[Forthcoming in *New Essays in Epistemological Disjunctivism*, eds. C. Doyle, J. Milburn, and D. Pritchard, Routledge. Please cite that version.]

**Two Forms of Memory Knowledge and Epistemological Disjunctivism**

Joe Milburn and Andrew Moon

[Word Count: 6429]

**Abstract**: In our paper, we distinguish between two forms of memory knowledge: experiential memory knowledge and stored memory knowledge. We argue that, *mutatis mutandis,* the case that Pritchard makes for epistemological disjunctivism regarding perceptual knowledge can be made for epistemological disjunctivism regarding experiential memory knowledge. At the same time, we argue against a disjunctivist account of stored memory knowledge.

*Introduction*

Recent discussion of epistemological disjunctivism has centered on perceptual knowledge. For instance, Duncan Pritchard describes the core claim of epistemological disjunctivism as follows:

*Core Thesis*

In paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge an agent, *S*, has perceptual knowledge that Φ in virtue of being in possession of rational support, *R*, for his belief that Φ which is both *factive* (i.e., *R*’s obtaining entails Φ) and *reflectively accessible* to *S*. (Pritchard 2012, 13)[[1]](#footnote-1)

Earlier presentations of epistemological disjunctivism, however, concerned not only perceptual knowledge, but knowledge of other minds and testimonial knowledge (cf. McDowell 1998 a, b). In fact, John McDowell’s arguments for epistemological disjunctivism involve considerations about the nature of knowledge as such and do not depend upon anything particular to perceptual knowledge. (Cf. McDowell 1998 a, b, c). If his arguments are correct, then we should expect disjunctivist accounts of any kind of knowledge in which it makes sense to speak of “appearances” deceiving us through no fault of our own. Of course, many philosophers have not been moved by McDowell’s arguments. In this way, Pritchard’s treatment of epistemological disjunctivism offers a new approach. By making epistemological disjunctivism a claim exclusively about perceptual knowledge, Pritchard is able to argue for it by appealing to special features of perceptual knowledge. Given plausible assumptions about the nature of perceptual knowledge, Pritchard’s Core Thesis becomes quite attractive.

In this paper, we will push the discussion forward by evaluating the possibility of establishing an epistemological disjunctivist account of memory knowledge along Pritchardean lines. We argue that, *mutatis mutandis,* the case that Pritchard makes for epistemological disjunctivism regarding perceptual knowledge can also be made for a certain type of memory knowledge. We also argue that the prospects for a disjunctivist account of *another* form of memory knowledge are bad. The final result is that Pritchardean disjunctivism is a live option for one kind of memory knowledge but not another kind.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The paper proceeds as follows. In Section 1, we distinguish between two different types of memory knowledge: experiential memory knowledge and stored memory knowledge. In Section 2, we defend a *parity thesis*. According to it, arguments analogous to Pritchard’s for epistemological disjunctivism regarding perceptual knowledge serve equally well for epistemological disjunctivism regarding experiential memory knowledge. In Section 3, we argue that such a parity thesis fails for a disjunctivist account of stored memory knowledge.

1. **Memory Knowledge: Experiential and Stored**

In this section, we’ll clarify our terms. Very broadly, our topic is *propositional knowledge*, that is, knowledge *that* *p*. (From here on, any use of ‘knowledge’ will refer to propositional knowledge unless otherwise stated.) More specifically, our topic is *memory knowledge*. We’ll discuss two types.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Suppose that John is trying to remember where he met Lorraine. At first, he cannot remember where they met. He then has a clear memory of meeting her at the Hesburgh library. He then comes to *believe that* he met Lorraine at the Hesburgh Library on the basis of this *memory of* meeting her there. The memory, which involves an experience or image, provides the grounds for John’s knowledge. We will call this *experiential memory knowledge*.

Contrast this with *stored memory knowledge*. Even while John is focused on his breakfast, he continues to know that his name is John. This knowledge is stored in his memory. Note that this knowledge does not depend on any kind of memory image or experience; he isn’t having any memory experiences as he devours his waffles. This example distinguishes stored memory knowledge from experiential memory knowledge.

Before moving on, we will distinguish between three forms of memory, which can be picked out linguistically. Consider,

1. John remembers the 13th floor of the Hesburgh Library.
2. John remembers reading philosophy books on the 13th floor of the Hesburgh Library.
3. John remembers that the philosophy books were held on the 13th floor of the Hesburgh Library.

In sentences 1 and 2 the verb “remember” takes as its complement a direct object. In (1), the direct object is a kind of physical object, the thirteenth floor of the Hesburgh Library. In (2), the direct object is an event: reading philosophy books on the 13th floor of the Hesburgh Library. We can call these cases of remembering, respectively, *object memory* and *event memory*. In (3), on the other hand, the verb “remember” takes a that-clause for its complement. Here John is described not as having object or event memory but as having *propositional memory*. These three types of memory will help us evaluate the prospects of a disjunctivist account of memory knowledge.

1. **Experiential Memory Knowledge and the Parity Thesis**
   1. *Pritchard on the Core Thesis*

In this section, we consider the prospects for establishing a disjunctivist account of experiential memory knowledge along Pritchardean lines. Recall his Core Thesis:

In paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge an agent, *S*, has perceptual knowledge that Φ in virtue of being in possession of rational support, *R*, for his belief that Φ which is both *factive* (i.e., *R*’s obtaining entails Φ) and *reflectively accessible* to *S*. (Pritchard 2012, 13)

Now consider,

*E-Memory Core Thesis*

In paradigmatic cases of experiential memory knowledge, *S* has experiential memory knowledge that *p* in virtue of being in possession of rational support, *R*, for his belief that *p*, which is both *factive* (i.e., *R*’s obtaining entails *p*) and *reflectively accessible* to *S*.

This claim is the equivalent of Pritchard’s Core Thesis, adapted to the case of experiential memory knowledge.

Are there good grounds for accepting this claim? We think there are. Or rather, we think that arguments analogous to Pritchard’s for the Core Thesis can be given with equal effect for E-Memory Core Thesis. Thus, if Pritchard’s arguments are sufficient to establish epistemological disjunctivism regarding perceptual knowledge, these analogous arguments should be sufficient for establishing epistemological disjunctivism regarding experiential memory knowledge. We will call this claim *the parity thesis*. To prove this thesis, we must first consider Pritchard's case for the Core Thesis. That is the topic of this subsection.

As Pritchard puts it, he aims to

[motivate] epistemological disjunctivism [i.e., the Core Thesis] by showing that this is an attractive position which we should want to hold *if* it were theoretically available, and furthermore showing that it *is* theoretically available, contrary to prevailing conventional wisdom in epistemology. (2012: 19)

Why should we want to hold epistemological disjunctivism if it is theoretically available? Pritchard provides three reasons. First, he notes that if the Core Thesis were true, it would allow us to understand paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge in a way that respected both internalist and externalist intuitions. On the one hand, paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge would be grounded on reflectively accessible rational support. Whatever grounds we have for our belief would not be beyond our ken. This would respect internalist intuitions. On the other hand, paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge would be grounded on factive, rational support. And this would respect externalist intuitions that stress the necessary connection between truth conducive belief formation and knowledge (cf. Pritchard 2012: 3-5).

Second, Pritchard notes that it is common practice to justify one’s perceptual belief that *p* (or one’s claims to perceptual knowledge that *p*) by appealing to the fact that one sees that *p*. Given this, the default should be to think of our perceptual knowledge that *p* as being rationally supported by our seeing that *p*. If this is correct, then we have strong *prima facie* grounds for accepting the Core Thesis, for we cannot see that *p* unless *p* is true; furthermore, it seems that in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge that *p*, we can know on the basis of reflection alone that we see that *p* (Ibid.: 17).

Third, Pritchard holds that epistemological disjunctivism allows us to deal with radical skepticism in a satisfying way.[[4]](#footnote-4) In particular, epistemological disjunctivism provides an undercutting response to the underdetermination-based skeptical paradox. This paradox arises when we accept the following three claims.

U1. One cannot have rational support that favors one’s belief in an everyday proposition over an incompatible radical skeptical hypothesis.

U2. If *S* knows that *p* and *q* describe incompatible scenarios, and yet *S* lacks a rational basis that favors *p* over *q*, then *S* lacks rationally grounded knowledge that *p*.

U3. One has widespread rationally grounded knowledge.

Accepting epistemological disjunctivism gives us grounds for rejecting U1. Suppose that I have perceptual knowledge that I have hands. Given the Core-Thesis, I have this knowledge in virtue of having factive, reflectively accessible rational support for my belief that I have hands. But given that this rational support is *factive*, it obviously favors believing that I have hands over the skeptical hypothesis that I am a handless brain in a vat (cf. Pritchard 2016: 133-134).

Pritchard’s view is that these considerations provide prima facie reasons for accepting epistemological disjunctivism. So, unless we have good grounds for rejecting epistemological disjunctivism, we should accept it as true.

Of course, many epistemologists think that we have good grounds for rejecting epistemological disjunctivism. Pritchard’s strategy is to survey the most pressing problems for epistemological disjunctivism and show that, after all, these are not sufficient grounds for rejecting the position. The problems that Pritchard identifies are *the access problem, the distinguishability problem,* and *the* *basis problem* (cf. Pritchard 2012: 19-22 ; Pritchard 2016: 127-132).

In brief, the access problem arises from the claim that we have perceptual knowledge in virtue of having rational support that is reflectively accessible. But if we can know by reflection alone that we see that *p*, and by reflection alone that if we see that *p* then *p*, then it seems that we could know by reflection alone that *p*, where *p* is some empirical fact. Thus, the Core Thesis implies that we can by reflection alone have empirical knowledge, which is incorrect.

The distinguishability problem starts from the idea that we are not able to distinguish illusory or hallucinatory states from states of seeing that *p* by reflection alone. But if the Core Thesis is true, then this shouldn’t be the case; we are able to know by reflection alone that we see that *p*. And if this is true, then we should be able to deduce that we are not in an illusory or hallucinatory state. Thus, contrary to the initial hypothesis, we can distinguish by reflection alone illusory or hallucinatory states from states of seeing that *p*.

Finally, the basis problem arises because it seems that to see that p is not only factive, but *epistemic*. That is, it seems that seeing that *p* is merely a way of knowing that *p*. But if seeing that *p* is a way of knowing that *p*, then it is hard to see how one could know that *p* in virtue of the rational support one has from seeing that *p*. In this case, one would know that *p* in virtue of the rational support that one has from knowing that *p*, which seems absurd. In the following two sections, we will consider Pritchard’s responses to these problems.

* 1. *Parity Between the Core Thesis and the E-Memory Core Thesis*

Our claim is that arguments analogous to Pritchard’s for the Core Thesis can be given with equal effect for the E-Memory Core Thesis. To see this, start by considering the grounds we possess for finding the E-Memory Core Thesis theoretically attractive. The E-Memory Core Thesis respects internalist and externalist intuitions to the same extent that the Core Thesis does. It claims that just as we have factive, reflectively accessible rational support for our beliefs in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge, we also have it in paradigmatic cases of experiential memory knowledge. If the E-Memory Core Thesis is true, then in paradigmatic cases of experiential memory knowledge, our rational support for our beliefs is not beyond our ken, respecting internalist intuitions. At the same time, our rational support is factive, respecting externalist intuitions that knowledge must be tied to truth conducive belief formation.

Likewise, common practice supports the E-Memory Core Thesis in the same way that common practice supports the Core Thesis. Suppose that you have left your office for lunch, and the question arises as to whether you have locked your office door. (One of your colleagues wants to go in and borrow a book from your desk, but you won’t be returning to your office for a couple of hours). You have purposely left your door unlocked so that your colleague can go by and collect the book, but your colleague has some doubts. (She believes that you are a creature of habit and always lock your door.) In response to your colleague, it would be perfectly natural to say something like the following: “I distinctly remember that I left the door unlocked because I wanted you to be able to get the book.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Part of our common practice in justifying our beliefs about our past actions and experiences is to appeal to the fact that we remember that we did such and such.

Furthermore, “remember that” just like “see that” is factive.[[6]](#footnote-6) i.e., you cannot remember that *p*, unless *p*. You cannot remember that you left the door unlocked, unless as a matter of fact you left the door unlocked. On top of this, in paradigmatic cases of experiential memory knowledge, the fact that one remembers that *p* is reflectively accessible. Take for example one’s experiential memory knowledge that one did not lock one’s office door. Presumably, in such a case, one can know that one remembers this without obtaining further information, (e.g. double checking that the door is in fact unlocked). Rather, one’s knowledge that one remembers that one left the door unlocked is the result of reflection. If this is correct, then we have strong prima facie grounds for accepting the E-Memory Core Thesis.

Finally, the E-Memory Core Thesis gives us grounds for rejecting certain forms of radical skepticism about the past. Consider the following Underdetermination-based skeptical paradox regarding our past.

U1. One cannot have rational support that favors one’s belief in an everyday proposition about their personal history over an incompatible radical skeptical hypothesis, (e.g. that the world is five minutes old, and all of one’s memories of events prior to this time are illusory).

U2. If *S* knows that *p* and *q* describe incompatible scenarios, and yet *S* lacks a rational basis that favors *p* over *q*, then *S* lacks rationally grounded knowledge that *p*.

U3. One has widespread rationally grounded knowledge about their personal history.

Given the E-Memory Core Thesis, if I have paradigmatic experiential memory knowledge that I bicycled to work this morning, then I know this in virtue of having factive reflectively accessible rational support for my belief. And since this rational support is factive it obviously favors my believing that I bicycled to work this morning over the skeptical hypothesis that the world is five minutes old.[[7]](#footnote-7)

In these ways, then, we can see that there is a parity between Pritchard’s Core Thesis and the E-Memory Core Thesis. The same kinds of considerations that provide prima facie reason for accepting the Core Thesis also provide prima facie reason for accepting the E-Memory Core Thesis. This brings us to the question of whether the grounds for rejecting the E-Memory Core Thesis and the Core Thesis are the same. To answer this question we start by looking at the problems facing the Core Thesis: the access problem, the distinguishability problem, and the basis problem.

Plausibly all three of these problems for the Core Thesis have analogues for the E-Memory Core Thesis. So, for example, we can formulate a version of the access problem as follows: if the E-Memory Core Thesis is correct, then it seems that one could, on the basis of reflection alone, know that some contingent event took place in the past; but this is false. Therefore, the E-Memory Core Thesis is false. Likewise, we can formulate a version of the discriminability problem as follows: prima facie, we cannot distinguish between states of remembering that something is the case (veridical memory experiences), from illusory or hallucinatory memory experiences. But if the E-Memory Core Thesis is true, then we should be able to do so. Therefore, the E-Memory Core Thesis is false. Finally, we can formulate a version of the basis problem in the following terms. Remembering that *p* is merely a way of knowing that *p*. (E.g. remembering that one bicycled to work this morning is merely a way of knowing that one bicycled to work this morning). But if remembering that *p* is a way of knowing that *p*, then it is hard to see how one could know that *p* in virtue of the rational support one has from remembering that *p*. In this case, one would know that *p* in virtue of the rational support that one has from knowing that *p*, which seems absurd.

Our claim is that while there are analogues to the access, distinguishability, and basis problem for the E-Memory Core Thesis, these problems are no more of a barrier for accepting the E-Memory Core Thesis than the original problems are for accepting the Core Thesis. Consider first the access problem and the distinguishability problem. They arise for the Core Thesis, not because it is a thesis about *perceptual knowledge* in particular, but because it claims that we can have factive and reflectively accessible reasons for believing contingent truths. The E-Memory Core Thesis makes a similar claim, which is why versions of the access problem and the distinguishability problem arise for the E-Memory Core Thesis. But just as these problems are not particular problems for perceptual knowledge, neither are Pritchard’s solutions to these problems particular to perceptual knowledge.

For example, consider Pritchard’s reply to the access problem. He argues that all that the Core Thesis implies is that one can have knowledge that one sees that *p* by reflection alone in just those cases in which one *already* has paradigmatic perceptual knowledge that *p*. But this claim is not so absurd since it does not allow that one could *come to know* that *p* on the basis of reflection alone (cf. Pritchard 2012: 50-52; Pritchard 2016: 130). Mutatis mutandis, this same solution could be given to the problem as it arises for experiential memory knowledge. The E-Memory Core Thesis only implies that one can have reflective knowledge that e.g. one bicycled to work today, when one *already* has experiential memory knowledge that one bicycled to work today. It does not allow that one could *come to know* that one bicycled to work today on the basis of reflection alone.

Likewise, Pritchard’s way of dealing with the distinguishability problem relies on nothing that is particular to perceptual knowledge. Simplifying things, we can understand Pritchard’s response to the distinguishability problem as follows. He grants that we cannot *discriminate* between cases of seeing that *p* from cases of illusion and hallucination on the grounds given to us by perception. We are, after all, likely to fall into the grips of an illusion. But this does not imply that in good cases we cannot know that we see that *p* instead of merely seeming to see that *p*. While it is true that we cannot *discriminate* between cases of seeing that *p* and cases of illusion and hallucination just on perceptual grounds, we can in some sense distinguish between these states (cf. Pritchard 2012: 96; Pritchard 2016: 131-132). Mutatis mutandis, the same solution can be given to the distinguishability problem for experiential memory knowledge. It can be admitted that we cannot discriminate between veridical memory experiences from non-veridical experiences on the mere basis of our memory experiences, but we can, in the good case know that we are in the good case and not in the bad one.

* 1. *A Potential Disparity: The Basis Problem*

Things are slightly different with the basis problem. The original basis problem for the Core Thesis arises because the following seems to be true.

*Visual Entailment Thesis:* If *S* sees that *p*, then *S* knows that *p*.

It is possible that the basis problem arises for the Core Thesis because of particularities regarding the notion of “seeing that *p*”.

The basis problem the E-Memory Core Thesis arises because the following seems true.

*Memory Entailment Thesis*: If *S* remembers that *p*, then *S* knows that *p*.

As a result, it is possible that the basis problem for the E-Memory Core Thesis arises from particularities regarding the notion of “remembering that” that are not present with “seeing that”. If this is true, then solutions to the basis problem for the Core Thesis might not work for the E-Memory Core Thesis.

Despite this abstract possibility, it seems that responses to the basis problem for the E-Memory Core Thesis, in fact, can run parallel to responses to the basis problem for Pritchard’s Core Thesis. So, for example, Pritchard tries to solve the basis problem by attacking the visual entailment thesis. He thinks there are cases in which one sees that *p* without knowing that *p*. His cases involve a person whose perceptual faculties are working properly in the appropriate sort of environment (and so one sees that *p*), but the person has either the false belief that their faculties are *not* working properly or the false belief that they are *not* in the appropriate environment. He would thereby fail to know that *p* (see Pritchard 2012: 26-28; Pritchard 2016: 127-128).

A similar strategy could be used to solve the basis problem for the E-Memory Core Thesis. Bernecker (2010: 74–88) thinks there are cases in which one remembers that *p* without knowing that *p*. His cases involve a person whose memory faculties produce a thought that *p* (and so one remembers that *p*) but the person fails either to believe *p*, have a justified belief that *p*, or not be in a Gettier situation with respect to *p*. He would thereby fail to know that *p*. Now, despite the broad similarities in Pritchard’s and Bernecker’s arguments against their respective entailment theses, we admit that differences in the details allow for potential disparities.[[8]](#footnote-8) Does this undermine our parity thesis? No, because we will show in the following paragraphs that a solution to the two basis problems do not depend on the falsity of the entailment theses.

The basis problem for the Core Thesis assumes that paradigmatic rational support for visual knowledge that *p* is seeing that *p*. However, as Craig French (2016) insightfully notes, Pritchard’s Core Thesis is silent about what the rational support is. While Pritchard himself holds that seeing that *x* is *F* provides the rational support for believing that *x* is *F*, this is not the only plausible candidate. Perhaps, as French suggests, it is not *seeing that x is F*, but *seeing an F-object*. Suppose, using French’s example, you have paradigmatic perceptual knowledge that a particular lemon is yellow. On his view, you have this knowledge in virtue of the factive reflectively accessible rational support you receive from *seeing a yellow lemon*. Likewise, in the case of perceptual knowledge of an event occurring, perhaps it is not *seeing that x is A-ing*, but seeing *X A-ing* that provides one’s rational support. Suppose you have paradigmatic perceptual knowledge that someone is running down your hallway. On the view under examination, you have factive reflectively accessible rational support from *seeing someone running down one’s hallway*. *Seeing an F-object* and *seeing an x A-ing* do not entail knowing, respectively, that *x* is *F* and that *x* is *A*-ing, and so the basis problem is avoided. One can see a yellow lemon without knowing that the lemon is yellow; likewise, one can see someone running down their hallway without not knowing that someone is running down their hallway.

This view is in line with the common practice of justifying one’s beliefs and claims to knowledge by appealing to the fact that one has seen the relevant kind of object or event. How do I know that a particular lemon is yellow? A natural response is to say that I see it (the yellow lemon). How do I know that someone is running down my hallway? A natural response is to say that I see someone running down my hallway. The view fits with common linguistic practice.

This view also supports internalist intuitions. On this view, it is plausible that the rational support for our paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge – e.g., that we see a yellow lemon – can be known by reflection alone.

The view also supports externalist intuitions. On this view, it is plausible that seeing an F-object entails that there is an F-object, and seeing an *x* *A*-ing entails that that there is an *x* *A*-ing. But if this is the case, then we can understand seeing an F-object as being factive, in the sense that if seeing an F-object is one’s rational support for believing that there is an F-object, then one’s rational support guarantees the truth of one’s belief.[[9]](#footnote-9) [[10]](#footnote-10)

Now, the E-Memory Core Thesis also fails to specify exactly what provides factive, reflectively accessible rational support in paradigmatic cases of experiential memory knowledge. Our claim is that a view analogous to French’s is available for a disjunctivist account of experiential memory knowledge. Just as it is possible to see a yellow lemon or to see someone running down one’s hall, it is also possible to remember a yellow lemon (object memory) or to remember someone running down one’s hall (event memory). And just as it is common practice to appeal to seeing F-objects in order to justify the relevant belief, so too it is common practice to appeal to remembering F-objects in order to justify the relevant belief. So, I might justify the claim that a particular lemon was yellow by saying that I remember a yellow lemon; likewise, I might justify the claim that someone was running down my hallway by saying that I remember someone running down my hallway. So, instead of appealing to propositional memory as what provides rational support for our experiential memory knowledge, perhaps we should instead appeal to object memory and event memory.

Plausibly, in paradigmatic cases of experiential memory knowledge, one can know by reflection alone that one remembers the relevant object or event. That is, in paradigmatic cases of experiential memory knowledge, one does not need more information than what one already possesses to know that one remembers the object or event. So, for example, in the case in which you have experiential memory knowledge that you left your door unlocked for your colleague, you don’t need to receive further information in order to know that you remember *leaving your door unlocked*.

This view seems to affirms the factivity component of the E-Memory Core Thesis. Plausibly, one cannot remember a yellow lemon unless the lemon was yellow; one cannot remember someone running down their hallway, unless someone was running down their hallway. So object and event memory are relational. In this way, they can also serve as factive rational support for the relevant belief.[[11]](#footnote-11)

* 1. *The Parity Thesis Vindicated*

We have strong grounds for accepting the parity thesis. First, every kind of consideration that gives us prima facie reason for accepting the Core Thesis also gives us prima facie reason for accepting the E-Memory Core Thesis. Second, the analogous problems for the Core Thesis and the E-Memory Core Thesis can be solved in analogous ways.

Of course, this does not show that there are no additional problems that arise only for the E-Memory Core Thesis. To see this, consider that Pritchard hasn’t proven that the only possible problems for the Core Thesis are the access, distinguishability, and basis problems. It is just that there are no further obvious problems for the view. As a result, we take it that the parity thesis stands.

To sum up, the analogies between seeing and remembering are such that we should expect the Pritchardean case for a disjunctivist account of experiential memory knowledge to be as plausible as the Pritchardean case for a disjunctivist account of perceptual knowledge.

1. **Stored Memory Knowledge and the Parity Thesis**
   1. *Stored Memory Knowledge*

Having discussed the prospects of establishing a disjunctive account of *experiential* memory knowledge on Pritchardean lines, we now consider the prospects for a disjunctivist account of *stored* memory knowledge. Consider the following claim.

S-Memory Core Thesis: In paradigmatic cases of stored memory knowledge an agent, *S*, has stored memory knowledge that *p* in virtue of being in possession of rational support, *R*, for his belief that *p* which is both *factive* (i.e., *R*’s obtaining entails *p*) and *reflectively accessible* to *S*.

We think that there are good grounds for rejecting any parity thesis between S-Memory Core Thesis and the Core Thesis. Whereas there are no obvious undealt with objections to either the Core Thesis and E-Memory Core, there are serious undealt with objections to S-Memory Core. In fact, we think these objections show S-Memory Core to be false.

Stored memory knowledge is typically derived from another source, such as perception, testimony, deductive inference, experiential memory, etc. By perception, Michael comes to know that the snow is white. Later on, even when his mind is focused on other things, he continues to have stored memory knowledge that snow is white. By testimony, Sam comes to know that everyone is meeting to read a paper next Friday. Later in the day, even when his mind is focused on other things, he has stored memory knowledge that everyone is meeting to read a paper next Friday.

A person’s stored memory knowledge will either be noninferential or inferential. If it is inferential, it will be either deductive inference or nondeductive inference. We will consider whether, in each of these three options – noninferential, deductive inference, and nondeductive inference – a person’s stored memory knowledge has factive, reflectively accessible support. The result will be that only in one of the options – deductively inferred, stored memory knowledge – can there be factive, reflectively accessible support.

* 1. *Noninferential Stored Memory Knowledge*

Let us begin by considering noninferential, stored memory knowledge. Such knowledge often has its origin in a non-memorial source. For example, if pressed as to why he believes that snow is white, Michael is likely to appeal to his perception; he has seen that snow is white or he has seen white snow. He might also appeal to his memory; he remembers that snow is white or he remembers white snow. So, he will tell his interlocutor that he believes that snow is white either because he has seen that snow is white (or has seen white snow) *or* because he remembers that snow is white (or snow being white).

Here is the problem.[[12]](#footnote-12) It seems that there is no good candidate for what will be the reflectively accessible, factive rational support for this stored memory knowledge. Since Michael does not *currently* see the white snow, he cannot appeal to his seeing the white snow or his seeing that snow is white; neither seeings can be his reflectively accessible, factive rational support. They are factive, but they are not reflectively accessible.

The rational support must therefore be either his *remembering* snow being white or his *remembering* that snow is white. But these are also not good candidates. Note that much of our stored knowledge is unconscious; Michael might even be taking a nap! During his dreamless nap, Michael is not remembering snow being white. This is because Michael is not having any experiences as he dreamlessly sleeps; he isn’t remembering anything at the moment. Neither can Michael’s rational support be his remembering *that* snow is white. Remembering that *p entails* belief that *p*; belief is a component of the remembering.[[13]](#footnote-13) Hence, given the plausible thesis that rational support is irreflexive, remembering that snow is white cannot be the rational support for believing that snow is white.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Notice that what we have said about stored memory knowledge with an original source in perception will apply to other sources of basic belief: introspection, a priori intuition, moral intuition, etc. I may first come to believe *I feel pain* or *1+1=2* or *gratuitous suffering is bad* by way of seeing these facts. Later, I continue to know these facts when I dreamlessly sleep. But there seems to be no reflectively accessible, factive rational support for these beliefs *at* these later times.

Given this, the S-Memory Core Thesis fails. We have paradigmatic instances of stored memory knowledge that we do not have in virtue of having factive reflectively accessible rational support.

* 1. *Inferential Stored Memory Knowledge*

Let us consider a case of deductive inference. Suppose Chris knows via testimony that Joyce is either at the party or at home; he then learns via perception that Joyce is not at home; he deductively infers that Joyce is at the party. Chris then falls into dreamless sleep. At this later time, Chris *does* have reflectively accessible rational support for his belief that Joyce is at the party: his knowledge that Joyce is either at the party or at home and his knowledge that Joyce is not at home. Furthermore, both instances of knowledge entail that Joyce is at the party, so the rational support is factive.[[15]](#footnote-15) So, we think that cases of stored memory knowledge that has its origin in deductive inference is not a problem for S-Memory Core Thesis.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Things are different with nondeductive inference. Plausibly, inductive knowledge can also be stored knowledge. Consider inductive knowledge that is based on an *ampliative inference*, which involves premises that do not entail their conclusion. Presumably, much of our everyday and scientific knowledge rests on ampliative inference. Suppose Josh knows that he has mice in his kitchen on the basis of seeing the usual symptoms of a mouse infestation: droppings, tracks, and signs of gnawing. It is natural to think of Josh as inferring, from the fact that he sees the various symptoms, that there are mice in his kitchen. Of course, Josh’s seeing droppings, tracks, and signs of gnawing does not entail that there are mice in his kitchen. So Josh’s knowledge that he has mice in his kitchen rests on an ampliative inference. If pressed as to why he believes that he has mice in his kitchen, Josh will appeal to his seeing the symptoms of a mouse infestation. This inductive knowledge can also become stored memory knowledge.

This is a problem for S-Memory Core. Josh does not possess his initial inductive knowledge in virtue of possessing *factive* rational support since his support does not entail the truth of his belief. But then, when this knowledge becomes stored, his rational support will *still* only make his belief probable and not entail the truth of his belief. So, this standard case of stored memory knowledge, originally arrived at by induction, counts as a counterexample to S-Memory Core.

One might object by claiming that before Josh gained his inductive knowledge, he lacked factive rational support for his belief, but after he gained this knowledge, he acquired factive rational support for it.[[17]](#footnote-17) In this case, while Josh does not have inductive knowledge in virtue of having factive rational support, Josh could have stored knowledge in virtue of possessing factive rational support. However, on the plausible assumption that rational support is irreflexive, there simply is no good candidate for what that rational support might be. Note that, when pressed as to why he believes that he has mice in his kitchen, Josh is likely to appeal to the various symptoms of mice infestation that he has seen. But this is to appeal to the same non-factive rational support he had when he first formed his belief. So our common linguistic practice does not provide a clue as to where the new, factive rational support is supposed to come from.

Furthermore, the objection implies that we *gain* rational support for our inductive knowledge once it becomes stored memory knowledge. This is odd. Suppose at 9:00 am, Josh sees the symptoms of mice infestation, and at 9:01 he makes the relevant inference, and so comes to know that he has mice in his kitchen. Suppose that Josh receives no more information bearing on the question of whether he has mice in his kitchen throughout the day, but his knowledge that he has mice in his kitchen becomes part of his stored memory knowledge. To claim that Josh now has *more* rational support for his belief that there are mice in his kitchen than he did at 9:00 am is absurd. If there is any change in the rational support for Josh’s belief, it seems that, given the fallibility of memory, Josh would *lose* rational support for his belief, not gain it. Given that we can have paradigmatic instances of stored memory knowledge that have their source in non-deductive inference, the S-Memory Core thesis fails.

1. **Conclusion**

In this paper, we distinguished between two sorts of propositional memory knowledge: experiential memory knowledge and stored memory knowledge. In the case of experiential memory knowledge, we argued for the parity thesis: the prospects for a disjunctivist account of experiential memory knowledge are as good (or roughly as good) as the prospects for a disjunctivist account of perceptual knowledge. In the case of stored memory knowledge, we denied this. There are good reasons for believing that a disjunctivist account of stored memory knowledge fails. On the one hand, there are paradigmatic cases of stored memory knowledge in which one lacks rational support for the relevant beliefs (not to mention factive, reflectively accessible rational support!). On the other hand, even if one were always to possess stored memory knowledge in virtue of having rational support, there are paradigmatic cases of stored memory knowledge that would lack *factive* rational support (those instances of memory that have their source in inductive inference). Either way, we should reject the parity thesis for stored memory knowledge.

Two results of this paper are worth stressing. The first is that Pritchard’s style of disjunctivism is *applicable* beyond the cases of perceptual knowledge. The second is that there are kinds of knowledge for which it is not applicable. These results call for a potentially fruitful question for the disjunctivist. Is it a merely contingent fact that we possess certain kinds of knowledge in virtue of possessing factive, reflectively accessible rational support and certain other kinds of knowledge without it? Could it have been the case that we possess e.g. paradigmatic perceptual knowledge without having factive reflectively accessible rational support? Or is there something special about the role of perceptual knowledge or experiential memory knowledge, as opposed to stored memory knowledge, that explains why this is the case? Providing an answer to these questions will help us to better understand epistemological disjunctivism.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**References**

Bernecker, Sven 2008, *The Metaphysics of Memory*. Dordrecht: Springer.

\_\_\_\_ 2010, *Memory: A Philosophical Study*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Brown, Jessica, 2018, *Fallibilism: Evidence and Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

French, Craig 2016, The formulation of epistemological disjunctivism, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 92: 86 –104.

McDowell, John 1998a, Criteria, defeasibility, and knowledge, in his *Meaning Knowledge and Reality*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 369-394.

\_\_\_\_ 1998b, Knowledge and the internal’ in his *Meaning Knowledge and Reality*.Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 395-413.

\_\_\_\_ 1998c, Knowledge by hearsay, in his *Meaning Knowledge and Reality*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 414-443.

Moon, Andrew 2012, Knowing without evidence, *Mind* 121: 309-31.

\_\_\_\_ 2013, Remembering entails knowing, *Synthese* 190: 2717–2729.

\_\_\_\_ 2017, Skepticism and memory, in Sven Bernecker and Kourken Michaelianeds., *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory*. New York: Routledge, pp. 335–347.

\_\_\_\_ forthcoming, All evidential basing is phenomenal basing, in P. Bondy and J.A. Cartereds., *The Epistemic Basing Relation*. New York: Routledge.

Pritchard, Duncan 2012, *Epistemological Disjunctivism* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

\_\_\_\_ 2016, *Epistemic Angst: Radical Skepticism and the Groundlessness of our Believing* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Schwarz, Arieh, Memory and disjunctivism, *Essay in Philosophy* 19:2 (Essay 4).

Williamson, Timothy, 2000 *Knowledge and Its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1. One might wonder how this claim is at the core of epistemological *disjunctivism*. The answer is this. It follows from Pritchard’s core thesis that the reflectively accessible rational support we possess for our perceptual beliefs is of two kinds. Either it is factive rational support, as in the good case, or it is non-factive rational support, as in the bad case. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As should be clear from the following discussion nothing we say hangs upon the nature of veridical and non-veridical memory experiences. Following Pritchard (2012: 24), we assume throughout this paper that epistemological disjunctivism is logically distinct from metaphysical disjunctivism. For a discussion of memory and metaphysical disjunctivism see Schwarz (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The taxonomy for *memory knowledge* in this section roughly follows Moon (2012, 310–323). See also Chapter 1 of Bernecker (2010) and Moon (2013, 2718–2719). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Pritchard’s views as to how epistemological disjunctivism provides a satisfying response to radical skepticism differs through time. In his (2012) Pritchard takes epistemological disjunctivism to provide the grounds for a satisfying Neo-Moorean response to skepticism. In his (2016) Pritchard rejects, Neo-Moorean responses to skepticism, but holds that epistemological disjunctivism provides the resources for undermining the underdetermination-based skeptical paradox. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Or, alternatively one could naturally say, “I distinctly remember being about to lock the door, but not doing it, because I wanted you to be able to get the book.” This is important for dealing with the basis problem. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For more defense of the factivity of propositional memory, see chapter 8 of Bernecker (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This response to skepticism was not considered for how to close the appearance-reality gap in section 4.1 of Moon (2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. At least one of the authors of this paper – you can guess which one! – thinks that Bernecker fails to show that the memory entailment thesis is false. (See Moon (2013) for a reply to Bernecker’s cases and a general defense of the memory entailment thesis.) Moon’s strategy might apply to Pritchard’s arguments against the visual entailment thesis, although that exploration must await another paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. One might object that object and event seeing are not factive in the relevant sense. Suppose Michelle and Hugh know that the YL-pill causes hallucinations. Hugh takes the YL-pill, and they wait; he hallucinates a yellow lemon. If Michelle asks Hugh, “What do you see?” and Hugh responds, “I see a yellow lemon!” this is natural for him to say. One might conclude that one can see an F-object without there actually being an F-object.

   In reply, retraction data indicates that Hugh’s statement is not meant literally. Were Michelle to say, “But *literally*, you don’t see a yellow lemon,” Hugh would naturally reply, “You’re right, Michelle. Literally, I don’t see a yellow lemon.” This is evidence that the original statement shouldn’t be taken literally. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. We have only presented a partial defense of the sort of view French defends. For a more complete defense, see French (2016: 95–102). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Now, Moon (2017: 346) has denied the relational nature of event memory by pointing out that the following sentence,

    1. “Old man Nelson remembers the fish being *this* big, but he’s certainly wrong”

    does not seem inconsistent. (We can imagine that the fish gets bigger every time he tells the story.) If (1) is consistent, then one can remember the event of an *x* being F even if *x* was not, in fact, F.

    We, including Moon, are inclined to think this is a mistake. We think that expressions of “*S* remembers *x* *A*-ing” are ambiguous between two readings. On one reading, *S* *actually remembers* the event of *x* *A*-ing; on this reading, *S* remembers *x* *A*-ing only if an event of *x* *A*-ing actually occurred. On another reading, *S* *seems to* remember the event of *x* *A*-ing; on this reading, *S* can seem to remember *x* *A*-ing even if there was no event of *x* *A*-ing. *Seeming to remember* should be understood in terms of *actual remembering*; one *seems to remember* *x* *A*-ing if and only if one seems to be in a state in which *one actually remembers* *x* *A*-ing. Our expressions of “*S* remembers *x* *A*-ing” are ambiguous between seeming to remember and actual remembering. And it’s actually remembering *x* *A*-ing that is the factive, reflectively accessible support for the proposition that *x* was *A*. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Here, we are employing Moon’s (2012) argument that one can have knowledge without evidence. His example is an instance of stored memory knowledge that had its origin in *a priori* intuition. See that reference for further exploration and defense of this type of argument. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See Moon (2013) for defense of the claim that remembering entails believing. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. One might argue that rational support is not irreflexive: one’s belief that *p can* be rationally supported by one’s remembering that *p* (which includes one’s believing that *p*). However, this comes at high theoretical costs. First, it is counterintuitive. Second, it would be impossible for one to believe *on the basis* of one’s rational support. This follows from the plausible claims that basing requires causation and that self-causation is impossible. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Although this entailment might not amount to *factivity*, in its ordinary sense, the rational support here entails the truth of the relevant *p*, which is what is required by *S*-Memory Core Thesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. However, despite Fred’s having rational support his belief, there are good reasons to doubt that Fred’s belief can be *based on* that support. See Moon (forthcoming) for a defense of this claim. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Consider for instance, views that take all knowledge that *p* to be evidence that *p* (E.g. Williamson 2005). If we take one’s evidence for *p* to provide one with rational support for believing that *p*, then one will have factive rational support for everything one knows. For criticisms of the view that all knowledge that *p* is evidence that *p* see Jessica Brown (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Thanks to Casey Doyle and Clayton LittleJohn for providing comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Thanks also to the Notre Dame Center for Philosophy of Religion. Both of us were research fellows there during the 2016-2017 academic year when we began working on this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)