid argument for the conclusion that no external world belief is well enough justified to be known. . . . The entailment claim is the argument's least plausible assumption. So, if the skeptical conclusion is to be avoided, then the entailment account of the truth connection is the best candidate for rejection.

(Conee 2004: 245)

Operating on the assumption that normative standing supervenes upon a thinker's reasons, they conclude that since our best reasons are compatible with the falsity of most of our beliefs, the right to hold these beliefs cannot

turn on whether these beliefs are correct. As such, knowledge cannot be a standing in the space of reasons in the first or the second sense.

McDowell thinks there are two mistakes in this reasoning. The first mistake is that of thinking that these fallible reasons might be adequate for positive standing. If these reasons really did leave it open whether our beliefs about the external world were correct, they couldn't give us the right to believe what we do. (He rejects the hybrid view of knowledge that these philosophers assume is correct.) The second mistake is that of thinking that a suitable reconstruction of our epistemic situation and a correct description of our reasons for believing what we do could be things that 'leave it open' whether, say, there really is gin in this glass and smoke in the air. This leaves out facts like the fact that we see that there's smoke in the air or that there is gin in the glass. They're replaced by something else (e.g., experiences, sense data, facts about the inner, false propositions, etc.).

This brings us to the second sense in which knowledge is for McDowell a standing in the space of reasons. A belief's being knowledge is determined entirely by the thinker's reasons. If a thinker's reasons for believing p are sufficient in the normative sense (i.e., they make it the case that the thinker justifiably believes what she does), they must put the thinker in a position to know that p is true. Knowledge stands on supporting reasons that a thinker couldn't have had unless they, too, were in a position to know. This seems to follow from something that McDowell and his critics mentioned earlier agree on, which is that normative statuses are determined by the reasons that the thinker has in her possession. They disagree about what a belief has to be like to attain this status (i.e., McDowell thinks that the belief has to constitute knowledge, and his critics cash out propriety in different terms), but they seem to agree that whatever status is, it is something a belief has by virtue of the reasons that a thinker has in her possession.

Critics of this second idea are targets for McDowell's criticism because they think of knowledge as a kind of hybrid. On this hybrid view of knowledge, having sufficient or adequate reason and having normative standing is one thing. Having an accurate belief and meeting whatever further conditions must be met for a belief to be knowledge is something further, something that a thinker might lack even if her reasons are perfectly adequate. McDowell rejects this hybrid view. He thinks that it suffers from a kind of incoherence:

In the hybrid conception [of knowledge that allows that two subjects might both believe for adequate reasons but differ in what they know], a satisfactory standing in the space of reasons is only part of what knowledge is; truth is an extra requirement. So two subjects can be alike in respect of their satisfactoriness of their standing in the space of reasons, because only in her case is what she takes to be actually so. But if its being so is external to her operations in the space of reasons, how

can it not be outside the reach of her rational powers? And if it is outside the reach of her rational powers, how can its being so be the crucial element in the intelligible conception of her knowing that it is so?

(1998: 403)

If knowledge is then taken to be an epistemic standing, we fail to do justice to an internalist insight:

[O]ne's epistemic standing . . . cannot intelligibly be constituted, even in part, by matters blankly external to how it is with one subjectively. For how could such matters be other than beyond one's ken? And how could matters beyond one's ken make any difference to one's epistemic standing?

(1998: 390)

If we turn the rhetorical questions into premises, we get our argument for the disjunctive conception of experience or appearance:

The Epistemological Argument for Metaphysical Disjunctivism

P1. If a complete description of your mental profile is neutral on whether p (where ' p ' throughout will be a promising candidate for being an object of perceptual knowledge), the fact that p obtains or doesn't obtain cannot be part of your perspective.

P2. If the fact that p obtains or doesn't obtain cannot be part of your perspective, the fact that p obtains or doesn't obtain cannot be among the reasons that contribute to your epistemic standing.

C1. So, if a complete description of your mental states and events is neutral on whether p , the fact that p obtaining or failing to cannot be among the reasons that make a difference to your epistemic standing with respect to p .

P3. Knowledge is itself an epistemic standing.

C2. So, if a complete description of your mental states and events is neutral on whether p , the fact that p obtaining or failing to cannot make a difference to what you know about p .

P4. According to the traditional conception of experience, a complete description of your mental states and events is neutral on whether p .

C3. So, if the traditional view of experience were correct, it implies that the fact that p obtaining or failing to cannot make a difference to what you know about p .

P5. If the fact that p obtaining or failing to cannot make a difference to what you know about p , you cannot know whether p .

C4. So, if the traditional view of experience were correct, you cannot know whether p .¹⁰

Someone who accepts the hybrid conception of knowledge will want to decouple the facts that can contribute to the subject's epistemic standing by being reasons from the things that determine whether a subject's beliefs constitute knowledge, but they can do this only by denying (P3).

What would be wrong with denying (P3)? McDowell offers us these observations:

What I claim yields no satisfactory conception of knowledge is the thought that truth-worthiness of endorsement, which is expressed by the attributor's undertaking the relevant commitment herself-is needed as an extra condition, over and above whatever entitlement can be attributed to the candidate knower. This thought reflects the idea that entitlement incompatible with falsehood in what one is entitled to cannot be had. Thinking on these lines, one will suppose that if one does no more than attribute whatever entitlement one can, one leaves it open that what the putative knower putatively knows is not even true. In that case, she certainly does not know it. Given this interiorizing of entitlement, the fact that the putative knower's commitment is to something that is in fact true . . . looks accidental in relation to the putative knower's entitlement.

(2002: 103)

We start from the idea that one essential difference between mere true belief and knowledge is that the latter cannot be a relation between a thinker and a fact where it is at all accidental that the thinker is right in taking the fact to be a fact (Unger 1968). Suppose that the difference between being in the good case and the bad didn't tell us what a subject's reasons could be for believing p . If so, given the thinker's best reasons for believing p , there is some element of luck and some degree of accidentality that distinguishes the subject in the good case from the bad. But this makes it hard to see what's good about the good case. To be in the good case, the case of knowledge, we're supposed to stand in some relation to a fact that shows that it is not at all an accident that we got things right. As we've just described the difference between the good case and the bad, it is to some extent lucky or accidental that the thinker who was moved by such and such set of reasons ended up with a true belief as opposed to a false one. So perhaps we have no right to describe the good case as good. It's good to the extent that a thinker has a true belief, but perhaps it isn't good in the intended sense. We cannot coherently describe it as a case of knowledge if good fortune is what brings the thinker and the fact together.

It's reasonably clear why McDowell thinks that the hybrid view is problematic. On the hybrid view, a belief needs the support of reasons to be knowledge, but the support it provides leaves it open whether the target belief is knowledge. It seems incoherent, then, to say that positive standing is both ensured by the reasons and requires that the target belief constitutes knowledge.

While most who defend the hybrid view of knowledge would respond by rejecting the idea that knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons in both of the senses discussed earlier, I would like to consider a slightly different response. I reject the hybrid view of knowledge because, like McDowell, I don't think that a belief's normative standing and its status as knowledge are separable. I disagree with McDowell because I deny that knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons in McDowell's second sense. I reject the idea that the thinker's reasons determine whether a thinker's belief attains positive normative standing *and* that the reasons determine whether a thinker's belief is knowledge. So, while I agree with McDowell that a belief attains positive normative standing iff it is known, neither positive normative standing nor knowledge is determined entirely by the thinker's reasons.

To see that there is room here for rejecting both the hybrid view and McDowell's alternative, consider a view that combines the idea that knowledge is normative for belief with [Williamson's \(2000\) E=K](#). On this view, a belief's positive normative standing turns on whether it is knowledge. In every case where a thinker knows, the thinker will have evidence or reasons that aren't available to thinkers who do not know, however similar their situation and perspective might be. Where these views differ is that the knowledge-first view I'm envisaging says that non-inferential beliefs constitute knowledge without the support of independently possessed reasons. McDowell needs to give us some further argument to rule this option out. If this option is left standing, it doesn't seem we need epistemological disjunctivism to avoid external world scepticism. And if we don't need epistemological disjunctivism to avoid scepticism, we don't need metaphysical disjunctivism to explain how we can come to have the awesome reasons that the epistemological disjunctivist claims provides us with our perceptual knowledge.

As I see it, there are two ways that McDowell might try to rule out this knowledge-first alternative. He might appeal to some conceptual truth about knowledge or some conceptual truth about positive normative standing. If he were to go the first route, he might try to show that nothing could be a state of knowledge unless it was adequately supported by independently possessed reasons. If he were to go the second route, he might try to show that nothing could be a rationally evaluable response that attains positive standing unless the thinker's reasons guarantee that it can attain that standing.

We might see some signs of the first rationale in McDowell's critique of the hybrid view. There is supposed to be some instability in that view because it seems to suggest that the conditions that help to turn a belief into knowledge might be conditions that aren't 'internal' to the subject's perspective on the world. Why is this problematic? It appears that it's problematic because this suggests that there is some kind of good luck or fortune that helps to turn our beliefs into knowledge, but it's hard to see how that status as a knower is one that we can come to have through good fortune. That seems right, but notice that this rationale works only if the thinker's reasons play an essential role in the anti-luck condition on knowledge. I don't see why they should. If someone has a safe basis for a belief, a complete description of that basis might not entail that the target proposition is true, but it seems strange to me to say that the thinker was lucky to get things right when basing her belief on a safe basis.¹¹ Rather than explore this route further in this chapter, I will just focus on the idea that rationally evaluable responses can only attain positive normative status if supported by the thinker's reasons.

This assumption about normative status and the thinker's reasons gives us the ancillary argument we need to rule out the knowledge-first alternative that I mentioned earlier:

1. Belief is a rationally evaluable response.
 2. A rationally evaluable response can attain positive normative standing iff the thinker's reasons must provide sufficient support (i.e., support that entails that the response can meet the relevant norms).
 3. Belief can attain positive normative standing iff it constitutes knowledge.
- C. So, belief can attain positive normative status iff the thinker's reasons guarantee that the thinker is in a position to know the target proposition.

The crucial premise in this argument is (2). With it in place, it's easy to see why someone would think that the knowledge-first position I sketched as an alternative to McDowell's is mistaken. Without it, it's hard to see how the considerations that McDowell appeals to could force us to abandon this view.

In the next section, I shall argue that perceptual experience will not provide us with the reasons that the epistemological disjunctivist claims we need to have perceptual knowledge. In the section that follows, I shall argue against the crucial premise of this argument. It cannot be true in general that positive status requires support from the thinker's reasons. Thus, there are no sceptical costs to be paid by denying epistemological disjunctivism.

4. The Visual Basis of Knowledge

According to the epistemological disjunctivist, the perceptual beliefs that the thinker forms in good cases are supported by reasons. Consider three candidate facts that could be the thinker's reason for believing p :

- (a) That it appears that p .
- (b) That p .
- (c) That I see that p .

It's clear that (a) wouldn't serve McDowell's purposes. It's too weak. It also seems to me to be a strange thing to propose if you think that perception is a source of reasons in the relevant sense. It seems that if all we get from perception when we see Agnes curled up on the couch is something like (a) is something that introspection provides us about perception. Perception itself seems to give us nothing further. McDowell rejects the idea that (b) could be the basis because he thinks that the transition from p to p couldn't capture the thinker's take on why they were convinced that p . This means that we're left with (c), something that entails (b) and thus seems like a good candidate for playing the rational role that McDowell requires.

The proposal differs from the knowledge-first approach sketched earlier because it identifies a reason that could be the thinker's reason for forming her non-inferential perceptual beliefs. The fact that the thinker sees that p is an input to a process that takes non-knowledge in and spits perceptual knowledge out. (If $E=K$ is correct, there can be no such process that takes *reasons* or *evidence* as input.) The possession of this reason and the ability to base beliefs on it cannot require that the thinker knows or believes (c), so the possession of (c) has to be understood in terms of the operation of perceptual capacities. Such capacities have to put us in a position to ϕ for the reason that we see that p without believing p or that we see that p . This acquisition of a reason and being able to treat it as a reason has to be understood in terms of visual relations between the thinker and the things this thinker perceives. To introduce a bit of terminology, *visualism* is the view that a thinker seeing that p is a visual affair, a matter of a thinker standing in some perceptual relation to the fact that p . ■

Visualism isn't my preferred view. I do not think that we stand in perceptual relations to facts. Even if we did, I do not think that there is any interesting epistemic status that supervenes upon the perceptual relations that we do stand in. I think that part of visualism's spurious appeal is that the kind of report I used in stating the view is mistakenly assumed to report some visual relation that holds between a perceiver and that which the perceiver perceives. I think this is a mistake about language that helps to explain a mistake about perceptual consciousness. In keeping with *epistemicism*, I think that reports of the form 'so and so sees that p ' report a

thinker's knowledge, not perceptual relations that hold between a thinker and the things in her surroundings.¹³ If epistemicism is correct, it seems that the epistemological disjunctivist hasn't given us any account of how we acquire perceptual knowledge. At the very least, it hasn't identified the reason that could serve as an input into a process that takes non-knowledge in and spits non-inferential knowledge out. And since I'm operating on the assumption that this is what epistemological disjunctivism purports to do, I think that the truth of epistemicism shows that epistemological disjunctivism on its current formulation fails. The view would need to be reformulated, and I doubt that any such reformulation will provide the epistemological disjunctivist with what they need because, as we'll see, we have non-linguistic reasons to think that no visual relation between an individual and the things she sees could provide the thinker with reasons that would ensure that this individual was in a position to have a justified belief or knowledge.

It's all to the good that (c) entails (b). This means that (c) provides the factive support the epistemological disjunctivist thinks we need to know (b). One worry about visualism, though, is that (c) doesn't seem to entail this:

(a*) It visually appears that *p*.

Consider, for example, 'I see that the implications of consequentialism are at odds with many of our intuitive moral judgements'. It surely doesn't follow from this that it visually appears that our intuitive judgements clash with this moral theory. Since (c) doesn't seem to entail (a), I think we have some good reason to think that (c) isn't really about perceptual relations between a thinker and the things that the thinker perceives. It certainly doesn't identify the light in which the thinker comes to hold the perceptual beliefs that she does. If it did, it would contain the kind of information that (a*) does, information about how things perceptually appear and the things that would be made perceptually manifest when the thinker sees how things are.¹⁴

If you think that all uses of 'sees that' are univocal, this might seem troubling. The visualists might say that there are purely perceptual uses of 'sees that', uses that differ from those that don't sustain the entailment from (c) to (a*). I still worry that the account will struggle to explain the fact that the alleged reports of perceptual relations aren't extensional. Many uncontroversial perceptual reports *are* extensional. If I see Agnes and Agnes was the one who mixed the drinks, it just follows that I see the one who mixed the drinks even if I don't think any drinks have been mixed. Epistemicism does a nice job handling linguistic data that alternative accounts struggle with, such as explaining why the 'sees that' reports are not extensional. Suppose Agnes sees Agatha and Agnes can see that this is Agatha. Suppose Agatha is the next person to order a martini. Agnes sees the next person to order a martini but it doesn't follow that she can see that this is the next person to order a martini. Similarly, if Agatha's drink is a martini

and both Agnes and Jack see it, it's possible that Agnes sees that it's a martini even if Jack cannot because, say, he is a lapdog, a child, or just doesn't spend much time in bars. What we fill in for p in a report of 'S sees that p ' depends, in part, upon the conceptual resources and abilities of the perceiver in a way that certain forms of awareness might not (e.g., the kind of simple seeing that's common to Agnes's and Jack's seeing Agatha's drink).

If visualism is going to account for the fact that these reports are not extensional, they might try to offer us an account of 'sees that' that can account for this, one that appeals to the exercise of concepts:

Visualism: When used perceptually, the report 'S sees that a is F' picks out a visual relation between S and the fact that a is F, one that ensures that the thinker is in a position to know that p perceptually. It does this, in part, by exercising the conceptual capacities necessary for representing something as being F.¹⁵

What should we make of this account?

There is some scepticism about the idea that facts are the right kinds of things to be the objects of perceptual awareness. Since it seems that visualism requires that facts be the objects of visual awareness, this seems like a serious problem for visualism and epistemological disjunctivism. Perhaps this scepticism is misplaced, though. Fish seems to think so:

the basic constituents of presentational character are not objects and properties per se. Instead, . . . [we should say that] to see a property is to see it as inhering in some object or other. When we combine this with the thought that we never simply see an object but always see it by seeing one or more of the properties it possesses, it suggests a general theory of what the fundamental constituents of presentational character are. Take a given tract of the environment that I visually perceive. This tract of the environment contains an array of objects and surfaces that possess a vast assortment of properties. Given that, when we see an object in our environment, we don't 'just' see that object, when we see an object what we see must be, at a minimum, that object's bearing a property. Likewise, given that we always see a property as inhering in an object, when we see a property what we see must be, at a minimum, an object's bearing that property. Taken together, these considerations suggest that the basic units that feature in presentational character are not properties and objects simpliciter, but rather object—property couples.

(2009: 52)¹⁶

If we think of facts as abstract, the scepticism about the very idea of perception relating us to facts seems well placed. If, however, we think of

facts as Fish's facts, perhaps the scepticism is unwarranted. Let's suppose for the time being that facts are Fish's facts and consider whether perceptual relations to them could play the role that epistemological disjunctivism requires. Could we stand in purely perceptual relations to the fact that, say, this is a tomato or that this tomato is red and thereby be in a position to know such things?

Visualism faces a serious objection, one that shows the advantages of epistemicism and, in turn, a knowledge-first approach to perceptual knowledge that tells us in advance that we shouldn't hunt for a reason that provides us with the basis for our perceptual knowledge. The objection concerns the relationship between seeing that p and being in a position to know that p on the assumption that the former is truly a visual relation between a thinker and some Fish fact. Suppose you see a tomato under ideal viewing conditions. You're in a museum. It's on a plinth. The light is directed on it just like so. There's an X for you to stand on and you're standing on it with your head directed in the right way. There's a sign that has 'Tomato' written on it in a sans serif font attached to the plinth. The tomato rests on a velvet pillow. Fill in the details so that it's a clear case of simple seeing (i.e., seeing a tomato), epistemic seeing (i.e., seeing that it is a tomato), and knowing (i.e., knowing that the thing on the plinth is a tomato).

According to visualism, its being a case of epistemic seeing is partially down to the fact that the understanding is operative and the tomato is represented as being one. The understanding is operative in the experience itself, not just in the judgement. It is also a matter of simple seeing, seeing a tomato. Had the understanding not been operative, the case would have been a case of simple seeing without epistemic seeing, but that's not what's happened. Because the tomato seen was represented as a tomato, it seems like as good a case of seeing that something is a tomato as anyone could hope for. And, as luck would have it, it's a case of being in a position to know.

Imagine a series of cases now where the viewer stands slightly farther away from the tomato so that at the last case in the series, a viewer sees a small speck from far off. And let's suppose that each case has this much in common. The viewer sees a tomato, and the understanding that is operative in our first case is still operative in these latter cases in the same way so that the viewer believes on the basis of her experience that the thing she sees is a tomato and her experience represents the thing as a tomato.

Just as we sometimes *judge* that something is an F from a great distance (perhaps too great a distance to judge reliably), there is no reason to think that the understanding that's operative in experience (assuming with McDowell, that it is) wouldn't sometimes represent the thing seen as being a tomato. Now, we have to ask two questions about this case of seeing a tomato at a distance. If the thinker believes that the tomato is a tomato, is

this correct belief knowledge? If the thinker's experience represents it as being a tomato, is this a case of epistemic seeing?

When we view things from too far off, the judgement that the thing on the plinth is a tomato might be correct, but its correctness should seem too fortuitous for the thinker's perceptual belief to constitute knowledge. The interesting question is whether this is a case of epistemic seeing. Here is how I see the situation. If we imagine our series of cases as described earlier, the structure of such cases will look like this:

[Note to author: Tables are better viewed when changing your 'MS Word settings' to 'Web view'].

	<i>Great Distance</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>On the X</i>
Simple Seeing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Epistemic Seeing	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Position to Know	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

On this way of describing things, epistemic seeing correlates with being in a position to know, but not with simple seeing and the representation of the perceived object as a tomato. If we describe things this way, it seems that epistemicism explains why we shouldn't describe the cases in which a thinker is standing far away as a case of simple seeing where the perceiver cannot see that the thing is a tomato. They cannot see that it is a tomato *because* they are not in a position to know. (They are not in a position to know, perhaps, because the basis for the correct judgement isn't reliable or isn't safe.)

Now compare this visualism. Visualism says that this kind of explanation makes no sense. The things that explain why you're not in a position to know do not explain why you don't stand in some visual relation to the things perceived. It would seem that this case gives us a straightforward counterexample to visualism. It would seem that *if* epistemic seeing were a purely perceptual affair, simple seeing and epistemic seeing should correlate in just the way that they appear not to.

Someone could, of course, contest this and say that simple and epistemic seeing do correlate:

11 Neither/Nor

	<i>Great Distance</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>On the X</i>
Simple Seeing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Epistemic Seeing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Position to Know	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

If epistemic seeing, though, is understood as simple seeing in which the concept correctly categorises the object perceived, we vindicate the idea that epistemic seeing is indeed a perceptual affair at the cost of maintaining the connection between epistemic seeing and being in a position to know. On this approach (which I think is counterintuitive), visualism is spared from the objection, but it turns out that seeing that p doesn't guarantee that the thinker is in a position to know p . In turn, this means that the epistemological disjunctivist's proposal fails. Even if a thinker's reason for ϕ -ing is that they see that p , it doesn't follow that they're in a position to know p .

This case generates a dilemma for the target view. On the one hand, if they were to acknowledge that one of our nine cases were a case of epistemic seeing without knowledge, they would have to acknowledge that it doesn't follow from the fact that some thinker sees that the thing is a tomato that the thinker is in a position to know that it is one. On the other hand, if they were to deny that this is a case of epistemic seeing, they would need a credible explanation as to why this isn't a case of epistemic seeing. I doubt that the visualists could offer a credible explanation as to why this would be. Why wouldn't a case of simple seeing in which a tomato is correctly classified as such be a case of epistemic seeing? It is surely a matter of being visually aware of one of Fish's facts if, say, the nearest case of simple and epistemic seeing is.

It's obvious why the first horn is a horn. Our epistemological disjunctivist needs to identify some reason that could ensure that the thinker is in a position to know, and (c) was the only possible candidate for that. As for the second horn, I see no good way for the epistemological disjunctivist to tackle this given a commitment to visualism. They cannot deny that the understanding that is operative in the good case is operative in the bad one. The same conceptual capacities are deployed. It's hard to see how there could be a difference in the visual relations because we've chosen our cases by screening out any case that isn't a case of simple seeing. If they're going to try to address the issue, they'll need to show that any case where the thinker isn't in a position to know that the thing is a tomato isn't a case of seeing that it is a tomato without appeal to epistemicism. I see no good way for them to do that. The things that would that explain why we cannot know would seem to be modal considerations that explain why it wouldn't be appropriate to deploy a concept (e.g., it could too easily be misapplied; it

would be applied even if the thing were not a tomato). It doesn't seem that such points could figure in an explanation of what we see or what visual relations obtain between a viewer and things in her environment.

5. The Thinker's Reasons

It's hard to resist the pull towards visualism and the idea that we need such a view to explain how perceptual knowledge and justification is possible. It seems that such a view is needed because it seems, to some, that it's impossible for any belief, inferential or non-inferential, to attain positive standing without being supported by reasons.

It isn't always clear why people believe that all belief exhibits this kind of dependence upon the support from the thinker's reasons, but it is clear that many people do believe this. If they think that this reflects some important insight into the nature of normativity because, say, they believe that reasons always determine normative standing, the explanation as to why belief needs the support of reasons to attain positive standing might appeal to this more general thesis:

Necessitarianism: The normative status of a thinker's rationally evaluable responses supervenes upon the thinker's reasons.

I'd like to shift our focus slightly in this section to discuss necessitarianism because I think that it's a commitment to necessitarianism that convinces people that the idea that knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons in the first sense (i.e., that a belief is justified iff it is knowledge) turns on whether it can be a standing in the space of reasons in the second sense (i.e., that a thinker's reasons wholly determine whether a thinker's belief constitutes knowledge). This necessitarianism seems to play a crucial role in the epistemological argument for metaphysical disjunctivism because it would explain why we should think that the possibility of perceptual knowledge requires that perception could provide us with these reasons that guarantee that any thinker with just these reasons would be in a position to know what we know in the good case.¹⁸

Necessitarianism is mistaken. The case of non-inferential knowledge is a case in which a thinker believes something without that belief being based on one of the thinker's reasons. Since the case of perceptual belief is a contested case, I'll focus on other cases. Let's take a step back to try to understand the motivation behind necessitarianism.

Necessitarianism is appealing to people who think that normative reasons have to play a kind of guiding role:

A familiar and intuitive thought is that normative reasons must be able to guide us. That is what reasons seem to be for. Considerations that cannot guide cannot do what reasons are supposed to do. To put the

same point differently, it is the job of a reason to recommend that a person perform a certain act or hold some attitude. If it is to do that job, the relevant person must be able to heed and respond to its recommendation.

(Way and Whiting 2016: 214)

The appeal of necessitarianism is completely mysterious if we reject this idea. If normative reasons don't have to be suited to play a guiding role, it's not at all clear why we would think that there's any interesting relationship between the reasons that the thinker could be moved by and the normative status of the thinker's rationally evaluable responses. On the other hand, if you think that normative reasons have to be able to play a guiding role, necessitarianism seems an attractive view.¹⁹

Because of this connection between necessitarianism and the idea that normative reasons should guide us, let's examine this thesis more closely:

Guidance: A set of normative reasons can require an agent to ϕ only if the agent is capable of being guided by these reasons in ϕ -ing in the circumstances under which they are required (i.e., they can respond correctly on the basis of the right reasons in a way that shows that they are attuned to their demands).²⁰

In the case of perceptual belief, you might think that a thinker in the good case who sees that, say, the bird on the branch is a parrot either ought to believe that it is a parrot or, at the very least, ought not believe that it is a penguin. If these requirements require normative reasons, Guidance tells us that these reasons have to be reasons that the thinker is appropriately sensitive to so that they can be moved by them (and not merely in accordance with them) in such a way that the thinker's rationally evaluable response is correct or appropriate. This couldn't happen unless the normative reasons that generated the requirement were accessible to the thinker in such a way that those reasons could have been her reasons, so it seems that Guidance supports the idea that the reasons that matter are the thinker's reasons understood as the reasons that could be the thinker's reasons for responding as she does.

If necessitarianism is mistaken because there can be cases where pairs of thinkers with the very same reasons are required to different things, the reasons that generate some of these requirements wouldn't satisfy Guidance. If, however, the reasons that require the agent to ϕ satisfy Guidance, it would seem that the connection between these reasons and the justification or propriety of the relevant response couldn't be contingent. Thus, it would seem that arguments for Guidance should support necessitarianism and objections to Guidance should undermine our confidence in necessitarianism.

One concern with Guidance is that it seems to conflict with intuitive verdicts about cases. To see this, we'll shift our focus away from cases of perceptual belief to a case of inferential belief.

Agnes has a very reliable breathalyser, one that she knows never fails to detect drunkenness when a driver is drunk. In only 5% of the cases in which a driver is sober will her breathalyser falsely say that the sober driver is drunk. She also is aware that 1 driver in 1000 will be drunk. Agnes administers the test and it indicates that the driver just stopped at the checkpoint is drunk. She's now very confident that the driver is very drunk. She has a credence of .95. That is where Agnes is, and you know how she got there. You know what she knows and how she has responded. Is this how she should have responded? Should she have a different credence?

It would seem that Agnes's options would include this credence along with the mathematically kosher credence (roughly .02) and scores more that would not impress your statistics professor. Here is my concern. Suppose that Agnes ought to have some credence or other. The ones that are not mathematically kosher (i.e., her actual credence and those that are not roughly .02) would not seem to be correct responses to her situation. The available reasons do not support this credence. If all the options but the mathematically kosher credence are incorrect responses to the available reasons, a 'No Dilemma' constraint tells us that she ought to have the mathematically correct credence for the simple reason that we have eliminated all the other alternatives to this one on the grounds that they are not correct responses to the available reasons. So, we have an argument that this response is mandatory. This response cannot be mandatory, however, because this response is not one that meets an attunement condition (i.e., the subject doesn't meet the conditions necessary for being guided appropriately by the reasons in the way spelled out in Guidance). Agnes cannot respond in the mathematically kosher way while, say, manifesting her competence if that is understood as her know-how to respond correctly to the reasons.

If this final response is not required, some other response must be permitted. But those seem to be ruled out because they fail to meet the condition that says that it's proper to ϕ only if the available reasons support that. There might be an alternative to Agnes's unwarrantedly high credence where Agnes suspends, withdraws, or just does not take account of the evidence presented to her. If this, however, is the only permitted option left on the table, it is mandatory. The problem is now that this withdrawing response is also one that would fail to meet the attunement condition. So, according to Guidance, it could not be mandatory. So it would seem that there is no feasible response that involves responding correctly to the normative reasons while basing that response on reasons that provide sufficient support for that response. If, as it seems, Guidance clashes with the intuitive judgement that Agnes shouldn't be confident and should

suspend judgement, Guidance clashes with intuition and doesn't provide support for necessitarianism.

There is a kind of structural defect in views that incorporate the attunement conditions. The introduction of such a condition threatens to screen out the requirements generated by the reasons that screen out the incorrect responses but must leave us at least one permitted response if reasons don't generate dilemmas. What larger lessons can be drawn from this? We should be sceptical of appeals to intuitions about guidance, for a start. Recall the quotation from the opening. The suggestion was that the normative reasons should satisfy certain conditions to be good normative reasons: *they* have to be such that they can guide creatures like us. Getting the 'can' right here is tricky, but on a very demanding reading of 'can', this is a deeply disturbing picture. Shouldn't the idea be that *we* should be such that we are guided to do, believe, and feel what the reasons require from us? If we're fully aware of the reasons but moved in the wrong way, isn't the fault in *us*?

As it happens, I think that it's important for the epistemological disjunctivist to reject Guidance. Think about the bad case. According to the epistemological disjunctivist, the thinker's lacking sufficient reason to believe that things are as they appear means that they cannot justifiably believe *p* when it appears that *p*. If they shouldn't believe this, there is a decisive reason for them not to. Can it guide them? It couldn't guide them if they don't know that such a reason applies to them. We have to reject negative introspection and acknowledge that their failure to be in a position to know is something that they're not in a position to know in the bad case. If the reason for them not to believe is decisive in this case (much in the way that the reason not to draw the inference is decisive in the case presented earlier), the winning reason isn't one that can guide the thinker. Again, we have to ask why we should think that the propriety of a response depends upon whether the thinker bases that response on the sufficient reason there is to respond this way. If the epistemological disjunctivist builds Guidance into their framework, they have to abandon this idea that the thinker in the bad case shouldn't believe because they have to abandon the idea that the thinker has a decisive reason not to believe what she does not know.

6. Why Is the Good Case Better?

Let's return to this question about the relationship between Normativity of Knowledge and Knowledge-Reasons. There are at least three ways in which things are better in the good case:

1. The good case is better than the bad because the thinker's reasons for believing *p* are better in the good than in the bad.
2. The good case is better in the sense that the belief that *p* is justified.

3. The good case is better in the sense that the thinker knows *p*.

I agree with McDowell that the hybrid view of knowledge is mistaken and that it's a mistake to say, as most epistemologists do, that (2) is false on the grounds that the reasons we have in the bad case are good enough to show that the beliefs formed in that case are justified. Like McDowell, I think that (2) and (3) are correct. Our disagreement concerns (1).

As I would explain (2), (2) is true because (3) is. If people insist on using the language of reasons, I would say this: because 'ought' implies 'reason' and (2) implies that the thinker should not believe *p*. This reason is decisive. This just follows from (3) and the idea that knowledge is the norm of belief, the idea that knowledge is a standing in the space of reasons in the first sense. Since I reject that all such standings are determined by the thinker's reasons, I see no need to appeal to (1) to explain (2) or (3). The explanation of (2) goes no farther than an appeal to (3).

In stating his epistemological case for metaphysical disjunctivism, McDowell claims that the difference between the good case and the bad cannot be external to the subject's perspective on things. In a way, the view offered respects that. The thinker who knows *is* aware of something that the thinker in the bad case is not—to know *p* is to be aware of the fact that *p*, and without such knowledge we don't have such awareness.

To rule out this shallow knowledge-first explanation of (2), McDowell would need to show that (2) requires (1). I don't think that it's a general truth that the propriety of a response requires access to the normative reasons that determine the status of our potential responses. The case of the fallacious inference seems to suggest that a thinker ought to suspend judgement when she's out of her depth even when she's in no position to appreciate that this is so. We find something similar happens in the bad case where a thinker hallucinates. The thinker has, according to McDowell, a decisive reason not to believe *p*. The thinker has no access to the reasons in light of which this is so. So even McDowell has to agree, given his commitment to (2) and (3), that some rationally evaluable responses can be proper or required even when the thinker cannot base her response on the reasons that determine the response's normative status. That is to say, even McDowell has to deny Guidance. Without some reason to think that belief is different from suspension of judgement in that proper belief always requires being based on reasons that provide sufficient support, there is little reason to think that our commitment to the Normativity of Knowledge should incline us towards Knowledge-Reasons.

Since I lack the imagination to invent further arguments for the mistaken view that all justified beliefs are justified because of the support provided by the thinker's reasons, I should stop here. Neither epistemological disjunctivism nor a suitably matched metaphysical disjunctivism is

necessary for accounting for the justification of perceptual belief. Hence the title.²²

Notes

References

- Brewer, Bill, 2011, *Perception and Its Objects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Byrne, Alex and Logue, Heather, 2008, Either/or, in Adrian Haddock and Fiona Macpherson, eds. *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carter, Adam, 2013, A problem for Pritchard's anti-luck virtue epistemology, *Erkenntnis* 78: 253–275.
- Cohen, Stewart, 1984, Justification and truth, *Philosophical Studies* 46: 279–295.
- Conee, Earl and Feldman, Richard, 2004, *Evidentialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- , 2008, Evidence, in Quentin Smith, ed. *Epistemology: New Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cunningham, J.J., 2018, Are perceptual reasons the objects of perception? in Johan Gersel, Rasmus Jensen, Morton Thanning and Søren Overgaard, eds. *In the Light of Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dutant, Julien, 2016, How to be an infallibilist, *Philosophical Issues* 26: 148–171.
- Fish, William, 2009, *Perception, Hallucination, and Illusion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- French, Craig, 2012, Does propositional seeing entail propositional knowledge? *Theoria* 78: 115–127.
- , 2016, The formulation of epistemological disjunctivism, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 92: 86–104.
- Ginsborg, Hannah, 2011, Perception, generality, and reasons, in Andrew Reisner and Asbjørn Steglich-Petersen, eds. *Reasons for Belief*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hughes, Nick, 2014, Is knowledge the ability to ϕ for the reason that p ? *Episteme* 11: 457–462.
- Kieseewetter, Benjamin, 2017, *The Normativity of Rationality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Littlejohn, Clayton, 2012, *Justification and the Truth-Connection*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- , 2013, The Russellian retreat, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 113: 293–320.
- , 2014, Fake barns and false dilemmas, *Episteme* 11: 369–389.
- , 2017, How and why knowledge is first, in J. Adam Carter, Emma Gordon and Benjamin Jarvis, eds. *Knowledge First*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Locke, Don, 2015, Knowledge, explanation, and motivating reasons, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 52: 215–232.
- Logue, Heather, 2014, Experiential content and naive realism: A reconciliation, in Berit Brogaard, ed. *Does Perception Have Content?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Longworth, Guy, 2018, Surveying the facts, in John Collins and Tamara Dobler, eds. *The Philosophy of Charles Travis: Language, Thought, and Perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lord, Errol, 2018, *The Importance of Being Rational*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Luper-Foy, Steven, 1984, The epistemic predicament: Knowledge, Nozickian tracking, and skepticism, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 62: 26–48.
- McDowell, John, 1998, *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- , 2002, Knowledge and the internal revisited, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 64: 97–105.
- , 2009, *Having the World in View: Essays on Kant, Hegel, and Sellars*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McGinn, Colin, 1999, The Concept of knowledge, in his *Knowledge and Reality: Selected Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McGinn, Marie, 2012, Non-inferential knowledge, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 112: 1–28.
- Pritchard, Duncan, 2012, *Epistemological Disjunctivism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schellenberg, Susanna, 2011, Perceptual content defended, *Nous* 45: 714–750.
- , 2018, *The Unity of Perception: Content, Consciousness, Evidence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schmidt, Eva, 2018, A dilemma for epistemological disjunctivism, in Robert French and John Smythies, eds. *Direct Versus Indirect Realism: A Neuropsychological Debate on Consciousness*. London: Elsevier, pp. 141–162.
- Schroeder, Mark, 2015, Knowledge is belief for sufficient (objective and subjective) reason, in John Hawthorne and Tamar Gendler, eds. *Oxford Studies in Epistemology* (vol. 5). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Siegel, Susanna, 2010, *The Contents of Visual Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sosa, Ernest, 1999, How must knowledge be modally related to what is known? *Philosophical Topics* 26: 373–384.
- Srinivasan, Amia, 2015, Normativity without Cartesian privilege, *Philosophical Issues* 25: 273–299.
- Sutton, John, 2007, *Without Justification*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Travis, Charles, 2013, *Perception: Essays After Frege*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Turri, John, 2010, Does perceiving entail knowing? *Theoria* 76: 197–206.

- Unger, Peter, 1968, An analysis of factual knowledge, *Journal of Philosophy* 65(6): 157–170.
- Van Cleve, James, 2004, Externalism and disjunctivism, in R. Schantz, ed. *The Externalist Challenge*. Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 481–495.
- Way, Jonathan and Whiting, Daniel, 2016, Reasons and guidance (or, surprise parties and ice cream), *Analytic Philosophy* 57: 214–235.
- Williamson, Timothy, 2000, *Knowledge and Its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- , forthcoming, Justifications, excuses, and sceptical scenarios, in Fabian Dorsch and Julien Dutant, eds. *The New Evil Demon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

-
- █ See [McDowell \(1998\)](#), [Pritchard \(2012\)](#). McDowell’s views have evolved, and the criticisms of epistemological disjunctivism discussed here do not apply straightforwardly to his new views. See McDowell ([2009](#)) for details. It is not clear whether his new views concerning the objects of visual awareness sit well with the epistemological assumptions operative in the epistemological arguments for disjunctivism discussed in this chapter. My target is not McDowell, but an idea about the rational role of visual contact with things in our surroundings that is inspired by McDowell ([1998](#)).
 - █ [McDowell \(1998\)](#) thinks that we need both forms of disjunctivism to avoid scepticism, but [Pritchard \(2012\)](#) is agnostic about metaphysical disjunctivism. For a helpful discussion, see [Byrne and Logue \(2009\)](#).
 - █ For further discussion of the connection, see [Schmidt \(2018\)](#).
 - █ Although [Cohen \(1984\)](#), [Conce \(2004\)](#), and [Conce and Feldman \(2008\)](#) all find this objectionable.
 - █ See [Littlejohn \(2017\)](#) and [McGinn \(2012\)](#) for arguments that our perceptual beliefs are not based on the thinker’s reasons.
 - █ Some philosophers like to say that experience is a source of evidence or a source of reasons. There is a kernel of truth in this idea. Experience is a source of knowledge, so it must be a source of evidence. I don’t think we should *also* say that experience is a source of evidence in the sense that it provides an evidential basis for knowledge. The process by which we acquire knowledge is the process by which we acquire evidence. These are not two processes, but one process under two descriptions.
 - █ Although the idea that cases of perceptual knowledge and/or justified perceptual belief are cases in which there is something that is the thinker’s reason for believing what she does is popular, it is hard to find arguments for this claim. For accounts of perceptual knowledge and/or justified belief where reasons and/or evidence play a central role, see [McDowell \(1998\)](#), [Siegel \(2010\)](#), [Ginsborg \(2011\)](#), [Pritchard \(2012\)](#), [Logue \(2014\)](#), [Schellenberg \(2014, 2018\)](#), [Schroeder \(forthcoming\)](#). For criticism of this idea, see [Brewer \(2011\)](#), [McGinn \(2012\)](#), [Travis \(2013\)](#), [French \(2016\)](#), [Littlejohn \(2017\)](#).
 - █ In addition to McDowell, see [Sutton \(2007\)](#), [Littlejohn \(2013\)](#), [Williamson \(forthcoming\)](#).
 - █ Infallibilism is often taken to be a sceptical view, but see [Dutant \(2016\)](#), [McDowell \(1998\)](#), [Williamson \(2000\)](#) for helpful perspective on the (alleged) sceptical consequences of infallibilism.

-
- ¹⁰ This reconstruction draws on [van Cleve's \(2004\)](#) exegetical work.
- ¹¹ For defence of a safety condition as an anti-luck condition, see [Luper \(1984\)](#), [Sosa \(1999\)](#), [Williamson \(2000\)](#).
- ¹² Prominent visualists include [McDowell \(1998\)](#), [McGinn \(1999\)](#), [Ginsborg \(2011\)](#), [Turri \(2010\)](#), and [Pritchard \(2012\)](#). The visualists that I have in mind think the fact that *p* is seen when we see that *p*. For a helpful discussion of what it might mean to be visually aware of facts, see [Longworth \(2018\)](#). For an interesting alternative proposal about reasons and the objects of visual awareness, see [Logue \(2014\)](#), [Cunningham \(2018\)](#).
- ¹³ [Williamson \(2000\)](#), [French \(2012\)](#). One source of confusion about visualism and epistemicism is that some authors seem to conflate the question, 'Does perceiving require knowing?' with a linguistic question about reports or attributions that use 'sees' and related verbs. Epistemicism does not tell us that propositional knowledge is necessary for perception. It tells us only that 'S sees that *p*' functions to attribute propositional knowledge. Since this is a claim about language, arguments for visualism and/or against epistemicism that appeal to psychological claims (e.g., perceiving does not require belief or knowledge) miss the point.
- ¹⁴ For further arguments that these reports of epistemic seeing do not report perceptual relations between an individual and the facts, see [Travis \(2013\)](#).
- ¹⁵ I suspect that visualism is largely responsible for the (mistaken) belief that fake barn cases show that it's possible to have reasons or evidence that aren't things that we know. For the use of such examples to argue that the thinker's reasons for ϕ -ing needn't be things the agent knows see, for example, [Hughes \(2014\)](#), [Locke \(2015\)](#). For responses to the use of such cases to criticise knowledge accounts of the possession of reasons, see [Carter \(2013\)](#), [Littlejohn \(2014\)](#).
- ¹⁶ The objection to a visualist view that takes perceptual contact with Fish's facts to be sufficient for being in a position to know should apply, inter alia, to views that take the relation of perceptual consciousness to include objects and properties. Even if perceptual consciousness relates us to objects and properties and has some kind of intuitional content because of the exercise of conceptual capacities, the case described in this section suggests that there can be pairs of cases with the same object, same properties, and same intuitional content where the perceptions differ with respect to whether they put the thinker in a position to know that the object in question has the relevant properties.
- ¹⁷ In this argument, the operative idea of being in a position to know is (roughly) the idea that you would know if you were to believe given the way of coming to believe available to you. Someone might try to blunt the force of the objection by adopting a slightly different conception of being in a position to know, one that says that a thinker is in a position to know by basing her belief on a reason *R* when the thinker would come to know by basing her belief on *R* provided that there are no defeaters. If, as someone might naturally think, there are defeaters here that defeat knowledge if you believe that there is a tomato on the plinth, the visualist can preserve the idea that there is a perceptual relation that's sufficient for being in a position to know. I don't think that this proposal will suit the needs of someone like McDowell because it introduces something that is necessary for knowledge that is independent from the reason that you'd be aware of perceptually. This would, in turn, result in a hybrid picture of knowledge according to which the difference between knowing and failing to know would be 'extrinsic' to perceptual consciousness (i.e., the

presence/absence of the knowledge defeater would not supervene upon the awareness of the reason R). But McDowell rejects this hybrid picture, and the rejection of the hybrid picture is the essential idea in his argument for metaphysical disjunctivism. If we're allowed to adopt a hybrid view of knowledge where a belief's status as knowledge doesn't supervene upon facts about the thinker's total reasons and the reasons on which her belief is based, we lose all motivation for thinking that the relevant reason has to be something the awareness of which is sufficient for all the things packed into my conception of being in a position to know. Thanks to Joe Milburn for raising the issue. I think it's an important one, and one that I had overlooked previously.

¹⁸ Necessitarianism supports the idea that a perceptual belief is justified only if it is based on a sufficient reason. Suppose Agnes forms the perceptual belief that this is a tomato on the basis of her experience. Suppose she comes to know that this is a tomato. If Agnes's belief was justified without being supported by reasons to believe this proposition, there wouldn't be a difference in the support she had for believing this or for believing that it is not a tomato. To account for the fact that the cases where Agnes has justification to believe it is a tomato are never cases where she has justification to believe that it is not, the necessitarian wants to say that her reasons support one without supporting the other. It doesn't seem they can account for this without insisting that the justification to believe one thing rather than the other requires the possession of reasons that provide sufficient support for one and not the other.

¹⁹ Joe Milburn wanted to know what connection, if any, there was between necessitarianism and Guidance. Might the necessitarian try to motivate their view without any appeal to Guidance? I think so. As Milburn reminded me, they might appeal to some sort of reasons-first view and/or the arguments for such a view. On this view, normative reasons wholly determine the normative status of any rationally evaluable response. I have no objections to the reasons-first idea, *per se*, but we should note that the reasons-first view might not be well suited for the epistemological disjunctivist. Many reasons-first philosophers (e.g., [Kiesewetter 2017](#); [Lord 2018](#)) think that the reasons that determine what we ought to believe, feel, and do are always *accessible* to the agent. (Part of their reason for thinking this is that they accept Guidance, but they could reject Guidance and accept the accessibility constraint.) But, as I've argued here, the epistemological disjunctivist has to reject this idea since they have to acknowledge that there are decisive reasons for us not to believe that are not accessible to the agent. If reasons-first philosophers were to relax the access requirement on normative reasons, their views might seem to be compatible with epistemological disjunctivism; but then it's not clear why in this framework we would need to have a rational basis for perceptual beliefs constituted by reasons of the kind that McDowell and Pritchard think are necessary for perceptual knowledge.

²⁰ [Kiesewetter \(2017\)](#) and [Lord \(2018\)](#) appeal to the idea that normative reasons are supposed to be able to guide us to objections to the idea that rationality consists in responding correctly to reasons. One of the aims of [Luriejohn \(2012\)](#) was to argue that there are no norms that could provide us with such reasons since, in principle, there is no interesting application condition that we could not in principle be misled about. If all potential application conditions are things that we can rationally but mistakenly believe to obtain (or rationally but mistakenly

believe not to obtain), it would seem that Guidance would have to be mistaken. For similar sceptical arguments against Guidance, see [Srinivasan \(2013\)](#).

²¹ In Littlejohn (2012), I also argued that something close to (1) explains why the good case is better. There I argued that the good case is better because the bad case is worse. It is worse because that is a case where there is a decisive reason not to believe, one that is provided by the fact that the thinker violates a norm. (There is no such reason not to believe in the good case because there is no norm violated in that case.) But the difference in reasons *not* to believe differs from the difference in the quality of the reasons *to* believe. I think the right explanation will accentuate the negative, not the positive, and focus on the presence/absence of reasons not to believe rather than the presence/absence of reasons to believe. This is not an explanation that is available to the disjunctivist.

²² I would like to thank Casey Doyle and Joe Milburn for helpful feedback on a previous draft. I would also like to thank Maria Alvarez, Bill Brewer, Adam Carter, Christina Dietz, Julien Dutant, Craig French, John Hawthorne, Nick Hughes, Dustin Locke, Guy Longworth, Errol Lord, Susanne Mantel, David Papineau, Susanna Schellenberg, Eva Schmidt, Matthew Soteriou, and Charles Travis for discussing these issues with me.