

New Issues in Epistemological Disjunctivism

**Edited by Casey Doyle, Joe Milburn,
and Duncan Pritchard**

1 Introduction

*Casey Doyle, Joe Milburn,
and Duncan Pritchard*

Tim Crane pointed out that disjunctivism is “a philosophical doctrine with a name like an eye disease” (2009). Despite its unbeautiful name, debates about disjunctivism are at the forefront of contemporary analytic philosophy. Varieties of disjunctivism have been advanced and contested in the theory of knowledge, philosophy of perception, philosophy of action, and philosophy of reasons and rationality. Although it was perhaps once common to refer to disjunctivism as a single position, whose main exponents included J. M. Hinton, Paul Snowdon, John McDowell, M.G.F. Martin, and John Campbell, it is now more common to distinguish at least two species of disjunctivism: metaphysical and epistemological disjunctivism.

Metaphysical disjunctivism is a thesis about the nature of perceptual *experience*. Many different formulations of metaphysical disjunctivism can be found in the literature (see Soteriou 2009 for a helpful overview). The weakest formulation holds that veridical perceptual experiences and hallucinations differ mentally in some important respect. Naïve Realists are committed to metaphysical disjunctivism (Martin 2004; Snowdon 2005) and much discussion has focused on evaluating the prospects of naïve realism by considering the truth of metaphysical disjunctivism. By contrast, epistemological disjunctivism is a thesis about the nature of perceptual *knowledge*, and in particular the kind of support that perceptual experience provides. In its weakest formulation, epistemological disjunctivism denies that veridical perceptual experiences and hallucinations provide the same support for perceptual beliefs. It holds that, in the right circumstances, veridical perceptual experience can provide *better* support for beliefs than hallucinations. The two most prominent defenders of epistemological disjunctivism—John McDowell and Duncan Pritchard—hold that perceptual experience provides factive, indefeasible, or falsity-inconsistent reasons for belief, as it is variously put, and these reasons are reflectively accessible to the subject. In the terminology of the Oxford Realists, veridical perceptual experience provides “proof” rather than evidence.

This is the first collection of essays dedicated to epistemological disjunctivism. A central aim of this volume is to broaden the discussion by

2 Casey Doyle et al.

considering epistemological disjunctivism in the context of other issues in epistemology and philosophy of mind. It considers historical precedents of the view, presents the state of the art in discussions of epistemological disjunctivism as an account of perceptual knowledge, and explores disjunctivist treatments of other domains of knowledge, such as memory, testimony, introspection, and knowledge of other minds. In this introduction we provide some background on the view and the relation between epistemological disjunctivism and metaphysical disjunctivism before offering brief summaries of each contribution.

1. Epistemological Disjunctivism

A range of views might rightfully receive the label *epistemological disjunctivism*. As mentioned earlier, any view claiming that veridical experience gives us better rational support than subjectively indistinguishable illusory or hallucinatory experience can be considered a weak form of epistemological disjunctivism. In what follows, however, we focus on epistemological disjunctivism as it figures in the work of John McDowell and Duncan Pritchard, as these are its two most prominent defenders in the literature.

According to Pritchard,

Epistemological disjunctivism is the view that in paradigm cases of perceptual knowledge the knowledge in question enjoys a rational support that is both *factive* and *reflectively accessible*. In particular, it is the view that when one has perceptual knowledge in such cases, the reflectively accessible rational support one has for one's knowledge that p is that one *sees that* p .

(2016: 124, emphasis in original)

To say that one has factive rational support in paradigm cases of perceptual knowledge is to say that the rational support one possesses is truth-guaranteeing. One cannot have factive rational support for believing that p , unless p is true. To say that one's rational support is reflectively accessible is to say that one can know by reflection alone that one possesses this rational support. The epistemological disjunctivist, then, holds that in paradigm cases of perceptual knowledge one has rational support for one's perceptual knowledge that is both factive and reflectively accessible. Pritchard's version of epistemological disjunctivism takes this rational support to be the fact that one sees that p . In this case, the rational support provided by our perceptual experience is of two kinds. Either it is factive and reflectively accessible, as in paradigmatic cases of knowledge, or it is not.

In motivating epistemological disjunctivism, Pritchard focuses on the benefits of accepting the view, as opposed to the disadvantages of accepting an alternative. According to Pritchard, epistemological disjunctivism

provides a new approach to perceptual knowledge. Normally, views of perceptual knowledge can be classified either as internalist or externalist. Internalist theories require that knowledge is grounded on reflectively accessible rational support; externalist theories, on the other hand, require that knowledge be grounded on truth-conducive processes of belief formation.

By making perceptual knowledge depend on reflectively accessible rational support, epistemological disjunctivism respects the internalist insight that knowledge is an achievement for which we are in part responsible. By making knowledge depend on factive support, at the same time it respects the externalist insight that our grounds for knowledge must make our knowledge reliable. By integrating internalist and externalist components, epistemological disjunctivism represents “a holy grail” for theories of perceptual knowledge (Pritchard 2012: 1–4). Furthermore, in Pritchard’s view, epistemological disjunctivism respects common sense and gives us the means to provide a satisfactory response to skepticism (see Pritchard 2012: 17–18, 131–135, 2016: 132–136). Given all this, if epistemological disjunctivism is an available position, we should accept it. Showing that it is an available position is a matter of removing standing objections to the view. So Pritchard’s argument for epistemological disjunctivism consists in large part in arguing that there is no good reason to reject it (Pritchard 2012: 18).

Pritchard presents three standing problems for epistemological disjunctivism and the solution to these problems. First, there is the basis problem. Many philosophers hold that seeing that p is just a way of knowing that p . But if seeing that p is a way of knowing that p , it does not seem we could have perceptual knowledge in virtue of the rational support that seeing that p affords us. So epistemological disjunctivism fails. Pritchard’s response to this problem is to challenge the idea that seeing that p is simply a way of knowing that p . Pointing to cases in which we possess misleading mental state defeaters, Pritchard argues that we can see that something is the case, even when we fail to know that it is the case (see Pritchard 2012: 21, 26–28; Pritchard 2016: 127–128).

Second, there is the access problem. Epistemological disjunctivists hold that we can know that we see that p by reflection alone. But we can also know by reflection alone that if we see that p , then p . So it seems that if epistemological disjunctivism is true, then we should be able to know, by reflection alone, various facts about our environment, which is absurd. Pritchard’s response to this problem, roughly, is to deny that one can know by reflection alone that one sees that p , if one does not already have perceptual knowledge that p . The epistemological disjunctivist is committed only to the idea that in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge, one can know by reflection alone that one sees that p (see Pritchard 2012: 20, 50–52; Pritchard 2016: 129–130).

Finally, there is the distinguishability problem. According to epistemological disjunctivism, if one has paradigmatic perceptual knowledge that p , then one can know by reflection alone that one sees that p . But this seems to imply that in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge, one is able by reflection alone to distinguish between good cases, in which one has perceptual knowledge, and corresponding bad cases, in which appearances are the same but misleading. But this seems wrong. After all, we are liable to fall into error when we are in the bad case. Pritchard's response to the distinguishability problem is to argue that in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge that p , while we know reflectively that we see that p , and so in some way are able to distinguish good cases from bad cases, this does not imply that we are able to *discriminate* between good and bad cases. Thus, while it is a commitment of epistemological disjunctivism that when one is in the good case, they can know by reflection that they are in the good case and not in the bad case, epistemological disjunctivism is in no way committed to the idea that we could somehow know in the bad case that we are in the bad case. Pritchard puts this by saying that in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge, we have favoring grounds for believing that we see that p instead of merely seeming to see that p , as opposed to discriminating grounds. So while we can know reflectively that we are in the good case when we are in the good case, and so in some sense distinguish the good case from the bad, we cannot discriminate between good and bad cases (see Pritchard 2012: 21, 96–97; Pritchard 2016: 132).

Whereas Pritchard motivates epistemological disjunctivism by appeal to its theoretical benefits, John McDowell presents his disjunctivism as an alternative to what he takes to be a seductive but ultimately incoherent view of empirical knowledge. To understand McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism, it is helpful to focus on two closely related features of his thought. The first is McDowell's disjunctive account of appearances or seemings. The second is his criticism of "hybrid conceptions of knowledge".

McDowell gives voice to a disjunctive account of appearances or seemings in various papers. For instance, in "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge", he makes the claim that "an appearance that such-and-such is the case can be *either* a mere appearance *or* the fact that such-and-such is the case making itself perceptually manifest to someone" (1998a: 386–387, emphasis in original). Elsewhere, McDowell states, "Of facts to the effect that things seem thus and so to one, we might say, some are cases of things being thus and so within the reach of one's subjective access to the external world, whereas others are mere appearances" (1998d: 241). And again, "an appearance is *either* a case of things being thus and so in a way that is manifest to the subject *or* a case of its merely seeming to the subject that that is how things are" (2010: 244, emphasis in original).

McDowell's disjunctive account of seemings or appearances is supposed to present an alternative to a view on which appearances always "fall short of the fact" (cf. McDowell 1998a: 387). If appearances always fall short of the fact, then whenever one is in a mental state in which it seems to them that things are thus and so, it is possible that the world is otherwise. He writes:

The idea of a fact [making itself perceptually manifest to someone] is in itself purely negative; it rejects the thesis that what is accessible to experience falls short of the fact in the sense I explained, namely, that of being consistent with there being no such fact.

(1998a: 387)

On McDowell's disjunctive account of appearances, at least some mental states of it seeming to one that things are thus and so are such that being in them is a sufficient condition for things actually being thus and so; some appearances are factive.

The disjunctive account of appearances serves as an alternative to what McDowell calls "a fully Cartesian view of subjectivity" (McDowell 1998d: 236). On this fully Cartesian view, "there are no facts about the inner realm besides what is infallibly accessible" for the subject (Ibid.: 241). If the fully Cartesian view is correct, a subject runs no risk of making a mistake about how things stand in the subjective realm; she cannot mistake herself to be in one subjective state when she is in another. McDowell holds that the Cartesian view of our subjectivity obscures not only how we could have perceptual knowledge of the objective world, but how we could even have appearances that purport to be about our objective environment (McDowell 1998d: 243). By endorsing the disjunctive conception of appearances, McDowell rejects the Cartesian idea that transparency is a mark of the subjective. No subject is infallible as to whether a fact concerning her objective environment is being made perceptually manifest to her. We are liable to perceptual error. Nevertheless, McDowell holds that when facts concerning one's environment make themselves manifest to one's subjectivity, this is itself a fact about one's subjectivity. We need not, and should not, understand such an event as factoring into an independent subjective component (how things appear to the subject) and an independent objective component (how things stand in the subject's environment). Rather, we should allow that certain facts about one's environment are implied by certain facts about one's subjectivity.

Intuitively, there is a close connection between a disjunctive account of appearances and epistemological disjunctivism. However, there is good reason for suspecting that McDowell thinks that adopting a disjunctive account of appearances is insufficient for adopting the latter. On McDowell's telling, ancient skepticism, as opposed to modern

Cartesian skepticism, accepted a disjunctive account of appearances but called into question the idea that possessing either kind of appearance could allow one to have knowledge (McDowell 1998d: 241). But the ancient skeptic is clearly not an *epistemological* disjunctivist. So, while adopting a disjunctive account of appearances might be a necessary condition for accepting epistemological disjunctivism, it certainly is not a sufficient one.

To understand how McDowell fits disjunctivism about appearances into a version of epistemological disjunctivism, it is useful to focus on his criticisms of “hybrid conceptions of knowledge”. Hybrid conceptions of knowledge hold that “knowledge is a standing in the logical space of reasons”. That is, they hold that knowing that p involves being able to justify one’s claim that p (McDowell 1998c: 395, fn). However, they deny that being able to justify one’s claim that p is sufficient for knowing that p . They hold that a standing in the space of reasons can never guarantee the truth of one’s belief. So according to the hybrid account, knowing that p involves both a standing in the space of reasons and something beyond that standing, namely, that one’s belief is true (McDowell 1998c: 400).

Putting aside McDowell’s Sellarsian terminology of the space of reasons, we can say that hybrid accounts of knowledge involve distinct internalist and externalist components. According to hybrid accounts, knowledge minimally involves having doxastic justification for one’s belief, where this involves awareness or knowledge of the grounds of one’s belief. This awareness must be such that one could, if prompted, cite these grounds to justify one’s believing as one does. But, on the hybrid account, meeting this internalist condition is insufficient for knowledge, since one can meet the condition and still fail to believe truly. So there is an externalist condition for knowledge as well, namely, that one’s belief be not only justified, but true. In other words, hybrid conceptions of knowledge are “fallibilist”. While they hold that having reflectively accessible rational support is necessary for knowing, they also hold that this reflectively accessible rational support cannot guarantee the truth of the relevant belief.

McDowell thinks it is necessary to reject a hybrid conception of knowledge. He states:

I think . . . that if we cannot see our way to accepting the Sellarsian idea in full, we should reject it, as in full-blown externalist accounts. It is not a good idea to suppose a satisfactory standing in the space of reasons might be part but not the whole of what knowledge is.
(1998c: 404)

Why is this? McDowell offers a battery of arguments. First, he argues that hybrid conceptions of knowledge allow for accidentally true beliefs to count as knowledge (McDowell 1998b: 403–404). Second, McDowell

argues that hybrid conceptions of knowledge cannot coherently understand knowledge to be a standing in the space of reasons (Ibid.: 402–403). Third, McDowell argues that hybrid conceptions of knowledge fail to explain how knowledge is a cognitive achievement of the knower (1998a: 373–374). Fourth, McDowell argues that hybrid accounts of knowledge are skeptical. He writes:

I do not think anyone has ever given a satisfactory answer to this question: if one acknowledges that one's warrant for believing something leaves open a possibility that things are not as one believes them to be, how does that differ from acknowledging that for all one knows things are not as one believes them to be, so that one does not know them to be that way? I doubt that anyone would go on supposing that a belief based on less than conclusive warrant can be knowledgeable, refusing to be embarrassed by that question, were it not for being unable to envisage any alternative—apart, that is, from explicitly conceding that we ought to be sceptical about the possibility of experience-based knowledge.

(2013: 148)

Finally, McDowell appeals to what might be called “transcendental concerns” in arguing against the hybrid conception of knowledge. He argues that hybrid conceptions of knowledge, like the fully Cartesian view of mind, put into question not only the possibility of having knowledge of the world, but also the possibility of thought being intentionally directed at the world (McDowell 1998b: 408–409).

While McDowell holds that we must reject a hybrid conception of knowledge, he acknowledges that it can seem that it is the only alternative to skepticism or a version of externalism on which knowledge does not involve a standing in the space of reasons. (This comes out in the previous block quotation.) According to McDowell, if we combine the fact that we are incorrigibly fallible believers with a certain conception of the space of reasons—that is, with a certain understanding of how doxastic justification must work—then it will seem that our standing in the space of reasons will never be able to guarantee the truth of our beliefs about the “external world”. What is this conception of the space of reasons? McDowell calls it “the interiorized conception of the space of reasons” (1998c: 404). It holds:

[Reason has] a proper province in which it can be immune to the effects of luck; not in the sense of sheer chance, but in the sense of factors that reason cannot control, or control for. The idea is that reason can ensure that we have only acceptable standings in the space of reasons, without being indebted to the world for favours received; if we exercise reason properly, we cannot arrive at defective standings

in the space of reasons, in a way that could only be explained in terms of the world's unkindness.

(*Ibid.*: 404–405)

This conception of the space of reasons is the epistemological analogue to the fully Cartesian view of the mind. According to it, the only facts that bear on our justification are those that we are not liable to fall into error about, given that we are sufficiently conscientious in making our judgments. The facts relevant to our standing in the space of reasons must be open to our view, though we might need to look closely to see them. Otherwise, we could come to have a defective standing in the space of reasons that *could* only be explained in terms of the world's unkindness.

Accepting the interiorized conception of the space of reasons leads one to accept what McDowell calls the Highest Common Factor conception of experience (cf. McDowell 1998a: 386–394). On this conception of experience, the justifying grounds given to us in cases of veridical experience are the same as those given to us in cases of illusory or hallucinatory experience. Note that the interiorized view of the space of reasons does not allow for the fact that one has a veridical experience to bear on one's justificatory status. We are liable to fall into error about whether our experiences are veridical or not, no matter how conscientious we are in forming our judgments. (It is exactly for this reason that we are liable to fall into error when making perceptual judgments, no matter how conscientious we are.) Thus, on the interiorized conception of the space of reasons, having a veridical experience cannot bear on our standing in the space of reasons. Nor, for similar reasons, can the fact that we are having an illusory or hallucinatory experience. What facts concerning our experience, then, can bear on our standing in the space of reasons? The most plausible candidate will be something like the fact that it appears to us that such and such is the case; plausibly, if we were sufficiently conscientious we would not fall into error in our judgments about *how things appear to us*. But facts about how things appear to us hold the same in cases of veridical experience and in the corresponding cases of illusory and hallucinatory experience. Veridical experience and illusory/hallucinatory experience, then, provide the same justifying grounds for belief.

Similar reasoning will apply to any domain of knowledge for which it makes sense to talk about being deceived by appearances through no fault of one's own. So, for instance, once one accepts the interiorized conception of the space of reasons, one is led to a Highest Common Factor conception of memory or testimony (cf. McDowell 1998c: 397).

Once one accepts the interiorized conception of the space of reasons, and the Highest Common Factor conception of experience (and memory, and testimony, etc.) that goes with it, hybrid conceptions of knowledge seem to be the only alternative either to skepticism or to a brute

externalism regarding knowledge. For on a Highest Common Factor conception of experience (or memory, or testimony), the grounds provided by experience (or memory, or testimony) never guarantee the truth of one's relevant beliefs. In this case, one's options seem to be either to deny that knowledge requires truth-guaranteeing grounds, or to admit a wide-ranging skepticism.

According to McDowell, however, we should reject both the interiorized conception of the space of reasons and the Highest Common Factor conception of experience that it generates. We should allow that we are liable to mistake what grounds we have for our beliefs, while holding fast to the idea that in the good case, when we *have* knowledge, our grounds for belief are truth-guaranteeing.

Once we reject the suspect view of the space of reasons, the disjunctive account of appearances provides us with an alternative view of the grounds we possess for our knowledge. One's knowledge that *p* need not rest on the grounds that it merely seems to one that *p*. Rather, in cases of knowledge one's ground for believing that *p* is the very fact that *p* making itself manifest to one's subjectivity. The disjunctive conception of appearances, then, allows for a view of knowledge in which we possess and are aware of possessing justifying grounds for our beliefs that guarantee the truth of these beliefs.

McDowell's view leaves it open that there may be cases in which we mistakenly take ourselves to have an experience in which a fact makes itself manifest to our subjectivity. In this case, neither do we have perceptual knowledge nor does our experience provide us with justifying grounds that guarantee the truth of our beliefs. On McDowell's view, however, this does not give us reason for calling into question the idea that normally we know that we possess grounds that guarantee the truth of our beliefs. As McDowell states,

Defective exercises of a perceptual capacity can be indiscriminable from non-defective exercises. It is a mistake to infer that even on an occasion on which the capacity is working perfectly, the current exercise of it is, for all one knows, defective.

(2011: 42)

Rather than making this mistaken inference, McDowell would have us consider perceptual knowledge to be the manifestation of a fallible capacity for self-conscious knowledge. When this capacity is fully manifested, one has perceptual knowledge, knowing that one's experience guarantees the truth of one's belief. But this capacity is a fallible capacity. Some of the times the manifestations of the capacity will be defective, resulting not in perceptual knowledge but in merely apparent knowledge. Nevertheless, the fallibility of this capacity does not prevent it from normally being exercised (cf. *Ibid.*: 50–53).

As should be clear, there are important differences between McDowell and Pritchard's formulations of epistemological disjunctivism, but there are also a number of shared characteristics. Both McDowell and Pritchard accept that in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge, one is in a position to provide a reason for their belief that guarantees the truth of this belief. This entails that the reflectively accessible rational grounds or reasons we receive in experience differ in good cases, cases in which we have perceptual knowledge, and in bad cases, cases in which we fail to have knowledge, perhaps due to the fact that we are in the grips of illusory experience.

2. Epistemological and Metaphysical Disjunctivism

As mentioned, early discussions of disjunctivism tended to run together different views and motivations under a single banner. This was unfortunate, because it obscured the different motivations and aims of different versions of disjunctivism, and so made their assessment difficult (Haddock and MacPherson 2008). Recent work has corrected for this by distinguishing between epistemological and metaphysical disjunctivism. While the core commitments of epistemological disjunctivism have been stated in the previous section, we can understand the core commitment of metaphysical disjunctivism as follows.

Metaphysical Disjunctivism, Core Commitment: Veridical perceptual experiences and hallucinations differ mentally in some important respect.

Stronger claims are often made by defenders of metaphysical disjunctivism. For example, some hold that veridical experiences and hallucinations are *fundamentally* different kinds of mental events (Martin 2004, Snowdon 2005). While denying that these events have a common kind, this view is consistent with accepting that veridical experiences and hallucinations share some important properties, such as phenomenal qualities. Others deny even this and insist that veridical perceptual experience and hallucination share no common mental element, sharing only the property of being subjectively indistinguishable (cf. Byrne and Logue 2008 for discussion). What matters for our purposes is the core commitment.

When the distinction between epistemological and metaphysical disjunctivism is made, it is often accompanied by two further claims. The first is that defenders of one form of disjunctivism can remain neutral on the truth of the other (Snowdon 2005; Byrne and Logue 2008: 67; Pritchard 2012: 29; Soteriou 2016). Even if there is some significant, perhaps fundamental, mental difference between perception and hallucination, this needn't be taken to have any immediate epistemological

consequences (cf. the earlier discussion of how, for McDowell, the disjunctive account of appearances is necessary but not sufficient for the epistemological conclusion he wants). Just because the two mental events are different in their *essences*, it doesn't follow that they are different in the *support* they lend to beliefs. (An analogy: claims about the metaphysical differences between zebras and cleverly disguised mules don't have any epistemic upshot when it comes to answering questions about the presence of zebras.) So a metaphysical disjunctivist needn't be an epistemological disjunctivist. Likewise, one might insist that the feature that makes a difference to the kind of support that veridical perceptual experience lends to belief isn't essential or fundamental to the kind of mental event that it is. Thus, one can be an epistemological disjunctivist without being a metaphysical disjunctivist. The second claim is that McDowell, a prominent disjunctivist, accepts epistemological disjunctivism but not metaphysical disjunctivism (Snowdon 2005; Byrne and Logue 2008; Haddock and MacPherson 2008). A theme in many of our contributions is that we should reevaluate one or both of these claims. Let's consider them in turn.

Even if epistemological and metaphysical disjunctivism are *logically* independent, it might be thought that they are dialectically related (Neta 2008, Pritchard 2012: 20). One strategy for relating them runs as follows. Suppose that epistemological disjunctivism is true: veridical perceptual experiences and hallucinations differ in the kind of support they lend to beliefs. That doesn't entail metaphysical disjunctivism. But we can ask: what explains the truth of epistemological disjunctivism? What is it about veridical perceptual experience and hallucination in virtue of which they lend different support to perceptual beliefs? A perfectly natural thought is that the two lend different support because they are different kinds of mental states; they differ epistemically because they differ in some fundamental way. Call this the "Explanatory Connection".

Explanatory Connection: Metaphysical disjunctivism provides the best explanation of the truth of epistemological disjunctivism.

Stephen Wright presses the point by insisting that it is "mysterious how experiences that are metaphysically identical could come apart in terms of providing reasons" (2013: 256). Duncan Pritchard describes the Explanatory Connection as follows:

In a nutshell, the disjunctivist view of the metaphysics of perceptual experience seems to offer the most natural way of explaining why there is this radical epistemic difference in these pairs of cases—viz., the reflectively accessible rational support is different because the very nature of one's experiences is different.

(2012: 24)

While Pritchard mentions the connection and suggests that it is plausible, he does not discuss it in detail. That is because, as mentioned, his discussion of epistemological disjunctivism, like others (Neta 2008), is primarily *defensive*.

On the other hand, denying that there are logical and explanatory connections between epistemological disjunctivism and metaphysical disjunctivism has some obvious benefits. Both are controversial claims beset with serious objections. If the Explanatory Connection is true, then defenders of epistemological disjunctivism must respond to the many objections facing metaphysical disjunctivism. For example, Tyler Burge has alleged that metaphysical disjunctivism is inconsistent with what we know about vision from empirical psychology (2005). In particular, he argues that it is inconsistent with the “Proximal Principle”, which roughly states that any two states of a perceptual system with the same proximal stimulation, internal input, and antecedent psychological states are the same type of perceptual state (2005: 22). Burge charges that metaphysical disjunctivism is committed to rejecting this principle, since it holds that veridical perceptual experience and hallucination are importantly or fundamentally different states despite sharing the three properties the principle mentions. As Bar-On and Johnson point out in their contribution (Chapter 16), the conjunction of the Explanatory Connection and the Proximity Principle spells trouble for epistemological disjunctivism. Their conjunction seems to show that epistemological disjunctivism is committed to an empirically untenable conception of perceptual experience. In her contribution (Chapter 10), Veli Mitova considers another reason to be wary of the Explanatory Connection: accepting both epistemological disjunctivism and metaphysical disjunctivism commits one to a particular conception of our motivating reasons for belief, one which she argues is implausible. While previous work has distinguished epistemological disjunctivism and metaphysical disjunctivism and has emphasized their logical independence, contributors here consider other reasons for and against holding both views together.

The general consensus in the literature, such as it is, is that epistemological disjunctivism and metaphysical disjunctivism are distinct theses and that “disjunctivism” is ambiguous between them. When reading philosophers who embrace disjunctivism, one must ask: which do they accept? Philosophers interested in the nature of perception might accept metaphysical disjunctivism and remain neutral on epistemological disjunctivism (Martin 2004; Snowdon 2005; Fish 2009). Others embrace epistemological disjunctivism and reject metaphysical disjunctivism (Millar 2007, 2008). A common claim in the literature is that McDowell defends epistemological disjunctivism but not metaphysical disjunctivism (Byrne and Logue 2008; Snowdon 2005; Haddock and MacPherson 2008). The contributions from Lockhart (Chapter 5), Sedivy (Chapter 8), Haddock (Chapter 13), and Avramides (Chapter 18)

contest this common reading. On the alternative, developed in different ways in these chapters, McDowell should be read as seeking to restore a commonsense picture of our perceptual relation to the world with both metaphysical and epistemological aspects, which cannot easily be pulled apart. As Sedivy puts it, “McDowell’s work has always emphasized that explaining perception’s objectivity and warrant is a single task”. And, as Avramides emphasizes, McDowell’s work has sought to undermine a Cartesian picture of the mind as a self-standing realm, divorced from the “external world”. The disjunctive conception represents an alternative to the Cartesian picture, and the rejection of this picture brings in its train both epistemological and metaphysical consequences. Our brief overview of McDowell’s disjunctivism in this chapter characterized it in terms of two moves: the proposal of a disjunctive conception of appearances (a metaphysical thesis), which undermines the felt need to endorse a Highest Common Factor conception of the support perception provides (an epistemological thesis). Although they differ in their focus, the chapters here that engage with McDowell’s work reveal that, on his version of disjunctivism, it is a mistake to suppose we can factor out the epistemological and metaphysical motivations for advancing views about perceptual experience.

3. Historical Antecedents and New Applications

In addition to evaluating epistemological disjunctivism on its own and as it relates to metaphysical disjunctivism, our contributors consider disjunctive approaches to other sources of knowledge as well as the historical antecedents of disjunctivism. It is worth pausing to consider the significance of these topics.

As noted earlier, McDowell and Pritchard offer different motivations for epistemological disjunctivism. McDowell’s motivations for epistemological disjunctivism require a disjunctive account of knowledge wherever there is a source of knowledge that depends upon appearances, and these appearances are such that we might be misled by them through no fault of our own. In contrast, Pritchard’s epistemological disjunctivism pertains only to visual perceptual knowledge. One issue addressed in this volume is the plausible scope of disjunctive accounts of knowledge. Are there sources of knowledge that allow us to be deceived by appearances but for which there is no plausible disjunctive account? Can Pritchardian motivations for epistemological disjunctivism be extended beyond perceptual knowledge? These chapters should be of interest to more than those with a craving for generality or a love of disjunctivism. As is the case with perceptual knowledge, the disjunctivist conception can be difficult to locate on the topography of views in the contemporary literature about memory, testimony, other minds, or introspection. (See especially Wright’s contribution in Chapter 15 on this point.) Considering the

disjunctive conception in these other areas promises to help us better understand the available theoretical options.

Discussions of disjunctivism situate it historically with reference to influential papers and a monograph by J.M. Hinton in the late 1960s and 1970s (Hinton 1967, 1973; see also the discussion of Hinton in Snowdon 2008). Others have noted that disjunctivism, in both its forms, has arisen largely out of Oxford and can be taken to descend from the “Oxford Realism” of Cook Wilson and H.A. Prichard (Kalderon and Travis 2013). Our volume considers other historical antecedents of the view, looking at the Stoics, Kant, Wittgenstein, and Austin. Rather than aiming for anything like being historically thorough, we have instead selected historical figures whose work is most likely to be of use to contemporary philosophers with an interest in disjunctivism. There are two reasons behind our selections. First, three of these figures have been influential in McDowell and Pritchard’s presentations of disjunctivism and, in the case of Austin, influential on both epistemological disjunctivism and metaphysical disjunctivism. Second, its defenders have long claimed that resistance to disjunctivism comes from broadly Cartesian conceptions of the relation between mind and world (see especially Schönbaumsfeld in Chapter 6 and Avramides in Chapter 18). If that is correct, then it would surely be useful to reflect on the work of philosophers who either are innocent of that Cartesianism, such as the Stoics, or are actively combatting it, as in the case of Kant, Wittgenstein, and Austin.

4. Summary of Chapters

In what follows, we provide summaries of the chapters of the book as they appear.

McDowell—“Perceptual Experience and Empirical Rationality”

In this chapter, John McDowell defends his conception of perceptual knowledge from a particular objection. In McDowell’s view, perception is a rational capacity for knowledge through impacts upon the senses. In full exercises of the capacity, exercises that yield knowledge, one’s perceiving (as opposed to one’s merely seeming to perceive) that such and such is the case is the ground for one’s knowledgeable judgment. Since we cannot perceive something unless it is the case, these grounds guarantee the truth of the relevant belief. Furthermore, in McDowell’s account, perception contains grounds not only for perceptual knowledge, but for knowledge that one has the grounds of one’s perceptual knowledge. Our capacity for perceptual knowledge, as a rational capacity, is at the same time a capacity for knowing the grounds of our perceptual knowledge.

McDowell defends this view from an objection. It is a “familiar fact” that one can, through no fault of their own, judge one’s self to perceive

something when one does not. This can make it seem that a perception can never contain within itself the potential grounds for knowledge that it is a perception rather than a merely apparent perception. But McDowell argues that the familiar fact would tell against his conception of experience only if it were the case that we needed an independent capacity for knowing what our perceptual judgments are grounded on, and that this capacity could give us knowledge only if it were infallible. But this is exactly what McDowell denies. As such, the familiar fact of misjudging whether we perceive something shows us only that our rational capacity for perceptual knowledge is a fallible capacity.

Pritchard—“Epistemological Disjunctivism and Anti-Luck Virtue Epistemology”

How does epistemological disjunctivism relate to the wider issue of the nature of knowledge? Duncan Pritchard answers this question by considering how epistemological disjunctivism, construed as a claim only about a particular kind of knowledge, might be embedded within a theory of knowledge he calls *anti-luck virtue epistemology*. This is a theory of knowledge that, he claims, can accommodate both virtue-theoretic and anti-luck insights about knowledge. He maintains that not only is epistemological disjunctivism (so construed) consistent with anti-luck virtue epistemology, but that it is also a natural fit. Pritchard here distinguishes between anti-luck virtue epistemology as a general schematic proposal that can accommodate several distinct interpretations, and a specific rendering of anti-luck virtue epistemology that he claims is particularly plausible. He argues that the latter, even despite being a form of epistemic externalism about knowledge, is entirely compatible with the distinctively decisive internalist epistemic support provided by epistemological disjunctivism. What they share, he claims, is the idea that knowledge is primarily more a matter of skillful cognitive manifestation than of being the product of ratiocination. What epistemological disjunctivism brings to anti-luck virtue epistemology, however, is the necessary kind of cognitive contact with reality to ensure that knowledge is, *contra* the radical skeptic, even possible.

Vasiliou—“Ancient Philosophy and Disjunctivism: The Case of the Stoics”

In his contribution, Iakovos Vasiliou reads the Stoics as assuming epistemological disjunctivism. Central to Stoic epistemology is the doctrine of cataleptic appearances. According to the stoics, cataleptic appearances (a) arise from what is, (b) are stamped and impressed exactly in accordance with what is, and (c) are of such a kind as they could not arise from what is not. Vasiliou notes that contemporary commentators either give an “externalist” interpretation of cataleptic appearances, or they understand the Stoic doctrine to fail, because for any veridical experience there can be phenomenologically indistinguishable illusory experience. Vasiliou

argues, however, that we can understand the Stoic doctrine concerning cataleptic appearances as a kind of epistemological disjunctivism. On this understanding, cataleptic appearances are factive, and we can know that we have them by reflection alone, since the cataleptic appearances are both the criterion of truth regarding appearances and of whether appearances are cataleptic. While understanding cataleptic appearances in this way aligns the Stoic doctrine with the epistemological disjunctivism of John McDowell and Sebastian Rödl, Vasilidou notes that McDowell diverges from the Stoics in denying the possibility of a Sage who through their wisdom only ever assents to cataleptic appearances.

Lockhart—“The Kantian Roots of Epistemological Disjunctivism”

The interpretation of Kant has played an important role in the development of John McDowell’s version of epistemological disjunctivism. In his contribution, Thomas Lockhart explains the connection between McDowell’s disjunctivism and his reading of Kant. Disjunctivists hold that, in the good case, perceptual experience provides a factive reason or indefeasible warrant for belief. According to McDowell’s brand of internalism, beliefs based on reasons must be “manifestations of rationality as such”. That is, they must be such that the subject can determine, by reflection alone, that they support the belief, were she to “step back” and assess its credentials. If the support is factive or indefeasible, then reflection upon one’s perceptual experience must present it as “revealing” the world. Thus, the disjunctivist needs a conception of perceptual experience on which it reveals the world to the subject in such a way that beliefs based upon it are manifestations of rationality. According to Lockhart, McDowell finds in Kant’s concept of an intuition the resources for such a conception. While leaving open the question whether Kant himself was an epistemological disjunctivist, Lockhart explains why the idea of an intuition matters for McDowell’s Kant and, in particular, why epistemological disjunctivists might make use of an account of perceptual experience on which conceptual capacities are “drawn on” in it. Lockhart’s chapter explores many of the same themes as Sedivy’s, for both defend McDowell’s claim that perceptual experience “reveals the world” and that our conceptual understanding must inform our perceptual experience. Lockhart shows the relevance of history to contemporary issues in philosophy of mind and epistemology.

Schönbaumsfeld—“Was Wittgenstein a Disjunctivist Avant la Lettre?”

Genia Schönbaumsfeld considers the question whether Wittgenstein was a disjunctivist. Given that Wittgenstein is widely thought to be a quietist whose approach to philosophy is therapeutic rather than constructive, it might be thought the answer would have to be “no”. But that presumes that disjunctivism must be thought of as a bit of constructive philosophical theorizing. Like Sedivy, Schönbaumsfeld rejects that characterization,

instead insisting that disjunctivism is merely the articulation of our commonsense conception of perceptual knowledge. Central to that conception is the rejection of what she calls the “Reasons Identity Thesis”, that is, the Highest Common Factor conception of the support that perceptual experience provides belief. As Schönbaumsfeld notes, the Reasons Identity Thesis tends to be motivated by a “fully Cartesian” conception of the mind on which our encounter with objects in perception is always mediated by representational states that “fall short of the facts”. Once in the grips of the Cartesian conception, it seems that one must provide a proof that there is an external world, “without any help from perception”, which could then entitle one to accept one’s perceptual experiences at face value. The Cartesian conception, in turn, seems to be forced on us by the possibility of radical doubt, that is, a doubt that undermines all of our beliefs about the “external world” in one go. In *On Certainty*, Schönbaumsfeld finds an argument that radical doubt is unintelligible. The consequences of this argument are powerful. As she puts it:

If Wittgenstein is right . . . that radical doubt is an illusion, then the notion that we either first need to establish that there is an external world, or else groundlessly take it ‘on trust’ (or ‘assume’) that there is, goes out of the window (p. 120).

If radical doubt is an illusion, then we do not stand in need of a proof of an external world, and so we do not face the prospect of constructing claims about the external world out of claims about our sense experience. “[P]hysical object propositions and propositions about experiential seemings can be cognitively on a par”. The rejection of radical doubt restores our commonsense conception of perceptual knowledge by undermining the motivations for the Reasons Identity Theory. In addition to its exploration of Wittgenstein’s relation to disjunctivism, Schönbaumsfeld’s essay offers an interpretation of Wittgenstein’s writings on Moore’s “proof” and a novel reading of Wittgensteinian “hinge propositions”. (For an alternative reading, one which also considers the relation between Wittgenstein’s views and disjunctivism, see Pritchard 2016).

Longworth—“Settling a Question: Austin and Disjunctivism”

In this contribution, Guy Longworth considers J.L. Austin’s relationship to contemporary disjunctivism and highlights the ways in which epistemic considerations figure into the debates concerning metaphysical disjunctivism. Longworth argues that while Austin sets the stage for contemporary disjunctivism, he failed to go beyond a schematic disjunctivist position, one that espouses commonsense realism regarding perception. According to Longworth, the key move of contemporary disjunctivists is to block the inference from a lack of distinguishable differences between veridical and hallucinatory experience to the claim that there

is no qualitative difference between veridical and hallucinatory experience. While Austin rejects the idea that all qualitatively identical experiences must be identical in every way, he does not explicitly reject the idea that indistinguishable experiences are qualitatively identical. Nevertheless, Longworth shows how Austin's thought anticipates the key move of contemporary disjunctivism. By distinguishing between cognitive and sensory powers, and by recognizing introspection as a fallible cognitive power, Austin opens up the idea that we might be unable to distinguish between veridical and hallucinatory perception, not because these kinds of experience are qualitatively identical, but because of cognitive limitations inherent to human introspection. So while Austin fails to make the key move of contemporary disjunctivism, he make this move possible.

Sedivy—“Disjunctivism and Realism: Not Naïve but Conceptual”

As mentioned, it has become common to label John McDowell an epistemological disjunctivist where this is interpreted to mean that his position is neutral on questions about the metaphysics of perception. Sonia Sedivy's contribution challenges this reading and outlines what she calls McDowell's "conceptual realism". This position is comprised of two central theses, both of which are part of common sense: that our conceptual understanding informs our seeing, and that in perceptual experience features of our environment can be made "manifest" for us. The first claim amounts to the idea that our experience picks out instances of kinds and properties. We recognize these kinds in perception thanks to our conceptual understanding. The second idea is that objects are "presented", "revealed", "manifest", or directly *there* for us in experience. (See Lockhart for a discussion of both claims as they relate to Kant's conception of an intuition.) As Sedivy emphasizes, this position should be contrasted with naïve realism, which is the standard view assumed in discussions of metaphysical disjunctivism. Sedivy argues that an advantage of conceptual realism is that it makes available resources for explaining things—such as the commonality between good and bad cases and the epistemic upshot of metaphysical disjunctivism—that naïve realism does not. She also considers how the *de se* content involved in perceptual experience on the conceptual realist picture might play an explanatory role in aesthetic experience, thus revealing the significance of a disjunctivist conception of experience for areas of philosophy beyond epistemology and philosophy of mind.

French—“Epistemological Disjunctivism and Its Representational Commitments”

In his contribution, Craig French develops what he calls the thing-seeing approach to epistemological disjunctivism. According to this approach, “[t]he particular kind of rational support that the epistemological

disjunctivist claims that our beliefs enjoy in paradigm cases of perceptual knowledge is that provided by visual perceptual states or episodes of thing-seeing” (p. 120). The thing-seeing approach is non-committal about whether perception involves propositional or representational content. Because of this, French’s thing-seeing approach allows one to be an epistemological disjunctivist without taking on controversial positions in the philosophy of perception. Much of French’s chapter is dedicated to defending the neutrality of the thing-seeing approach from two objections. The first objection holds that thing-seeing cannot provide factive rational support unless it involves propositional content, since factive rational support can only be provided by factive propositional attitudes. French’s response is that while states of thing-seeing might not offer factive rational support in this technical sense, given that thing-seeing is relational, they offer factive rational support in the sense that they guarantee the truth of the relevant perceptual beliefs. The second objection is that if perceptual states were non-representational, then they could not provide rational support for our beliefs. Engaging with the work of Hannah Ginsborg, French suggests that the conscious character of states of thing-seeing could allow states of thing-seeing to rationalize our beliefs by providing us with the relevant sorts of reasons, even if perceptual states were non-representational. As a result, the thing-seeing approach allows one to accept epistemological disjunctivism while being agnostic about the nature of perception.

Mitova—“Either Epistemological or Metaphysical Disjunctivism”

Veli Mitova demonstrates that philosophers interested in disjunctivism need to keep in mind debates concerning the nature of reasons. She does this by arguing against the conjunction of epistemological and metaphysical disjunctivism in a novel way. According to Mitova, the conjunction of epistemological and metaphysical disjunctivism implies disjunctivism about motivating reasons for perceptual belief. According to this view, motivating reasons for perceptual beliefs are either factive states partly external to the agent, or non-factive states purely internal to the agent. But disjunctivism about motivating reasons for belief is an implausible view. Mitova has us consider a case in which an individual contemplates a flowering tree for an hour; during this time, an evil demon intervenes at three different points, interposing a hologram of the flowering tree. If disjunctivism about motivating reasons is correct, then there are seven different motivating reasons for why the individual believes there is a flowering tree in front of her. In Mitova’s view, this makes motivating reasons for belief too independent from the believer’s perspective, calls into question the idea that motivating reasons are causes, and on the whole makes motivating reasons too protean—it simply isn’t plausible that our motivating reasons change so fluidly. Thus, we should not hold the conjunction of epistemological and metaphysical disjunctivism. This result

goes against some traditional strategies for arguing for metaphysical disjunctivism in which the truth of epistemological disjunctivism is offered as a reason for accepting metaphysical disjunctivism, and it threatens both epistemological and metaphysical disjunctivism if these mutually imply each other.

Littlejohn—“Neither/Nor”

Clayton Littlejohn attacks epistemological disjunctivism on the grounds that it mistakenly makes the justification of our non-inferential perceptual beliefs depend upon their being based upon sufficient reasons for belief. In particular Littlejohn rejects the idea that “[i]f S knows that *p*, S’s being in a position to know supervenes upon the reasons she possesses and her belief is properly based on sufficient reasons” (p. 217). These reasons would be reasons that put one in position to know that something is the case. Littlejohn’s attack is two-pronged. First, Littlejohn attacks the idea that “seeing that *p*” is a visual relation between a perceiver and a fact that could put us in a position to know that *p*. Littlejohn has us imagine a case in which one sees a tomato from a very far distance, and one represents what one sees as a tomato. Given that one is so far away from the tomato, one is not in a position to perceptually know that what one sees is a tomato. This creates a dilemma for the disjunctivist. Either she must deny that in this case one sees that there is a tomato in front of them, or she must deny that seeing that there is a tomato in front of oneself always puts one in a position to know. Second, Littlejohn attacks the idea that the normative status of belief supervenes upon the reasons at hand of an individual believer. Littlejohn argues that we are tempted to believe that our rational evaluable responses supervene on the reasons we have at hand because we are tempted to believe that we could always (at least in principle) respond to the reasons that we have. Once we can see how to reject this latter idea, however, we will find ourselves free to reject the former.

Neta—“Disjunctivism and Credence”

Epistemological disjunctivism implies that in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge the successful perception of a mind-independent object provides a *better basis for belief* about that object than an indistinguishable illusion or hallucination can. Ram Neta uses this idea to formulate an objection to epistemological disjunctivism. This objection makes two plausible assumptions. The first is that S’s having a better basis for believing that *p* at time *t*₂ than at time *t*₁, implies that, all else being equal, S has better evidence for *p* at time *t*₂. The second is that if S has better evidence for *p* at time *t*₂ than at time *t*₁, then S is rationally obliged to be more confident in *p* at *t*₂ than at *t*₁. With these assumptions in place, Neta has us suppose that someone gradually transitions from being under the grips of an illusion or hallucination into successfully

perceiving a mind-independent object and so having perceptual knowledge concerning this object. If epistemological disjunctivism is true, then the individual would have better grounds for their belief. Given the two plausible assumptions, the individual would then be rationally obliged to be more confident in the relevant perceptual belief at the end of the transition. But this seems plainly false. Neta's response to the objection is to reject the assumption that having better evidence rationally requires us to be more confident. Neta holds that while rational confidence is determined by evidential support, evidential support is not determined simply by what is in one's evidence set. Rather, evidential support is determined by what is in one's evidence set and how confident one should be that one has this evidence. If there is an imperceptible change to one's evidence set, one should be neither more nor less confident that they have a particular set of evidence.

Haddock—“Disjunctivism, Skepticism, and the First Person”

With some notable exceptions (McDowell 1998a, 1998b), discussions of epistemological disjunctivism have focused on the epistemology of perception. Some chapters of this volume consider disjunctivist proposals for other domains of knowledge, such as testimony (Wright), memory (Milburn and Moon), other minds (Avramides), and self-knowledge (Bar-On and Johnson, Doyle). Adrian Haddock presents disjunctivism as a conception of knowledge generally, one that aims to complete the project of modern epistemology, paradigmatically expressed in Descartes's *Meditations*. According to Haddock, that project is essentially *first-personal*, in that it aspires to provide an account of knowledge in the face of the possibility of error that would yield self-understanding, rather than a merely theoretical analysis from a third-person perspective. Roughly, this means that it aims to articulate an account of knowledge drawing on resources available to the subject herself, from the first-person point of view, that would reveal that she can know despite the possibility of error. As Haddock emphasizes, the project of modern epistemology, so understood, has for the most part been ignored in contemporary epistemology, which favors the third-person perspective. On Haddock's reading, central to McDowell's disjunctivism is the thesis that “there is no knowledge without self-knowledge”, which reveals the disjunctivist to respond to the Modern project. How could self-knowledge help in revealing the possibility of knowledge in the face of error? One way would be Cartesian: we happen upon a self-ascription expressible as “I think that p ”, which is self-verifying, guaranteeing the truth of both the self-ascription and the proposition contained within it (e.g. “I experience that there is a red square”). But this proposal is toothless if we want to vindicate our knowledge claims when p is not verified by my thinking that I think it, that is, knowledge claims about the external world. The disjunctivist denies that

the self-knowledge that can secure our claims to know the external world must be self-verifying. But, for just this reason, it seems unable to respond to the skeptical threat. If I defend my claim to know that p by citing the fact that I see that p , we can simply ask how I know *this*. Since “I see that p ” isn’t self-verifying, it would seem we stand in need of some further justification for our self-knowledge. On Haddock’s telling, then, the disjunctivist’s appeal to self-knowledge is of no use. But there is an insight behind the thesis that knowledge requires self-knowledge: self-knowledge is not knowledge of some fact in addition to the fact that p , but is, instead, a “use of ‘I perceive p ’ [that] does reveal this thought [that p] to be true, because to use ‘I perceive p ’ is to grasp, not merely the thought expressed by ‘ p ’, but the truth of this thought” (Haddock, p. 264). Standing in the way of this insight is the widespread view, rejected by Anscombe, that “I” is a referring expression. Offering a novel interpretation of her argument, Haddock argues that, if “I” does not refer, then the project of modern epistemology and so the skeptical threat are incoherent.

Milburn and Moon—“Two Forms of Memory Knowledge and Epistemological Disjunctivism”

In their chapter, Joe Milburn and Andrew Moon consider the prospects for extending Pritchard’s disjunctivism to memory knowledge. Milburn and Moon distinguish between experiential and stored memory knowledge. Experiential memory knowledge is knowledge of the past that is grounded upon memory experience. Stored memory knowledge is simply knowledge that we retain, having acquired it in the past. Milburn and Moon argue that the prospects of a disjunctivist account of experiential memory knowledge are as good as the prospects of such an account for perceptual knowledge. Just as we commonly justify our knowledge claims by appealing to the fact that we see that something is the case or that we see a particular object, so too do we commonly justify our memory knowledge claims by appealing to the fact that we remember that something is the case, or that we remember a particular object or event. And just as *seeing that* is factive and *seeing an object* is relational, so too *remembering that* is factive, and *remembering an object or event* is relational. So we have reason to believe that in paradigmatic cases of experiential memory knowledge we know in virtue of having factive, reflectively accessible rational support. Things are different, however, in the case of stored memory knowledge. First, there is reason to deny that one possesses stored memory knowledge that p in virtue of possessing any rational support for p . Second, even if we possess stored memory knowledge that p in virtue of possessing rational support for believing that p , there are paradigmatic cases of stored memory knowledge that seem to lack factive rational support, for example stored memory knowledge that rests on inductive grounds.

Wright—“Testimonial Disjunctivism”

Stephen Wright considers the viability of an epistemological disjunctivist treatment of testimonial knowledge. His discussion is structured around three questions: (1) What are the elements of disjunctivism about testimony? (2) How does disjunctivism fit into the existing topography of views on testimony? (3) Is disjunctivism about testimony viable? On the disjunctivist proposal Wright considers, a subject can know that p on the basis of hearing the speaker say that p , where this is a factive and reflectively accessible reason. As Wright explains, this position can be difficult to locate on the familiar map of positions in the epistemology of testimony, divided between Reductionists and Anti-Reductionists. Like Milburn and Moon, Wright observes that some of the objections to epistemological disjunctivism about perception and the responses to them provided by Pritchard and McDowell are not restricted to the perceptual case. Thus, the disjunctivist about testimony can appeal to them in defending her view. Wright then argues that, despite some reasons to be optimistic about disjunctivism about testimony, it is unclear what would count as a paradigmatic instance of testimonial knowledge, on the disjunctivist analysis. Like Milburn and Moon, Wright abstracts from the case of perceptual knowledge and considers epistemological disjunctivism, as formulated by Pritchard (2012), as a schematic view, applied here to the case of testimony. In addition to its insights about testimony, the chapter provides a template for thinking about disjunctivism in other domains of knowledge.

Bar-On and Johnson—“Epistemological Disjunctivism: Perception, Expression, and Self-Knowledge”

In important work, including her monograph *Speaking My Mind* (2004), Dorit Bar-On has developed a Neo-Expressivist account of first-person authority. Such an account must explain why self-ascribing a mental state in speech or thought from the first-person perspective, issuing an “avowal”, is immune from most ordinary forms of doubts and scrutiny. The explanation is that avowals express first-order mental states because they are issued from them. In a good case, a subject’s ground for self-ascription is the very mental state self-ascribed, whereas, obviously, it cannot be that in the bad case. Thus, the Neo-Expressivist proposal is committed to the disjunctivist claim that good and bad cases differ in the support they lend. In their contribution, Bar-On and Drew Johnson compare disjunctivism about self-knowledge with the more-familiar disjunctivism about perceptual knowledge. Like others, they accept that epistemological disjunctivists should accept a version of metaphysical disjunctivism. Impressed by an argument from Tyler Burge mentioned earlier, Bar-On and Johnson contend that the latter is incompatible with principles about the metaphysics of perception. Disjunctivism about self-knowledge avoids this worry, since it denies that self-knowledge is based

on introspection or any form of perceptual experience. Next, they compare their favored Expressivist proposal with Constitutivism, another theory of self-knowledge committed to disjunctivism, arguing that the Neo-Expressivist proposal fares better. Finally, they consider ways in which this disjunctivist treatment of self-knowledge might help the more familiar case of perceptual knowledge. In the case of self-knowledge, Bar-On and Johnson favor a view on which the subject's support for self-ascribing mental states is a form of entitlement, rather than justification, in Burge's sense. Their suggestion is that epistemological disjunctivists can avoid difficulties from the metaphysics of perception by thinking of support in terms of entitlement.

Doyle—“Ringers for Belief”

Like Bar-On and Johnson, Casey Doyle considers a disjunctivist treatment of self-knowledge. Epistemological disjunctivism claims that when all goes well, seeing that p places one in a position to know that p and to know that one sees that p . But if the good and bad cases of perceptual experience are subjectively indistinguishable, how can the subject know, by reflection alone, that she is in the good case when she is? This is the worry from subjective indistinguishability. Doyle considers whether it confronts a disjunctive treatment of doxastic self-knowledge, focusing on the thesis that one can know that one believes that p on the ground that one believes that p . First-person self-ascriptions of belief are based on their truthmakers. Defenders of this view (like Bar-On 2004; Zimmerman 2006; Travis 2012) have argued that it does not confront the worry. Doyle provides reasons for thinking that it does. He frames things in terms of the question whether there are, in Charles Travis's terms, “ringers” for beliefs: cases in which it subjectively seems to one, in the first-personal way, that one believes that p , though one doesn't. He argues that there are such cases, such as imagination, self-deception, and delusion. In these cases one consciously judges that p , or performs a conscious act indistinguishable from judging, thanks to which it seems to one that one believes that p , though one doesn't. This argument presupposes a particular, if widely assumed, conception of conscious judgment as an episode in phenomenal consciousness, perhaps realized in inner speech. He concludes by considering an alternative view, on which self-consciousness of judgment. Such a view has been proposed by disjunctivists like McDowell, Rödl, and Kern in response to the subjective indistinguishability worry about perceptual knowledge. (This view is considered in detail in Vasiliou's contribution, Chapter 4.) While it avoids the objection, it is a radical view about self-knowledge, which makes it difficult to see how our capacity for self-knowledge is fallible. Thus, in addition

to considering an *extension* of epistemological disjunctivism to another domain, Doyle shows how reflection on self-knowledge can bring out something important about at least some formulations of epistemological disjunctivism about perceptual knowledge.

Avramides—“Disjunctivism and Other Minds”

McDowell’s version of disjunctivism about appearances was originally presented in the context of a discussion about knowledge of other minds. In her contribution, Anita Avramides considers the relation between McDowell’s disjunctivism in these two areas. Her focus is “McDowellian Disjunctivism”, meaning a disjunctivism that shares the motivations behind McDowell’s view. Avramides rejects the common picture of McDowell’s disjunctivism as merely an epistemological thesis. Her contention is that in both the perceptual and other minds cases, McDowell offers a diagnosis of the temptation to accept a Highest Common Factor conception of the epistemic import of perceptual experience and another’s behavior. In both cases, that view seems to be forced on one because of a commitment to a broadly Cartesian picture of the mind, conceived as an autonomous or self-standing realm populated by items to which we have infallible access. This picture of the mind threatens our knowledge of both the external world and other minds. If there is a divide between our sense impressions and objects in the world, skepticism looms. And if the minds of others are kept “behind” their behavior in an autonomous realm, then it is unclear how we could gain access to them. Since the same picture prevents us from accepting a disjunctivist view of the two domains of knowledge, it is “dubiously coherent” to be a disjunctivist about perceptual knowledge (for McDowell’s reasons) while resisting it as part of an account of knowledge of other minds. As Avramides puts it, drawing on Davidson, the epistemic barrier from the inside out (to the external world) is also a barrier from the outside in (to the mind of another). The two stand or fall together. Avramides’s chapter brings out why disjunctivists with broadly anti-Cartesian motivations should be more concerned with the problem of other minds, and it indicates how that problem is central to the philosophy of mind and epistemology.

References

- Burge, Tyler, 2005, Disjunctivism and perceptual psychology, *Philosophical Topics* 33: 1–75.
- Byrne, Alex and Logue, Heather, 2008, Either/or, in Adrian Haddock and Fiona Macpherson, eds. *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 57–94.
- Crane, Tim, 2009, The pigs in my garden, *Times Literary Supplement*, 31 July 2009.

- Fish, William, 2009, *Perception, Hallucination, and Illusion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Haddock, Adrian and Macpherson, Fiona, 2008, Introduction: Varieties of disjunctivism, in Adrian Haddock and Fiona Macpherson, eds. *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–24.
- Hinton, John Michael, 1967, Visual experiences, *Mind* 76(April): 217–227.
- , 1973, *Experiences: An Inquiry Into Some Ambiguities*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kalderon, Mark and Travis, Charles, 2013, Oxford Realism, in Michael Beaney, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Analytic Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 489–517.
- Martin, M. F., 2004, The limits of self-awareness, *Philosophical Studies* 120: 37–89.
- McDowell, John, 1998a, Criteria, defeasibility and knowledge, in his *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- , 1998b, Knowledge and the internal, in his *Meaning, Knowledge and Reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- , 1998c, Knowledge by hearsay, in his *Meaning, Knowledge and Reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- , 1998d, Reply to Wright, in Crispin Wright, Barry Smith and Cynthia Macdonald, eds. *Knowing Our Own Minds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- , 2010, Tyler Burge on disjunctivism, *Philosophical Explorations* 13(3): 243–255.
- , 2011, *Perception as a Capacity for Knowledge*. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press.
- , 2013, Perceptual experience: Both relational and contentful, *European Journal of Philosophy* 21(1): 144–157.
- , this volume, Perceptual experience and empirical rationality.
- Millar, Alan, 2007, What the disjunctivist is right about, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 74(1): 176–198.
- , 2008, Perceptual-recognitional abilities and perceptual knowledge, in Adrian Haddock and Fiona Macpherson, eds. *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 330–347.
- Neta, Ram, 2008, In defence of disjunctivism, in Fiona Macpherson and Adrian Haddock, eds. *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 311–329.
- Pritchard, Duncan, 2012, *Epistemological Disjunctivism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- , 2016, *Epistemic Angst*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Snowdon, Paul, 2005, The formulation of disjunctivism: A response to Fish, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series 105: 129–141.
- , 2008, Hinton and the origins of disjunctivism, in Fiona Macpherson and Adrian Haddock, eds. *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 35–56.
- Soteriou, Matthew, 2009, The disjunctive theory of perception, in Edward N. Zalta, ed. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 ed.). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/perception-disjunctive/>.
- , 2016, *Disjunctivism*. London: Routledge.

- Travis, Charles, 2012, While under the influence, in his *Perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 391–412.
- Wright, Stephen, 2013, Review: Duncan Pritchard: Epistemological disjunctivism, *Dialectica* 67(2): 252–257.
- Zimmerman, Aaron, 2006, Basic self-knowledge: Answering Peacocke’s criticism of constitutivism, *Philosophical Studies* 128: 337–379.