DOI: 10.1111/phpr.12754

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Philosophy and
Phenomenological Research

Basic knowledge and the normativity of knowledge: The awareness-first solution

Paul Silva Jr.

University of Cologne, Germany

Correspondence
Paul Silva, University of Cologne, Germany.
Email: psilvajr@gmail.com

Abstract

Many have found it plausible that knowledge is a constitutively normative state, i.e. a state that is grounded in the possession of reasons. Many have also found it plausible that certain cases of proprioceptive knowledge, memorial knowledge, and self-evident knowledge are cases of knowledge that are not grounded in the possession of reasons. I refer to these as cases of *basic knowledge*. The existence of basic knowledge forms a primary objection to the idea that knowledge is a constitutively normative state. In what follows I offer a way through the apparent dilemma of having to choose between either basic knowledge or the normativity of knowledge. The solution involves homing in on a state of *awareness* (≈non-accidental true representation) that is distinct from knowledge and which in turn grounds the normativity of knowledge in a way that is fully consistent with the existence of basic knowledge. An upshot of this is that externalist theories of knowledge turn out to be fully compatible with the thesis that knowledgeable beliefs are always beliefs that are justified by the reasons one possesses.

Many have found it plausible that knowledge is a constitutively normative state, i.e. a state that is grounded in the possession of reasons. Many have also found it plausible that certain cases of proprioceptive knowledge, memorial knowledge, self-evident knowledge, among others are cases of knowledge that are not clearly grounded in the possession of reasons. I refer to these as cases of *basic knowledge*. The existence of basic knowledge forms a primary objection to the idea that knowledge is a constitutively normative state. In what follows I offer a way through the apparent dilemma of having to choose between either basic knowledge or the normativity of knowledge.

In section 1 I explain the idea that knowledge is normative. In section 2 I give the cases of basic knowledge and explain why they seem to challenge the normativity of knowledge. In section 3 I lay out a view of reasons and their possession that others have defended. On this view, reasons are facts or true propositions, and possession of (access to) them is to be understood virtue-theoretically. In section 4 I explain why there is no direct tension between basic knowledge and the normativity of knowledge. In section 5 I respond to objections, including the recent objections to the normativity of knowledge issued by Sylvan (2018). I conclude by explaining how externalist theories of knowledge can be fully compatible with the thesis that knowledgeable beliefs are always beliefs that are justified by the reasons one possesses.

1 | KNOWLEDGE NORMATIVISM

Schroeder (2015a) has recently defended the idea that knowledge is belief for sufficient reason. This is an old idea, going back at least to Kant (A822/B850) who claimed that knowledge is 'assent for objectively and subjectively *sufficient grounds*'.[1] Kant took this to be an exceedingly obvious truth, accordingly he did not bother to 'pause for the exposition of such readily grasped concepts.' Schroeder (2015a, 2015b) took the time for exposition, and he issued several new arguments in favor of a broadly kantian theory of knowledge. My focus in this paper will be on the necessity direction of the kantian thesis about knowledge:

> Knowledge Normativism (KN) Necessarily, if S knows that P at t, then S knows that P at t partially in virtue of having sufficient reason to believe that P at t.

Besides Kant and Schroeder, a host of epistemologists have expressed their commitment to KN in some form or other. C.I. Lewis (1946) said that knowledge is 'belief which not only is true but also is *justified* in its believing attitude.' Sellars (1956, pp. 298-9) wrote that in 'characterizing an episode or a state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical *space of reasons*, of *justifying* and *being able to justify* what one says'. Chisholm (1957, p. 16) held that knowledge is a matter of '*having sufficient evidence*'. McDowell (1995, p. 887) said knowledge is a 'standing in the *space of reasons*'. It is not terribly difficult to find other advocates of the view that knowledge is normative in the way indicated by KN (cf. Ayer, 1956; Firth, 1978; Bonjour, 1985; Moser, 1987; Conee & Feldman, 2001; Lehrer, 1990; Gettier, 1963). As the citations above indicate, there are two common ways of expressing the idea that knowledge is in part a normative relation: one that is justification-centric and one that is reasons-centric. Both are intuitively related in that one has ultima facie justification to believe that

[1] For exposition of Kant's view see Chignell (2007).

P iff one has sufficient reason to believe that P.[2] I will assume that they are so related in what follows.

KN is neutral on the nature of reasons as well as what it takes to have (=possess, access) reasons. In this way KN is a kind of ecumenical claim, and we will return to different ways of understanding these aspects of KN below. Use of the term 'in virtue of' is here being used to flag the role played by constituent elements in reductive analyses. For example, if *being a bachelor* is to be reductively analyzed partially in terms of *being male*, then one is a bachelor partially in virtue of being male. As stated, KN indicates nothing about the way in which one's belief has to be *a response to* one's reasons if one is to have knowledge. Put differently, KN is only a thesis about 'propositional justification' not 'doxastic justification'. We'll return to this issue in the end.

While KN has been widely endorsed among epistemologists, there are plenty of recent accounts of knowledge that are taken to be inconsistent with KN. Instances of such theories can be found in early causal theories of knowledge (Goldman, 1967; Armstrong, 1973), tracking theories of knowledge (Nozick, 1981), reliabilist theories of knowledge (Kornblith, 2002, 2008; Dretske, 1981, 1991; Plantinga, 1993), certain safety theories of knowledge (Sosa, 1999; Grundmann, forthcoming), reliabilist virtue theoretic accounts of knowledge (Sosa, 2007; Greco, 2010), as well as theories of knowledge that combine elements of safety and reliabilist virtue epistemology (Pritchard, 2012a; Kelp, 2013). What such theories have in common is the implication that knowing is just a matter of one's true belief satisfying some externalist condition, and in all these cases the target externalist condition is never reductively analyzed in terms of *having sufficient reason*.

To make this point concrete take, for example, Pritchard's (2012a) anti-luck virtue epistemology which combines elements of safety-theoretic and reliabilist virtue-theoretic conditions:

> ANTI-LUCK VIRTUE EPISTEMOLOGY S knows that P iff S's safe true belief that P is the product of her relevant cognitive ability.

A belief is safe, roughly, when it could not have easily been false when formed in the way it was actually formed; while a belief is produced by a cognitive ability, roughly, when it is non-defectively produced by a reliable cognitive process. But neither the concept of believing safely nor believing from a cognitive ability is explicated in terms of having sufficient reason. Accordingly, Pritchard is careful when discussing his views about the relation between normativity and knowledge to emphasize that his anti-luck virtue epistemology is supposed to be in tension with normative views of knowledge. For example, Pritchard (2016, p. 233; cf. 2015, p. 633) writes:

> For while I think it is clear that *paradigm* cases of perceptual knowledge are rationally grounded, I'm careful not to make any general claims in this regard. In particular, I don't claim that perceptual belief is in general rationally grounded or that propositional knowledge is in general rationally grounded (and I certainly don't hold that all propositional knowledge must be grounded in factive reasons).

[2] Schroeder (2015a), Lord (2018a), Sylvan (2018). Chisholm, in contrast, uses the concept of *evidence* in his account of knowledge. No complications are introduced by this provided our evidence is the only sort of reason for belief that can ground knowledge.

This rejection of KN by Pritchard and others is primarily motivated by the difficulty of accounting for clear cases of knowledge where it is in no way obvious that one has knowledge *in virtue of* having sufficient reason. Here lies the challenge of basic knowledge.[3]

2 | THE CHALLENGE OF BASIC KNOWLEDGE

To get a grip on the challenge of basic knowledge it will help to consider a few examples. Turri (2010b, p. 320) argues that certain instances of self-evident knowledge are instances of knowledge not grounded in the possession of reasons:

> Descartes notwithstanding, it is highly implausible that I need a reason to justifiedly believe, or know, for that matter, that I exist. Of course, the fact that I have abundant reasons to believe that I exist is irrelevant to whether I need such reasons for my belief in my own existence to rise to the level of doxastic justification or knowledge.

Plausibly, Turri's remarks could be extended to other cases of exceedingly self-evident truths like *I am thinking*, or *I am here now,* or *if there is something then there is not nothing*. People who believe these things typically have knowledge and justified beliefs, but it's not clear what reason, if any, they must be relying on in order to have this knowledge and justification.

Littlejohn (2015, pp. 601-602) argues for the same claim in the case of proprioceptive knowledge:

> If we choose our examples correctly, we'll quickly see that the possibility of knowledge doesn't turn on whether there are available supporting reasons because we'll see that there are perfectly good cases of knowledge without clues [=reasons]. Anscombe (1962) told us where to look for such cases. The knowledge that you have of the position of your own limbs is knowledge, but the beliefs that constitute knowledge don't count as rationally held because we can work out where our limbs are by relying on some clues. If your legs are crossed and you know it, you don't work out which leg is on top of the other by consulting a feeling, a tickle or a sensation that's a clue to how your legs are positioned. There's a story to tell about how this knowledge is possible, but when we say, 'You know this because…' we don't fill in the dots by identifying the clues you relied on or the reasons that persuaded you.

Likewise, Goldman (2009) argues that the much of our knowledge at a time t is not grounded in reasons we possess at t. This is because the persistence of knowledge doesn't depend on the persistence of our possession of reasons. For example, when we forget the reasons in virtue of which we came to know P (as we often do), we often have knowledge that P at t without having any reasons in virtue of which we know that P at t. Unless one adopts a generous theory of the possession of reasons that allows us to possess forgotten reasons, the case of forgotten evidence is a powerful objection to KN given how ordinary it is for us to persist in holding beliefs while

[3]A referee pointed out there there are senses of 'normative' distanced from the idea of having reasons on which the problem of basic knowledge doesn't threaten the normativity of knowledge. This is right. See Sylvan (2018, pp. 192ff) for a discussion of other possible senses. But notice that KN *is* the controversial claim endorsed by many epistemologists, and KN is the claim that many other epistemologists have leveled the basic knowledge objection against.

having forgotten the evidence on which we based our beliefs (Michaelian, 2011; Bernecker & Grundmann, 2019).

Another often cited example involves chicken sexing. Consider Armstrong's (1963, pp. 431-432) remarks:

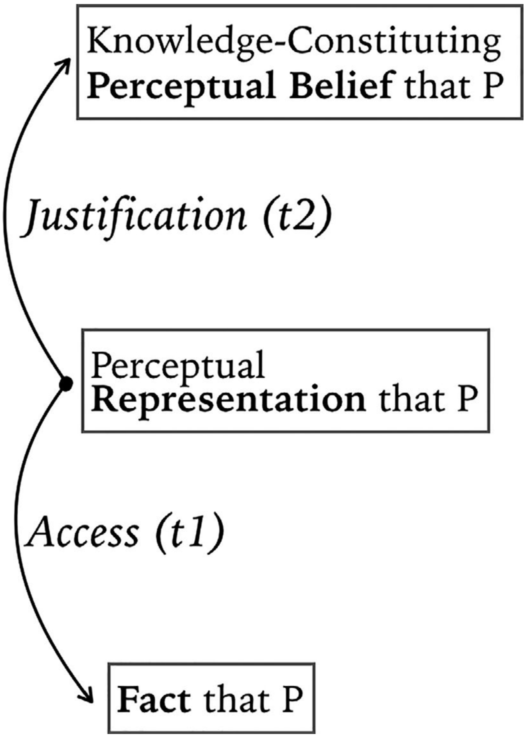
> …consider the interesting case of the chicken-sexer. He can, more or less accurately, say that a chicken will grow up to be a cock or a hen, but he does not know, and nobody else knows, what visual cues he is using. (Chicken-sexers are trained by being shown photos of chicks whose later career is known. They are told when they guess correctly, and they gradually come to guess better and better.) It is natural to say that female and male chicks give rise to different inner states resembling visual impressions in the chicken-sexer, and that these inner states are responsible for the sexer's choice, but yet that the sexer is not directly [introspectively] aware of these states.

One of the intuitions that epistemologists have had about this case is that chicken sexing, so described, is at least a possible way of coming to know that a chick has a given sex. And it's at least a possible way of coming to know that is not grounded in reasons possessed by the agent (Goldman 1975, pp. 112-114; Foley, 1987; Sosa, 2015; Sylvan, 2018). So again we seem to have a counterexample to KN.

Potential counterexamples to KN don't end here. Some have thought the possibility of knowledge by blindsight a possible case of knowledge not grounded in possessed reasons (Block, 1995; Sosa, 2015). Similarly, some have thought that facts about our current mental states are sometimes directly accessible and knowable without the reliance on any kind of intermediary state (a reason) that indicates the fact that we are currently in that mental state. But again, such knowledge would seem to be knowledge that is not grounded in possessed reasons and hence another potential counterexample to KN.

I'll use the term **basic knowledge** ostensively to refer to the class of cases of knowledge (or possible knowledge) cited above. Thus, I'll use the term to refer to the cases above of proprioceptive knowledge, self-evident knowledge, knowledge despite forgotten evidence, and knowledge via chicken sexing, blindsight, and introspection. But I leave it an open question whether or not these cases of basic knowledge are cases of knowledge that are not grounded in possessed reasons. That's the topic of section 4.

Generally, what underlies the objection to KN from basic knowledge is the disanalogous structure between cases of basic knowledge and paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge. In the typical perceptual case, it's regularly assumed that we have *a perceptual representation* that plays the dual role of (i) *justifying* our perceptual belief and (ii) giving us *access* to (=putting us in *possession* of) the relevant features of the world in virtue of which our perceptual belief is knowledge-constituting in good external circumstances. Moreover, this is imagined to be a diachronic relation in so far as our perceptual beliefs are *caused by* our perceptual representations (Pryor, 2000; Huemer, 2005, 2007; Silins, 2007; Neta, 2010). For example, it's often assumed that you *first* see that you have a hand, i.e. you have a visual perceptual representation in epistemically good circumstances whose content is that you have a hand. Since you're in good circumstances this perceptual representation gives you *access to the fact* that you have a hand and also gives you *justification* to form a belief that you have a hand. In response to your perceptual representation you *then* form the knowledge-constituting belief that you have a hand. In a picture:



Again, the idea depicted here is that one's epistemic access to the world is constituted by, and thus temporally co-incident with, one's perceptual representation (in good circumstances); and this perceptual access to the world prompts one to *then* respond by forming a belief that is both justified and knowledge-constituting (again, in good circumstances).[4]

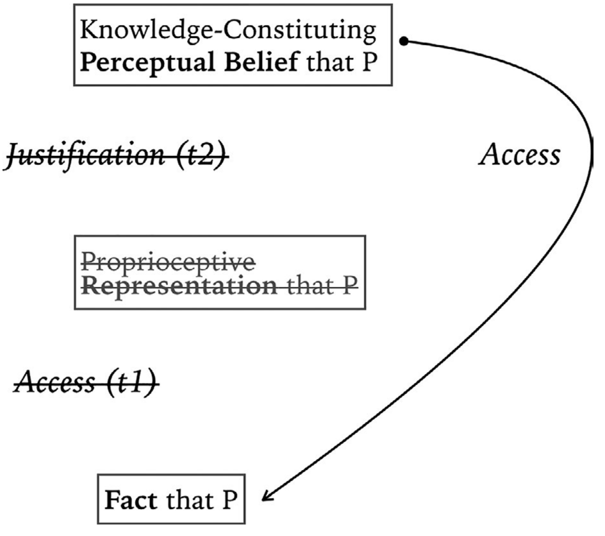
But in the cases of basic knowledge listed above it is commonly argued that we don't get a picture that is anything like this. For example, on Armstrong's account chicken sexers don't report having special experiences that indicate whether or not a chick is male or female; in cases of forgotten evidence one has lost their evidence and thus lost that which stood to justify their belief to begin with. As Anscombe (1957) and Littlejohn (2015) urge us, reconsider the case of proprioceptive knowledge. Just close your eyes and consider how your arms and legs are arranged. If your hands are above your knees, you know that they are; if your feet are crossed, you know that they are; if you're standing (sitting), you know that you are. But your proprioceptive knowledge in these instances is not mediated by any obvious non-doxastic proprioceptive representational state in the way that paradigmatic perceptual knowledge tends to be mediated by non-doxastic perceptual representational states.[5] Put differently, it's not as though you have some proprioceptive represen-

[4]By 'good circumstances' I mean those devoid of things like causal deviance, environmental luck, further defeating information, and whatever else might derail one on the path to knowledge.

[5]At the *sub-personal* level there are perhaps non-doxastic representational states that play a role in arriving at one's proprioceptive belief. All we're concerned with here are non-doxastic representations that are appreciable at the *personal* level. For if sub-personal non-doxastic representations were able to justify beliefs in the way perception is commonly thought to, then the objection from basic knowledge would be far less interesting. In any case, the mere metaphysical possibility of cognitive abilities that have as outputs knowledge-constituting beliefs independent of any mediated non-doxastic representation is enough to challenge the idea that knowledge is constitutively a normative state.

tational experience *independent* of your belief as you do when in normal circumstances you look in the direction of a nearby tree and have a visual experience as of a tree.

Accordingly, in cases of proprioceptive knowledge, as Littlejohn's objection goes, we just have the proprioceptive cognitive ability that has as it's characteristic output knowledge-constituting proprioceptive beliefs, and when exercises of this ability yield knowledge they *thereby* give us access to the world. In a picture:



So while our proprioceptive knowledge ensures that we have proprioceptive access to the proprioceptive facts, there is no apparent story to tell about how that proprioceptive knowledge is to be explained in terms of a *prior* normative relation to those same facts. The raw materials to tell that story appear to be absent.

Accordingly, the problem for advocates of KN is this: cases of basic knowledge seem to be cases of knowledge that P where one has that knowledge without having it in virtue of possessing sufficient reason to believe P. The possibility of such knowledge is inconsistent with KN. But whether or not the cases of basic knowledge are counterexamples to KN depend on how we understand the notion of 'having sufficient reason'.

3 | ON 'HAVING SUFFICIENT REASON'

So what are reasons and when are they sufficient? Generally, sufficiency is regarded as a matter of weightiness:

> SUFFICIENCY S has sufficient reason to believe P iff the reasons S has for believing P are at least as weighty as the reasons S has not to believe P.[6]

Talk of *the weight of reasons* is meant to capture the way in which reasons can "stack-up" in favor and in opposition to certain responses. For example, in the case of belief you can have all kinds of reasons to

[6]I intend a reading on which 'the reason S has' has existential implications, ruling out the vacuous case.

believe P and all kinds of reasons to refrain from believing P. But you only have sufficient reason to believe P when your reasons in favor of believing are *not outweighed* by your reasons to refrain (Lord and Maguire 2016). For the most part this way of thinking about sufficiency is independent of one's stance on the nature of reasons.[7]

As to what reasons are, the traditional view among epistemologists has been a version of *mentalism* which holds that epistemic reasons for belief are non-factive representational mental states: perceptual experiences, introspective experiences, memorial experiences, intuitive experiences, as well as certain beliefs.[8] Since mental states are always mental states *of someone*, the question of what it takes for one to possess (have access to) reasons requires no additional condition. It was this mentalist picture of reasons that was implicit in the presentation of the basic knowledge objection to KN in the last section.

While mentalism has historically been the default position among epistemologists, non-mentalist alternatives have been on the rise in recent years. Here's a commonly endorsed and defended alternative to mentalism:

> Broad Factualism Objective reasons are either facts or true propositions that favor responses.[9]

The main motivation behind Broad Factualism has to do with our justificatory practices: we reference (or attempt to reference) facts or true propositions when engaged in the activity of *justifying* the actions and attitudes of ourselves and others. We say things like: *the fact* that there are elephants in Africa is a reason to believe that they've not yet gone extinct, and *the fact* that you're hungry is a reason to get a snack, and *the fact* that a potential action would cause harm is a reason to refrain from that action, and so forth. When our attempts to justify actions and attitudes reference falsehoods rather than facts we view the attempted justification as defective. Broad Factualists take this aspect of our justificatory practice as illuminating *the sources* of our justification for our attitudes and actions, i.e. facts or true propositions. Broad Factualism is arguably the dominant position in the literature on the normativity of action (Scanlon, 1998; Raz, 1999; Dancy, 2000; Schroeder, 2007; Alvarez, 2010; Skorupski, 2011; Parfit, 2011; Whiting, 2014; Kiesewetter, 2017) and it has already secured a stable and growing place in current epistemological treatments of the normativity of belief (Williamson, 2000; Schroeder, 2015a; Lord, 2018a,b; Littlejohn, 2017; Kiesewetter, 2017; Sylvan, 2018).[10]

There is much else to be said on behalf of Broad Factualism, but this is not the place for it.[11] My aim is to demonstrate how Broad Factualism can help solve the problem of basic knowledge facing KN. But before exploring whether Broad Factualism can help resolve the tension between KN and basic knowledge, it's worth considering whether mentalists can themselves offer a solution to the problem.

---

[7]This way of thinking of sufficient reason is just a different way of thinking about *ultima facie* justification, where a belief is *ultima facie* justified just in case one's justification is undefeated (i.e. sufficient).

[8]See Davidson (1986), Huemer (2001), Lyons (2009), Pollock and Cruz (1999), Silins (2007), Neta (2010), and Pryor (2000).

[9]I call this 'Broad Factualism' because of it's disjunctive content. Usually, the term 'factualism' is limited to the view that reasons are facts. While the view that reasons are true propositions is a factive form of abstractionism, which takes reasons to be propositions.

[10]Williamson (2000, ch. 9) argues that evidence is propositional and just what you know. Assuming that your evidence just is your epistemic reasons for belief, Williamson is a Broad Factualist or something quite close to it even though he rejects KN.

[11]See Sylvan (2016) for a summary of the issues surrounding Broad Factualism as an alternative to mentalism.

3.1 | A mentalist solution?

Some may wonder whether or not a mentalist picture of reasons could resolve the problem of basic knowledge. For example, perhaps every basic belief that P is a case where agents have sub-personal capacities that give rise to a seeming that P, where the seeming state is itself a reason for belief that P, and a belief that P is formed on the basis of the seeming that P. The seeming justifies the belief (barring defeaters) and the agent has access to the reason in virtue of it being her own mental state. If something along these lines is correct then we have a possible solution to the present conflict between basic knowledge and KN since reasons (in the form of seemings states) always justify the basic beliefs one has.[12]

To appeal to seemings in this way we first have to say something about the relation between beliefs and seemings. Here are some options that emerge from the literature on seemings:

> *Independence*: Seemings and beliefs are independent psychological states. Therefore, it is possible for S to believe that P without it seeming to be the case that P, and vice versa. (Bealer, 1998; Pust, 2000; Huemer, 2007)
>
> *Identity*: Seemings and beliefs are (at least) token-identical states. Therefore, necessarily, S believes that P iff P seems true to S. (Lycan 1988, pp. 165-166; Swinburne 2001, pp. 141-142)
>
> *Composition*: Beliefs are to be understood reductively as seemings that have a certain functional profile, namely, the functional profile that is characteristic of belief in assertion, action, and inference. Therefore, it is impossible for S to believe that P and it fail to be the case that P seems true to S. (Lyons 2009, pp. 71ff)

Recall, KN is a necessity claim. Now, if Independence is true, then its is metaphysically possible for there to be, for example, proprioceptive beliefs with all the externalist virtues (e.g. safety, sensitivity, manifesting reliable ability, adherence) *without seemings*. Standard 'externalist' theories of knowledge (i.e. the theories of knowledge that only require a true belief to have some subset of the externalist virtues to be knowledge) will entail that there are possible cases where these seeming-free beliefs are knowledge. So there will be instances of knowledge without seemings to appeal to for justification in the case of basic knowledge. So, by externalist lights, KN must be false if Independence is true.

Now consider Identity. If Identity is true, then its is metaphysically possible for there to be proprioceptive beliefs at t1 with all the externalist virtues (e.g. safety, sensitivity, manifesting reliable ability, adherence) *without a distinct seeming/belief state* at t0 on which to base one's proprioceptive belief at t1. Again, externalists will call such a belief formed at t1 knowledge, and it will be case of knowledge without seemings to *non-circularly* appeal to for justification. For at t1 the only relevant seeming will be identical to the proprioceptive belief itself. But to allow the seeming/belief to be a self-justifying mental state is to allow for a kind of epistemic circularity akin to premise-circularity that epistemologists have tended to want to avoid. So, by externalist lights, KN must be false if Identity is true and beliefs cannot be self-justifying.

Now consider Composition. If Composition is true, we again seem to have a circularity problem. For then a part of the mental state that makes up the belief state (the seemings portion) will have to

[12] I am grateful to a referee for pointing this out.

be taken to justify the whole belief state. Again, this is undesirable for it requires a belief to be self-justifying. So, by the lights of externalists, KN must be false if Composition is true and beliefs cannot be self-justifying.

In summary, mentalists who want to employ seemings to resolve the basic knowledge objection to KN face a *prima facie* dilemma: either reject basic knowledge as genuine knowledge or accept some kind of epistemic circularity on which beliefs can be self-justifying. As I will explain, Broad Factualists face no such dilemma.

3.2 | Back to Broad Factualism: possession

Unlike mentalists, Broad Factualists need to say something substantive about what it takes *to have* (=possess, access) a reason. For if reasons are facts or true propositions they are not automatically within one's ken in a way that could justify one's prospective beliefs and actions. The fact that a mathematician has proven X is conclusive reason for you to believe X, but if you're wholly ignorant that X has been proven you cannot justifiedly believe or reason from X in the process of forming new beliefs or in deciding which courses of action to take.

There are a wide range of views of what possession of reasons amounts to among Broad Factualists. Some maintain that being in any representational state (a belief state, a seeming state) that has a reason P as its content is sufficient for possession of P (Schroeder, 2015a). Others maintain that something more epistemically demanding is constitutive of the possession of reasons. On the more demanding side of things there are a range of alternatives. For one example take a virtue reliabilist account of the possession of reasons (Silva, forthcoming; cf. Sylvan 2018, p. 212). On this view there is a general relation a thinker stands in to a fact when they non-defectively exercise a reliable ability to accurately represent the world. I'll refer to this relation that gives one access to (/possession of) facts as *the A-relation*, and it is defined in the following reliabilist virtue-theoretic way:

> (A-relation) S hosts an accurate representational propositional attitude (e.g. a belief, a seeming) with P as its content, where S's accurately representing P is the product of a non-defective exercise of a reliable capacity of S's cognitive system.

Three things to note about the A-relation. First, it's a factive relation since a representational propositional attitude is accurate just in case it's content is true. Second, the A-relation is a virtue-theoretic relation in that one only stands in it if one's accurate representation is produced in a *non-defective* manner. There are different ways of understanding non-defective exercises among virtue epistemologists and leaving the nature of non-defectiveness an open question here will not impact the main points to follow (Greco, 2012).

Finally, we regularly stand in the A-relation. For example, whenever we *perceive that P* or *remember that P* we stand in the A-relation. This is because one only counts as perceiving that P or remembering that P when one's reliable perceptual and memory abilities non-defectively yield accurate representational states.[13] It is less clear if it's a part of natural language that *intuiting that P* or *introspecting that P* refer to instances of the A-relation since it seems coherent to speak of people as having false (inaccurate) intuitions and as having false introspective seemings. It will be convenient for us to have a term that refers to instances of the A-relation across all our cognitive capacities, thus including ideal exercises of intuition, introspection, and so forth. So let's *stipulatively* say that any time a thinker

[13]See footnote 15 for mention of complications arising from naïve realist views of the nature of perception.

stands in this A-relation to some true proposition P that they are **aware** of the fact that P. Accordingly, we can speak thinkers being *perceptually aware* of the fact that P, *memorially aware* of the fact that P, *introspectively aware* of the fact that P, *intuitively aware* of the fact that P, *proprioceptively aware* of the fact that P, and so forth.

For reasons I discuss elsewhere (Silva forthcoming), possessing or accessing a reason P is not best identified with awareness (=standing in the A-relation). Rather, possession is to be understood in terms of *being in a position* to be aware (Silva, forthcoming; Sylvan, 2018, p. 212). Hence:

> POSSESSION=POTENTIAL AWARENESS (P=PA) S possesses a fact P iff S is in a position to be aware the fact that P.

There are a few things to note about (P=PA). First, it's an account of the possession of *objective* reasons (=facts, true propositions). So it's silent on the question of what kind of possession relation there might be when it comes to possessing 'merely apparent reasons' or 'subjective reasons'. This issue of apparent reasons is relevant when is comes to addressing situations where *misleading* perceptual experiences seem to rationalize believing P even though P is false (cf. Schroeder, 2015a; Sylvan, 2015). Second, (P=PA) is not an account of the richer notion of possessing P *as a reason to respond in a certain way*. For in order to, say, possess P *as a reason to dance a jig* I have to at the very least be *able* (in some sense) to dance a jig *for* that reason (Sylvan, 2015, 2018; Lord, 2018a). For present purposes we can set aside discussion of this practical condition. All I'm concerned with here is what *epistemic relation* an agent has to bear to a fact in order to possess it, and the account of this thinner possession relation will be compatible with a variety of views about what richer, practical relation is needed in order to possess a fact *as a reason for a given response*. Finally, there is a question about how *being aware* differs from *being in a position to be aware* and why it's necessary to identify possession with the later, logically weaker notion. For present purposes further specification of this issue won't matter. All that's needed to unravel the problem of basic knowledge facing KN is the sufficient condition that being aware is *sufficient* for the possession of reasons. Accordingly, we only need the left-to-right direction of that biconditional in what follows.

Now there is a potential wrinkle in seeking to avail myself of the view that being in a position to be aware grounds possession when defending KN. For some might think that *the A-relation is the knowledge relation*, and hence:

> (K=A) S knows that P iff S is aware that P.

If this is true, then possessing a fact is just a matter of *being in a position to know it,* something others have argued for (Sylvan 2018, pp. 212; Lord, 2018, ch 3; Neta 2017, p. 48).

The first thing to note is that (K=A) is a controversial thesis because it is highly revisionary. For if (K=A) is true, then all instances of awareness are instances of knowledge. Thus, for example, every instance of *perceptual awareness* is an instance of knowledge. But notice that on fairly common views of perception one can be perceptually aware that a barn is nearby even if: (i) one has apparently reliable *but misleading* undercutting information that a barn is not nearby, or (ii) one doesn't believe there's a barn nearby, or (iii) one is beset by environmental luck (e.g. one is in fake-barn setting).[14]

But on common ways of thinking about knowledge, one cannot know P if any of (i)-(iii) obtain. So I and many others would prefer to reject (K=A) in favor of a view on which awareness (the A-relation) is a more general state of which perception that P and knowledge that P are distinct instances.

[14]See McDowell (1998), Huemer (2001), Turri (2010a), Pritchard (2012b), Schroeder (2015b, MS), Silva (MS). Bernecker (2010) argues for the same thing in the case of memory: one can be remember that P even if correlates of (i)-(iii) fail.

Like I said, *(K=A)* adds only a superficial wrinkle to my use of (P=PA) in defense of KN. It is a wrinkle because it raises objections involving the circularity of the account I'm going to offer. Is it superficial because there are various ways of avoiding a problematic circularity, which I address in section 5. But first, in the next section, I'll explain how Broad Factualism and (P=PA) offer us a model for understanding how and why basic knowledge is consistent with KN.

4 | ANSWERING THE CHALLENGE OF BASIC KNOWLEDGE

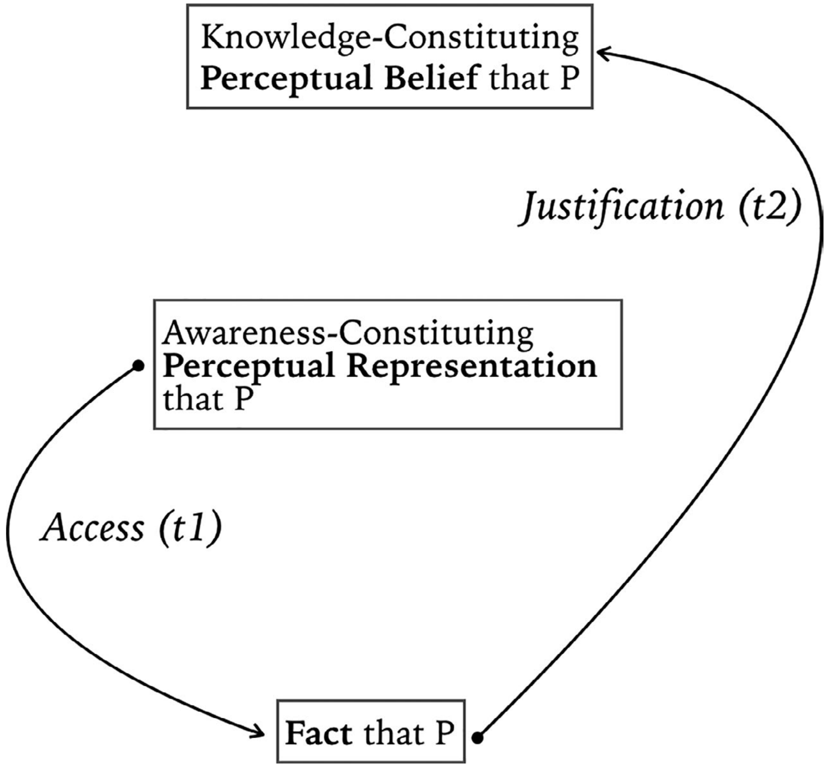
So far we've seen how Broad Factualism together with (P=PA) offers a specific way of understanding what it takes to *have sufficient reason* to believe P. In what follows I'll explain the taxonomy of cases of justified belief that emerge from this. Specifically, distinct categories of justified belief will unfold in such a way that the cases of basic knowledge find a natural home as a kind of belief for sufficient reason.

Let's start with inferential knowledge. Take a case where you infer P from Q where P≠Q. Suppose also you know that Q and Q implies P, and you competently deduce P from that knowledge. Other things being equal, in such cases you are justified in believing P is true because there are other facts *distinct from* P that you know and hence are aware of and so have access to. We can refer to such cases where you have (ultima facie) justification to believe P due to *inferences* from prior states of knowledge (or awareness) that do not explicitly involve the fact that P as cases of **indirect justification**.

But not all cases of justification are indirect. Take, for example, a case where you *believe that* there is a ceiling over your head because you *see that* there is a ceiling over your head.[15] Given how ingrained the mentalist picture of reasons is we need to take care in understanding what's going on in this sort of case. According to Broad Factualism *only* facts (or true propositions) can justify beliefs. So your awareness-constituting perceptual representation (=your perceptual representation that stands in the A-relation) plays no *justificatory* role. Rather, as (P=PA) indicates, the role of your awareness-constituting perceptual representation of the fact that P is to *enable* P to justify your belief that P by giving you access to (possession of) that same fact. So in this kind of perceptual case, it is the fact *that there is a ceiling over your head* that is justifying your belief that a ceiling is over your head; your perceptual awareness of that fact simply enables this to happen by putting you in possession of the relevant fact.

[15]This obviously presupposes that seeing that P is not partially constituted by one's believing that P. It is very common in both epistemology and philosophy of mind to maintain that there are non-doxastic representational experiences with propositional content that produce belief in the content of those non-doxastic experiences. Perception is widely taken to be an instance of such non-doxastic states. See, for example, Alston (1989), Audi (1998), Bealer (2000), Bengson (2015), Bergmann (2013), Bernecker (2010), BonJour (2001), Chisholm (1977), Chudnoff (2011), Feldman and Conee (1985), Fumerton (2001), Haack (1993), Huemer (2005, 2007), Silins (2007), Neta (2010), Lycan (2013), Markie (2013), McDowell (1994), McGrath (2013), Pollock and Cruz (1999), Pryor (2000), Pritchard (2012b), Pust (2000), Reynolds (1991), Sosa (2015), Steup (2000), Tucker (2010, 2013), and Turri (2010a). For examples in the philosophy of mind see Field (1978), Fodor (1978), Schiffer (1987), Susanna Siegel (2010), Nanay (2014), Susanna Schellenberg (2014), Berit Brogaard (2014), Heather Logue (2014), Schwitzgebel (2015), Crane and French (2017), and Lyons (2009, p. 71) (cf. Locatelli & Wilson 2017). Some may worry about how compatible this picture of perception is with naïve realist views of perception that reject the idea that the perception of particulars (=simple seeing) involves accurately representing propositions. Such naïve realists are encouraged to think about subsequent discussion of 'perceiving that P' in terms of *seemings* non-defectively produced by the perception of particulars. For further discussion of this way of thinking about 'perceiving that P' see Schellenberg's (2014, pp. 201ff) discussion of the Association Thesis. Ultimately, little turns on this issue since the end result of this worry is just to make knowledge-constituting perceptual beliefs formed in response to the perception of particulars cases of basic knowledge just as much as proprioceptive knowledge is basic knowledge.

Let's use the term **direct justification** for such cases where *the fact that P* is what justifies *believing that P*. Endorsements and defenses of direct justification are not uncommon among Broad Factualists (Hopp, 2012; Schroeder, 2011, 2015a; Lord, 2018a, pp. 75ff; cf. Sosa 2015, pp. 197-198). We can illustrate direct justification as typically understood by Broad Factualism and (P=PA) in the perceptual case as follows:



Unsurprisingly, some have worried about direct justification. For example, Schroeder (2015b, p. 379) writes:

> I used to think… that when you have a visual experience as of P (which could be either veridical or otherwise), you come to have the proposition that P as among your reasons to believe that P. But [this view] runs into trouble with defeaters. If your visual evidence that there is something red in front of you is just <that there is something red in front of you>, this is such good evidence that there is something red in front of you that it is hard to see how it could be defeated by learning that you are wearing rose-colored glasses.

There are two kinds of sub-cases to be distinguished: the case where there is actually nothing red in front of you, and the case where there *is* something red in front of you, so you get a misleading defeater. In the first case the objection fails because there is no fact to be aware of. It is with the second case that we have a potential objection. This second kind of case may be problematic on a view of possession (like Schroeder's) that allows *any* representation that P to ground the possession of P whether or not one's representation is *non-defectively* produced and sustained by an agent's cognitive ability. But this objection is much harder to get off the ground on views of possession like (P=PA) where possession is understood in terms of awareness (=the A-relation). For awareness requires the non-defective exercise of one's cognitive ability, and one's cognitive abilities are *defectively* exercised when credible undercutting defeaters are in play. That is, in the presence of credible undercutting defeaters one ceases to count as being aware of (and so ceases to possess) the relevant fact. Consider a non-epistemic case. Jeter has the ability to hit baseballs in normal conditions: it consists in his ability to predict the future location of the baseball and to take a good swing in that location. Suppose conditions are normal, never the less he mistakenly thinks they're not since he has it on good (but mistaken) authority that his new sunglasses always make the baseball appear five inches above its actual location. Suppose Jeter ignores this information, swings his bat in the direction the ball visually appears to be anyway, and he hits the ball. In such a case, Jeter's success *fails to be* a non-defective exercise his ability to hit baseballs.[16]

There is an additional, or alternative, explanation available in response to Schroeder's worry. It doesn't follow that one has a justified belief that P simply because one *has* strong reasons to believe P and one believes P. A justified belief is also a belief that is *properly* responsive to one's reasons (Turri 2010b). Indeed, the kind of case that Schroeder describes is just a case where one's belief is, intuitively, not properly related to the reasons one has. Why not? Neta (forthcoming), Prado (forthcoming), Silva (2018), and van Wietmarschen (2013) have all argued that having sufficiently strong negative higher-order information prevents one from having a justified belief that P, even if one's first-order reasons support belief that P. And knowing (or justifiedly believing) that one is wearing rose colored glasses is such higher-order information. After all, you know that if you were wearing rose colored glasses, an object appearing red would not be a reliable indicator of it actually being red.[17]

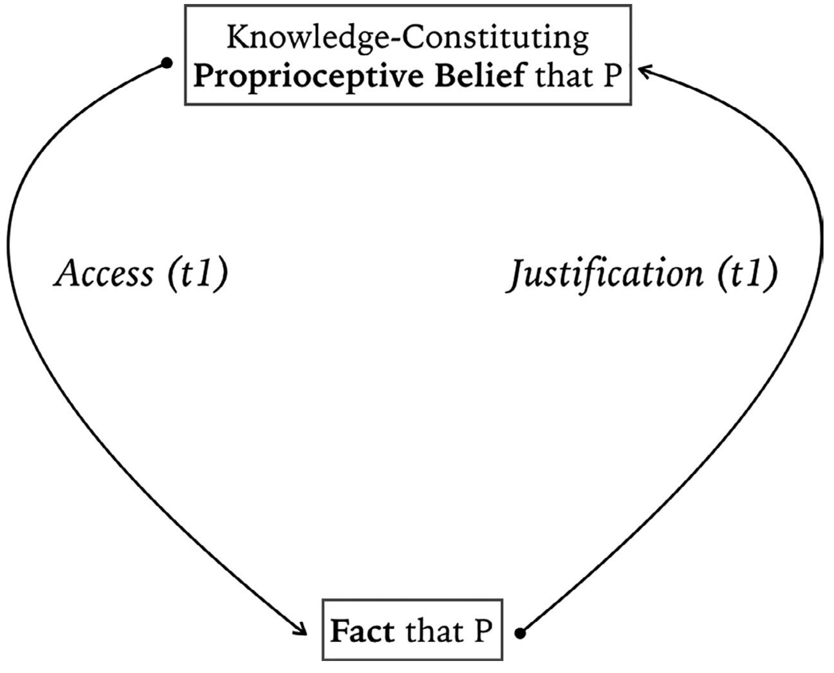
What the above cases of direct and indirect justification for belief have in common is that neither requires one to actually have the belief that P in order for believing that P to be justified by the reasons one possesses. This is because in those cases one's *access* to the facts that justify believing P is *not constituted by or otherwise dependent on* one's already believing that P. Accordingly, the above cases of direct and indirect justification allow for the possibility that one has propositional justification *to believe* that P even if they lack a doxastically justified *belief* that P. So such instances of direct justification to believe P are *non-doxastic* in so far as one's justification doesn't depend on one actually believing P, rather it depends on one's hosting a non-doxastic awareness-constituting representational state towards P. Let's use the term **contributorily justified beliefs** to refer to beliefs that are *either indirectly justified* (as in the above case of inferential knowledge) *or non-doxastically directly justified* (as in the above case of perceptual knowledge). However, not everything we know and justifiedly believe is like this, bringing us back to the problem of basic knowledge.

Surprisingly, Broad Factualism and (P=PA) neatly pave the way for an explanation of how to reconcile basic knowledge with KN. To see this take a knowledge-constituting proprioceptive belief that P. For example, take the proprioceptive knowledge that you're hands are above your feet. When one forms such a knowledge-constituting proprioceptive belief that P, *that belief is also awareness-constituting*: for every instance of knowledge is itself an instance of the A-relation.[18] Moreover, given (P=PA), it follows that one has access to the fact that P when one proprioceptively knows that P. And this direct *doxastic proprioceptive access* to the fact that P enables *that fact* to in turn justify one's proprioceptive belief that P. We can put this into a picture:

[16]Again, different accounts among virtue epistemologists of what non-defectiveness amounts to, and each will explain the details of this differently (Greco, 2012).

[17]See Prado (forthcoming) for a detailed discussion of this idea within the Broad Factualist framework.

[18]Maybe knowing requires *more* than standing in the A-relation. For example there is some kind of anti-luck requirement on knowing like safety or sensitivity (Pritchard, 2012a; Kelp, 2013). But the idea that knowing requires at least that one non-defectively exercise a reliable ability is reasonably uncontroversial.



What distinguishes such instances of proprioceptive knowledge from the more familiar paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge is *the type* of representational state that is awareness-constituting and hence access-granting. In the perceptual case, it's a *non-doxastic* representational state; in the cases of basic knowledge it's a *doxastic* representational state (i.e. the knowledge-constituting *belief* itself). Let's call beliefs that are justified by reasons accessed in this *direct*, *doxastic* fashion **constitutively justified beliefs**.

Some think that perceiving that P is constitutively a matter of believing that P. This view of perceiving that P only threatens the idea that perceptual knowledge involves contributory justification. That's fine. It is consistent with KN since on this view paradigmatic perceptual knowledge will just involve constitutive justification, and thus be much more like proprioceptive knowledge. This is discussed further below.

5 | RESPONDING TO OBJECTIONS

The Epistemic Circularity Objection. Cases of basic knowledge are cases of constitutively justified belief, or so I've argued. But it can seem as if constitutively justified beliefs are self-justifying. For in the constitutive case, the belief *that P* is justified by *P*. That seems circular in some epistemically problematic sense.

But notice, it does not follow from the fact that there are knowledge-constituting *beliefs* which play *a* role in their own justification that these beliefs are also self-justifying. For, again, according to Broad Factualism only facts (true propositions) justify beliefs. This holds even in the proprioceptive case above: it is the *fact* that P that justifies believing P. It's just that one's knowledge-constituting proprioceptive belief that P is part of what *enables* the fact that P to perform a justificatory function by facilitating access to the fact that P. Many others have also held the view that the fact that P can justify belief in that same fact (Hopp, 2012; Schroeder, 2011, 2015a; Lord, 2018a, pp. 75ff; Sosa 2015, pp. 197-198).

The Metaphysical Circularity Objection. Sylvan (2018, pp. 208) has issued the following argument against KN:

> M1. Justification is grounded in possessed reasons. M2. Possession of reasons is grounded in knowledge. M3. So, *on pain of metaphysical circularity*, knowledge is not grounded in justification.

M3 is inconsistent with KN.

There are two ways to handle this objection. Recall the theory of possession I've advocated was (P=PA) (Silva forthcoming). We only get M2 and the resultant circularity objection if we adopt a view that identifies knowledge with awareness, (K=A). As noted above, many would reject (K=A) (McDowell, 1998; Huemer, 2001; Turri, 2010a; Pritchard, 2012b; Schroeder, MS; Bernecker, 2010).

But suppose one of these advocates of KN wanted to hold on to something in the neighborhood of (K=A). A close alternative in the spirit of (K=A) would be for advocates of KN to argue that the intuitions that favor (K=A) mistake identity with a kindred metaphysical notion: constitution. For illustration: while the statue is not identical to the lump of clay it is made from, the statue is constituted by and dependent on its clay. Because of this the statue inherits certain properties from its clay: its location, its weight, its color, and so on. Yet for all this the statue is not to be identified with the clay of which it's constituted.[19] Similarly, those who reject (K=A) can argue that knowledge is constituted by but distinct from states of awareness, i.e. states of true representation from a non-defective exercise of a reliable cognitive ability. Since *beliefs* are representational states that can be held from a non-defective exercise of a reliable cognitive ability, belief states can constitute states of awareness which give one access to reasons. And in the case of basic knowledge that P, one's knowledge-constituting belief that P is knowledge-constituting in virtue of the fact that it was (metaphysically) first awareness-constituting. And being awareness-constituting it gave one access to reasons that conferred a *further* status on the awareness-constituting belief: justification. In virtue of this further normative fact, the belief "became" not only awareness-constituting, but also knowledge-constituting.

But suppose (K=A) were true. There would remain a problem with the argument from M1-M3. For this argument against KN assumes that metaphysical circularity is a mark of falsehood. But as Lewis (1976) pointed out, while metaphysical circularities are oddities they are not necessarily oddities that indicate falsehood. While he cited various examples, consider the case of time travel. Lewis argued that in such cases one's action A can be explained in terms of itself. For example, the fact that Tim became a time traveller might be owed to the fact that Tim encountered a time traveller who inspired him in the past. If that time traveller was Tim himself, then the fact that Tim becomes a time traveller is causally explained in terms of the fact that Tim became a time traveller. That's a metaphysical circularity, and a definite oddity. But not a falsehood for that reason.

Now consider the fact that S has basic knowledge that P, and assume as Sylvan does, that knowledge is awareness: (K=A). KN implies that S's basic knowledge that P exists partly in virtue of the fact that S has sufficient reason to believe P. But according to (P=PA) and (K=A), S has sufficient reason to believe P because S has basic knowledge that P. So, S knows that P because S knows that P. An oddity? For sure. A falsehood? We've been given no reason to think so. I don't think this is the most attractive response to Sylvan's objection. But I mention it because advocates of (K=A) who want to substantiate the metaphysical circularity objection should explain why their identity view is superior

[19]This view of statue/lump phenomena is very widely held among metaphysicians. See Rea (1998) and Wasserman (2017).

to a constitution view and just why the kind of metaphysical circularity implied by (K=A), (P=PA), and KN is a problematic kind of circularity. This is work that has been left undone.

The Objection from Determination. Sylvan (2018, p. 200) issues an argument from determination against KN:

> D1. Seeing that p, remembering that p, etc., determine knowing that p. D2. Seeing that p, remembering that p, etc., are not normatively constituted; rather, they are non-normative in the way mental states generally are. D3. If a determinable is normatively constituted, its determinates must be too. D4. So, knowledge is not normatively constituted.

D4 is inconsistent with KN. Against D1, many reject the idea that seeing that P, remembering that P, etc. are determinates of knowing that P (McDowell, 1998; Huemer, 2001; Turri, 2010a; Pritchard, 2012b; Schroeder, MS; Bernecker, 2010). I will not rehearse those arguments here, but I gestured at them above in section 3 in response to (K=A).

But suppose D1 is true. We can block the argument at D2. For against D2 consider Sylvan's (2018, p. 199) own account of seeing that P: "Seeing that P plausibly consists in having a visual *belief* whose truly representing that P manifests a reliable perceptual ability." Now, if D1 is true then seeing that P is just a determinate way of knowing that P. And since on Sylvan's view seeing that P is a kind of belief that P from a non-defective exercise of one's cognitive ability, it follows that seeing that P is a form of awareness of the fact that P (=it instantiates the A-relation in regard to P). So it *is* a kind of constitutively justified belief. Again, there may be circularity worries here, but I've addressed those above. And the strength of this argument seems dependent on strength of the circularity arguments.

The Argument from Animal Knowledge. Sylvan (2018, p. 203ff) argues that if 'justified' is treated as a paradigmatic deontic term to be analyzed in terms of reasons then "we can appeal to animal knowledge again to set aside JTB+ analyses." This would rule out KN. But the cases of animal knowledge to which Sylvan is referring are just the cases of basic knowledge mentioned above. We've already explained how basic knowledge is consistent with KN and responded to objections. So at this point it's hard to see what's distinctive about this objection.

The Doxastic Justification Objection. Another worry with KN and constitutive justification concerns whether or not it's coherent to regard constitutively justified beliefs as beliefs that are held *for* reasons. To see the trouble recall how paradigmatic cases of perceptually justified beliefs are beliefs that are (i) based on reasons to which one has independent access, (ii) one's belief is a causal (and hence diachronic) response *to that mode access*, and (iii) one's belief counts as responsive to one's epistemic reasons in virtue of (ii). But in the case of constitutive justification this manner of causal/diachronic responsiveness to independently accessed reasons is not possible. For one's access to the facts that justify believing P is not prior to one's belief that P. The two are coincident. To put the issue differently, while it may not be hard to see how constitutively justified beliefs can enjoy 'propositional justification', it remains somewhat more difficult to see how they can enjoy 'doxastic justification'.

There are a couple ways to answer this worry on behalf of KN. There is, as usual, a bullet-biting response: constitutively justified beliefs like we find in the cases of basic knowledge are *beyond* doxastic justification; these are simply cases where the notion of a belief being held *for* a reason is inapplicable. But the inapplicability of this kind of justification doesn't refute KN, which is silent on this further issue. KN is simply a thesis about propositional justification (=having sufficient reason).

This bullet-biting response is a reasonable way of preserving KN. But it's not necessary. For this concern turns on the assumption that a belief's being held for a reason requires a response *to prior independent access* to a reason. This assumption is doubtless natural on the traditional mentalist idea that normative reasons are mental states, and the further common assumption that one's belief that P is doxastically justified only when it is formed in the right way in response to those mental states that justify believing P. But the mentalist assumption is inconsistent with Broad Factualism and so can't play a role in underwriting the idea that doxastic justification is impossible for constitutively justified beliefs. Indeed, once mentalism is put out of the picture it's becomes difficult to get a grip on this particular objection. This difficulty is added to on the present account of reasons and their possession. For given (P=PA), constitutively justified beliefs are *reliably related* to the facts in virtue of which they're justified. And, given Broad Factualism, were the believed fact not to obtain, that belief *would not and could not* be justified in the constitutive case.[20] Accordingly, there is a robust sense in which constitutively justified beliefs are *responsive to reasons* and in this sense held *for* reasons.

Doubtless there are further senses in which a belief can be held 'for' a reason that constitutively justified beliefs are incapable of satisfying. For example, any view on which believing for a reason P requires one to be able to non-question beggingly argue for their belief *with P* would be a view of believing for a reason which constitutively justified beliefs will not. When asked why one believes P in constitutive cases one can only cite the reason as being P itself. This is of no dialectical value and is entirely question-begging. But as Alston (1989) and many others have urged us, we shouldn't confuse having the ability to justify our belief with having a justified belief. The general point, then, is that we can coherently find value in a range of increasingly demanding notions of believing *for* a reason, but there is at least one minimal notion of believing for a reason that seems to be in play in the cases of constitutively justified belief (and hence the cases of basic knowledge). That there is such a minimal notion is enough for defenders of KN who think knowledge is not merely a matter of *having* sufficient reason for belief, but also believing *for* sufficient reason.

The Deliberative Objection. A referee pointed out that some might have the following concern:

> Bring in the subject's deliberative perspective on how the world strikes her, and on what to believe given this. The subject has no prior awareness of the fact that P, e.g. that her legs are crossed, and possesses this reason initially exactly by way of believing that her legs are crossed. (Add that the belief is a successful exercise of a cognitive capacity, etc.) From her perspective, the belief that her legs are crossed has nothing going for it, she just randomly finds herself with it. *As far as she can tell*, the belief has zero support. So as far as her own deliberation goes, it is hard to see how she could then justifiably rely on the reason, allegedly possessed thereby, in further reasoning. But if she can't rely on it in further reasoning, how can we say she possesses it? So to the extent that possessing reasons is essentially connected to using them in reasoning, something seems to be missing when the subject possesses a reason via a constitutively justified belief.

Notice first that it's a bit of an overstatement to say basic beliefs have *nothing* going for them from the first person point of view. In general, for mature thinkers who are capable of raising the deliberative question basic beliefs fit one's expectations about the world as well as one's expectations about their ability to access the world. For when I come to believe my hands are above my knees without looking at them (by proprioception) this new belief is not typically a surprise to me. Often enough my hands are above my knees and when they are I know that I am typically able to know this sort of fact about my body without looking. The fact that we have a sense of our own cognitive capacities involving our basic beliefs says something in favor of our reliance on our basic beliefs in future reasoning. In other words, we know enough about our cognitive abilities to, if needed, construct some kind of meta-justificatory

[20]It's perhaps worth noting that the only time one could have a justified false belief on the present view by way of inference from possessed facts.

argument for the reliability of our proprioceptive beliefs as well as our other basic beliefs. If I'm in a position to do this, it's clearly not the case that there is *nothing* going for basic beliefs from the first person point of view.

Moreover, recall a putative lesson of Agrippa's trilemma. Suppose I justifiedly believe P. This needs to be explained, and the usual candidate explanations are these: I justifiedly believe P because my justification for P is circular, infinite, or has a foundation. The typical answer these days is foundationalist, and part of the foundationalist picture is that questions about the origins of our justification have a stopping point (or rather a starting point) that is "beyond" need of further justification. On one kind of mentalist picture, it's our non-doxastic experiences that are the stopping point. For example, in the perceptual case it is our perceptual experiences and we don't need to search for a further justification for or perceptual experiences in order for them to serve as sources of justification for our beliefs. This is due, in part, to the fact that perceptual experiences are not the kind of state that can be justified (they are non-doxastic and involuntary responses to the world).[21] So according to the mentalist foundationalist, if I believe P and the (normative) reason that justifies my belief that P is *my seeing that P* (or *my seeming to see that P*) this is where things end.

But notice anti-foundationalists could put pressure on this mentalist stopping point: "From my perspective, the perceptual experience that P has nothing going for it, I just randomly find myself with it. As far as I can tell, the *perceptual experience* has zero support. So as far as my own deliberation go, it is hard to see how I could then justifiably rely on the reason, allegedly possessed thereby, in further reasoning." You'll have noticed that this is the very concern raised above. And if it applies to basic beliefs, it applies here too. For, quite generally, if the justification of a belief that P depends on my relying to some condition ϕ, one can always ask (or be asked) *why are you relying on* ϕ*?* I don't see why the mentalist has any special advantage here. That is, if ϕ is a mental state that temporally preceded the belief that P, it only pushes this question back one step: I believe P because I had an experience as of P. Okay. But why rely on *that*? So the core deliberative question remains whether or not one is a mentalist, and the foundationalist response is the same in both cases.

6 | CONCLUSION

Not only does Broad Factualism and (P=PA) offer us a model in which we're able to see the consistency of KN and the cases of basic knowledge, they also offer us a model in which we can see the consistency of KN with the conditions for knowing specified by various "externalist" theories of knowledge. For example, consider again Pritchard's anti-luck virtue epistemology: knowledge is safe *true belief* that is *a non-defective product of one's cognitive capacities*. The A-relation is just a generalized notion of this virtue-theoretic element of Pritchard's theory of knowledge. This is because the A-relation is a virtue theoretic account of *accurate representation* generally, and not just accurate representation in the mode of *true belief*. Thus, according to Broad Factualism and (P=PA), every time a thinker counts as knowing that P according to Pritchard's anti-luck virtue epistemology they also count as instantiating the A-relation and thereby as having belief for sufficient reason–be it contributory or constitutive. *The upshot is that such, externalist theories of knowledge and normative theories of knowledge that subscribe to KN are consistent*. Inconsistency emerges only after one adds further assumptions about the nature of reasons and their possession (e.g. mentalist assumptions).

[21]Though Susanna Siegel's book *The Rationality of Perception* takes this assumption to task.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper would not be what it is without the valuable contributions of two anonymous referees, Ram Neta, Peter Graham, Clayton Littlejohn, Sven Bernecker, Ori Beck, Joachim Horvath, Thomas Grundmann, Jessica Brown, Anna-Maria Asunta Eder, Daniel Greco, Andreas Mueller, Eyal Tal, Luis Rosa, Stefanie Grüne, Sofia Bokros, Giulia Napolitano, Lisa Benossi, Francesco Praolini, Jakob Ohlhorst, Errol Lord, Lisa Miracchi, and Dan Singer. Special thanks are owed to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's generous financial support for the Cologne Center for Contemporary Epistemology and the Kantian Tradition.

REFERENCES

Alston, W. P. (1989). *Epistemic justification*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Alvarez, M. (2010). *Kinds of reasons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Anscombe, G. E. M. (1957). *Intention*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Armstrong, D. M. (1973). *Belief, truth, and knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Armstrong, D. M. (1963). Is introspective knowledge incorrigible?. *Philosophical Review*, *72*, 417–432.

Audi, R. (1998). *Epistemology: A contemporary introduction to the theory of knowledge*. New York: Routledge.

Ayer, A. J. (1956). *The problem of knowledge*. Macmillan.

Bealer, G. (1998). Intuition and the autonomy of philosophy. In DePaul and Ramsey 1998 (pp. 201–240).

Bealer, G. (2000). A theory of the a priori. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, *81*, 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0114.00092

Bengson, J. (2015). The intellectual given. *Mind*, *124*, 707–760. https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzv029

Bergmann, M. (2013). Externalist justification and the role of seemings. *Philosophical Studies*, *166*, 163–184. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-012-0037-y

Bernecker, S. (2010). *Memory: A philosophical study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bernecker, S., & Grundmann, T. (2019). Knowledge from forgetting. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *98*, 525–540. https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12469

Brogaard, B. (2014). *Does perception have content?*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Block, N. (1995). On a confusion about a function of consciousness. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *18*, 227–287. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X00038188

Bonjour, L. (1985). *The structure of empirical knowledge*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bonjour, L. (2001). Toward a defense of empirical foundationalism. In M. DePaul (Ed.), *Resurrecting old-fashioned foundationalism*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Chignell, A. (2007). Kant's concepts of justification. *Nous*, *41*, 33–63. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0068.2007.00637.x

Chisholm, R. (1957). *Perceiving: A philosophical study*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Chisholm, R. (1977). *Theory of knowledge* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Chudnoff, E. (2011). What intuitions are like. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *82*, 625–654. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2010.00463.x

Crane, T. & French, C. (2017). The problem of perception. E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The stanford encyclopedia of philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/perception-problem/.

Dancy, J. (2000). *Practical reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Davidson, D. (1986). A coherence theory of truth and knowledge. In E. Lepore (Ed.), *Truth and interpretation*. New York: Blackwell.

Dretske, F. (1981). *Knowledge and the flow of information*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dretske, F. (1991). Two conceptions of knowledge: Rational vs. reliable belief. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, *40*, 15–30.

Feldman, R., & Conee, E. (1985). Evidentialism. *Philosophical Studies*, *48*, 15–34.

Firth, R. (1978). Are epistemic concepts reducible to ethical concepts? In A. Goldman & J. Kim (Eds.), *Values and morals* (p. 219). Dordrecht: Co. D. Reidel Publishing, 1978.

Field, H. H. (1978). Mental representation. *Erkenntnis*, *13*, 9–61.

Fodor, J. A. (1978). Propositional attitudes. *Monist*, *61*, 501–523.

Foley, R. (1987). *The theory of epistemic rationality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Fumerton, R. (2001). Classical foundationalism. In M. DePaul (Ed.), *Resurrecting old-fashioned foundationalism*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Gettier, E. (1963). Is justified true belief knowledge. *Analysis*, *23*, 121–123.

Goldman, A. (1975). Innate knowledge. In S. Stich (Ed.), *Innate ideas*. Oakland: U. Cal. Press.

Goldman, A. (1967). A causal theory of knowing. *The Journal of Philosophy*, *64*, 357–372.

Goldman, A. (2009). Internalism, externalism, and the architecture of justification. *Journal of Philosophy*, *106*, 309–338. https://doi.org/10.5840/jphil2009106611

Greco, J. (2010). *Achieving knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Greco, J. (2012). A (different) virtue epistemology. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *85*, 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2011.00567.x

Grundmann, T. (Forthcoming). Saving safety from counterexamples. *Synthese*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-018-1677-z

Haack, S. (1993). *Evidence and inquiry: Toward reconstruction in epistemology*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hopp, W. (2012). The (many) foundations of knowledge. In D. Zahavi (Ed.), *The oxford handbook of contemporary phenomenology*. Oxford University Press.

Huemer, M. (2001). *Skepticism and the veil of perception*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Huemer, M. (2007). Compassionate phenomenal conservatism. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *74*, 30–55. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2007.00002.x

Kant, I. (1996). *Critique of pure reason, trans. Werner Pluhar*. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Kaplan, M. (1996). *Decision theory as philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kelp, C. (2013). Knowledge: The safe-apt view. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *91*, 265–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/00048402.2012.673726

Kiesewetter, B. (2017). *The normativity of rationality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kornblith, H. (2002). *Knowledge and its place in nature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kornblith, H. (2008). Knowledge needs no justification. In Q. Smith (Ed.), *Epistemology: New essays*. Oxford: OUP.

Lehrer, K. (1990). *Theory of knowledge*. Colorado: Westview Press.

Littlejohn, C. (2015). Knowledge and awareness. *Analysis*, *75*, 596–603. https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/anv051

Littlejohn, C. (2017). How and why knowledge is first. In A. Carter, E. Gordon & B. Jarvis (Eds.), *Knowledge first*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lewis, C. I. (1946). *An analysis of knowledge and valuation*. La Salle: Open Court.

Lewis, D. (1976). Paradoxes of time travel. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *13*, 145–152.

Locatelli, R., & Wilson, K. (2017). Introduction: Perception without representation. *Topoi*, *36*, 197–212. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-017-9460-1

Logue, H. (2014). Experiential content and Naïve realism. In B. Brogaard (Ed.), *Does perception have content*? (pp. 220–241). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lord, E. (2018a). *The importance of being rational*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lord, E. (2018b). Epistemic reasons, evidence, and defeaters. In D. Star (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of reasons and normativity* (pp. 601–628). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lord, E., & Maguire, B. (2016). *Weighing reasons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lycan, W. (1988). *Justification and judgement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lycan, W. G. (2013). Phenomenal conservatism and the principle of credulity. In C. Tucker (Ed.), *Seemings and justification: New essays on dogmatism and phenomenal conservatism* (pp. 293–305). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lyons, J. (2009). *Perception and basic beliefs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Markie, P. (2013). Searching for true dogmatism. In Tucker C. (Ed.), *Seemings and justification: New essays on dogmatism and phenomenal conservatism* (pp. 248–269). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Michaelian, K. (2011). Generative memory. *Philosophical Pscyhology*, *24*, 323–342. https://doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2011.559623

Miracchi, L. (2015). Competence to know. *Philosophical Studies*, *172*, 29–56. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-014-0325-9

McDowell, J. (1994). *Mind and world*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

McDowell, J. (1995). Knowledge and the internal. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *55*, 877–893.

McDowell, J. (1998). *Meaning, knowledge, and reality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

McGrath, M. (2013). Phenomenal conservatism and cognitive penetration: The ‘bad basis’ counterexamples. In C. Tucker (Ed.), *Seemings and justification: New essays on dogmatism and phenomenal conservatism* (pp. 225–247). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moser, P. (1987). Propositional knowledge. *Philosophical Studies*, *52*, 91–114.

Nanay, B. (2014). Empirical problems with anti-representationalism. In B. Brogaard (Ed.), *Does perception have content*? (pp. 40–50). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Neta, R. 2010. Liberalism and conservatism in the epistemology of perceptual belief. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *88*, 685–705. https://doi.org/10.1080/00048400903225734

Neta, R. (2017). Your evidence is the set of facts that are manifest to you? In V. Mitova (Ed.), *The factive turn in epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Neta, R. (Forthcoming). The basing relation. *Philosophical Review*, *128*, 179–217. https://doi.org/10.1215/00318108-7374945

Nozick, R. (1981). *Philosophical explanations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Parfit, D. (2011). *On what matters: Volumes 1 and 2*. Oxford: OUP.

Plantinga, A. (1993). *Warrant and proper function*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pollock, J. L., & Cruz, J. L. (1999). *Contemporary theories of knowledge* (2nd ed.). Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Prado, J. G. (Forthcoming). Dispossessing defeat. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12593

Pritchard, D. (2012a). Anti-luck virtue epistemology. *Journal of Philosophy*, *109*, 247–279. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43820700

Pritchard, D. (2012b). *Epistemological disjunctivism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pritchard, D. (2015). Epistemological disjunctivism: Responses to my critics. *Analysis*, *75*, 627–637. https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/anv058

Pritchard, D. (2016). Epistemological disjunctivism: Responses to my critics. *Journal of Philosophical Research*, *41*, 221–238. https://doi.org/10.5840/jpr201672075

Pryor, J. (2000). The skeptic and the dogmatist. *Noûs*, *34*, 517–549. https://doi.org/10.1111/0029-4624.00277

Pust, J. (2000). *Intuitions as evidence*. New York, Garland Publishing.

Rea, M. (1998). *Material constitution*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Raz, J. (1999). Explaining normativity. *Ratio*, 354–379.

Reynolds, S. L. (1991). Knowing how to believe with justification. *Philosophical Studies*, *64*, 273–292.

Scanlon, T. (1998). *What we owe eachother*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Schellenberg, S. (2014). The relational and representational character of perceptual experience. In B. Brogaard (Ed.), *Does perception have content*? (pp. 200–220). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schiffer, S. (1987). *Remnants of meaning*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Schroeder, M. (2007). *Slaves of the passions*. Oxford: OUP.

Schroeder, M. (2011). What does it take to 'have' a reason? In A. Reisner & A. Steglich-Petersen (Eds.), *Reasons for belief*. Cambridge University Press.

Schroeder, M. (2015a). Knowledge is belief for sufficient (objective and subjective) reason. *Oxford studies in epistemology* (Vol. 5). https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198722762.001.0001

Schroeder, M. (2015b). In defense of the Kantian account of knowledge: Reply to whiting. *Logos & Episteme*, *6*, 371–382. https://doi.org/10.5840/logos-episteme20156328

Schroeder, M. (2015c). Is knowledge normative? *Philosophical Issues, 25,* 379–395. https://doi.org/10.1111/phis.12050

Schroeder, M. MS. Knowledge is not the most general factive stative attitude. University of Southern California.

Schwitzgebel, E. (2019). Belief. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy* (Fall 2019 Edition), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/belief/>.

Sellars, W. (1956). Empiricism and the philosophy of mind. In H. Feigl & M. Scriven (Eds.), *Minnesota studies in philosophy of science* (Vol. 1). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Skorupski, J. (2010). *The domain of reasons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Silins, N. (2007). Basic justification and the Moorean response to the skeptic. T. Gendler & J. Hawthorne (Ed.), *Oxford studies in epistemology* (Vol. 2, pp. 108–142). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Silva, P. (2017). How doxastic justification helps us solve the puzzle of misleading higher-order evidence. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, *98*, 308–328. https://doi.org/10.1111/papq.12173

Silva, P. (Forthcoming). Possessing reasons: Why the awareness-first approach is better than the knowledge-first approach. *Synthese*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-020-02916-5

Silva, P. (MS). Awareness and the substructure of knowledge. University of Cologne.

Siegel, S. (2010). *The contents of visual experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Siegel, S. (2017). *The rationality of perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sosa, E. (1999). How to defeat opposition to moore. *Philosophical Perspectives*, *13*, 141–54. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2676100

Sosa, E. (2007). *A virtue epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sosa, E. (2015). *Judgement and agency*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Steup, M. (2000). Unrestricted foundationalism and the Sellarsian dilemma. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, *60*, 75–98. https://doi.org/10.1163/18756735-90000744

Swinburne, R. (2001). *Epistemic justification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sylvan, K. (2015). What apparent reasons appear to be. *Philosophical Studies*, *172*, 587–606. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-014-0320-1

Sylvan, K. (2016). Epistemic reasons I: Normativity. *Philosophy Compass*, *11*, 364–376. https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12327

Sylvan, K. (2018). Knowledge as a non-normative relation. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *97*, 190–222. https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12371

Tucker, C. (2010). Why open-minded people should endorse dogmatism. *Philosophical Perspectives*, *24*, 529–545. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41329456

Tucker, C. (2013). *Seemings and justification: New essays on dogmatism and phenomenal conservatism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Turri, J. (2010a). Does perceiving entail knowing? *Theoria*, *76*, 197–206. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-2567.2010.01065.x

Turri, J. (2010b). On the relation between propositional and doxastic justification. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *80*, 312–326. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2010.00331.x

van Wietmarschen, H. (2013). Peer disagreement, evidence, and well-groundedness. *Philosophical Review*, *122*, 395–425. https://doi.org/10.1215/00318108-2087654

Wasserman, R. (2017). Material constitution. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/material-constitution/>.

Whiting, D. (2014). Keep things in perspective: Reasons, rationality and the a priori. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, *8*, 1–22.

Williamson, T. (2000). *Knowledge and its limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

How to cite this article: Silva P. Basic knowledge and the normativity of knowledge: The awareness-first solution. *Philos Phenomenol Res*. 2020;00:1–23. https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12754