

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available  
in INQUIRY 02 Aug 2022

<http://tandfonline.com/10.1080/0020174X.2022.2105941>

## **In touch with the facts: Epistemological disjunctivism and the rationalisation of belief**

*Abstract:* The idea of believing for a good reason has both normative and psychological content. How are these related? Recently, a number of authors have defended a ‘disjunctivist’ view of rationalisation, on which a good reason can make a subject’s responses to it intelligible in a way that mere ‘apparent reasons’ cannot. However, little has been said about the possible epistemological significance of this view or its relationship to more familiar forms of disjunctivism in the philosophy of perception. This paper examines the relationship between epistemological disjunctivism and disjunctivism about rationalisation, arguing that the latter provides an attractive articulation of certain elements of the former. The specific claim is that disjunctivism about rationalisation enables the proponent of epistemological disjunctivism to explain why beliefs that are based on conclusive normative reasons provided by perception are susceptible to a certain kind of undercutting defeat. On the way to motivating this claim, the paper considers possible ways of articulating epistemological disjunctivism in terms of reasons, distinguishes different forms of disjunctivism about reasons for belief and clarifies the relationships between them.

*Keywords:* reasons for belief, rationalisation, disjunctivism, perceptual knowledge, McDowell

## 1. Introduction

We believe things for reasons. Sometimes—often, we might hope—the reasons for which we believe are good reasons. The idea of believing for a good reason is partly normative and partly psychological: something's being a good reason for belief is a matter of its 'counting in favour' of believing, but its being a reason for which someone believes is a matter of its playing a certain kind of role in the aetiology or explanation of a certain belief. How deeply are the normative and the psychological connected in someone's believing for a good reason? Various views are possible. At one end of the spectrum, we could see the connection as being no deeper than coincidence: for you to believe that  $p$  for a good reason is just for some consideration that happens to count in favour of your believing that  $p$  to happen to figure in the right way in an account of why you believe that  $p$ , with the counting and the explaining not necessarily having anything to do with one another. A perhaps more appealing view would see the connection as being somewhat deeper than this. That you believe that  $p$  for a reason at all imputes some degree of rationality to your belief, we might think, and there is presumably some general connection between rationality and good reasons. Perhaps believing rationally is (roughly) a matter of believing what, as it seems to you, you have good enough reason to believe (compare Kolodny 2005; Sylvan 2015), and you believe for a good reason when you are fortunate enough to be right about what reasons there are and what beliefs they favour in the particular case. On this understanding, your general grasp of reasons for belief—of what kinds of considerations favour which kinds of beliefs—plays an operative role in explaining why you believe as you do, but

we needn't say that there actually *being* a good reason in the particular case makes any significant difference for the purposes of understanding why you believe what you believe. After all, what reasons there seemed to you to be might not have corresponded to what reasons there actually were. Had that been the case, your belief would still be perfectly intelligible. The seeming, we might think, exhausts the psychological side of the matter.

We might, however, consider whether the connection, sometimes at least, runs deeper still, such that there actually being a good reason, a good reason for which you believe, makes your belief intelligible in a way that cannot be captured in terms of psychological factors that do not in themselves amount to there being a good reason for which you believe. Perhaps a good reason can cast an explanatory light on the response it normatively favours in a way that nothing else can. Since this light would necessarily be absent when a subject believes for bad reasons or for 'merely apparent' reasons, to say this would be to impute a 'disjunctive' structure to the psychological aspect of believing for reasons. A view like this has recently been advanced with respect to *acting* for reasons (Hornsby 2008; McDowell 2013; Roessler 2014), and with respect to responding to reasons quite generally (Cunningham 2019). However, these discussions have not explored in any detail what epistemological significance the view might have when applied specifically to belief. That is what I aim to do in this paper. I argue that a 'disjunctivist' conception of believing for reasons provides useful resources for the epistemology of perception, specifically in an articulation of a more familiar disjunctivism, namely epistemological disjunctivism. On the way to this conclusion, I consider the relationship

between epistemological disjunctivism and reasons, and also clarify and distinguish different ‘disjunctivist’ claims about believing for reasons.

The shape of the paper is as follows. Section 2 introduces a distinction between normative and motivating reasons for belief and raises the question how epistemological disjunctivism should be understood in light of this distinction, considering in particular Mitova’s (2019) suggestion that epistemological disjunctivism is concerned solely with normative reasons. Section 3 discusses Mitova’s argument against disjunctivism about motivating reasons and argues that the argument misses its target. Section 4 introduces a different disjunctivist view—disjunctivism about rationalisation—and suggests that something like Mitova’s argument does raise serious questions about this view. Section 5 clarifies the relationship between rationalisation disjunctivism and normative reasons disjunctivism, in the process proposing a specification of the latter. Section 6 argues that rationalisation disjunctivism is, despite the qualms raised in section 4, a valuable complement to (epistemological) normative reasons disjunctivism, because it explains how the justification provided by a conclusive reason could be undercut by environmental factors.

## **2. Perceptual reasons: normative and motivating**

Epistemological disjunctivism is a view, or family of views, about perceptual knowledge and the way that such knowledge is grounded in perceptual experience. The epistemological disjunctivist claims that veridical perceptual experience characteristically provides ‘epistemic grounds’ or ‘rational support’ that goes beyond that provided by a subjectively indistinguishable non-

veridical experience (an illusion or hallucination). They characteristically claim, in particular, that veridical perceptual experience, in paradigm cases, provides a subject with *conclusive* support for beliefs about their mind-independent environment—a form of support that guarantees the truth of those beliefs (e.g. McDowell 1995; 1998; Pritchard 2012).

A question not often given much attention is just what is meant by ‘epistemic grounds’, ‘rational support’, or any of the other related terms that are variously used in formulating epistemological disjunctivism’s central claims. A natural way to frame this question in the context of contemporary normative philosophy is to ask how we might best formulate the epistemological disjunctivist’s central claims in terms of *reasons*. It seems reasonable to expect that claims about rational support for belief should be translatable into claims about reasons for belief. However, such translation is not simply a mechanical task; it will require us to make substantive decisions about the interpretation of epistemological disjunctivism.

An especially relevant distinction commonly drawn, particularly in the philosophy of action, is that between *normative* and *motivating* reasons (e.g. Alvarez 2010; Dancy 2000, chap. 1; Parfit 2001; Smith 1994). Normative reasons are, roughly, considerations that count in favour of specific actions on the part of an agent, while motivating reasons are, roughly, the reasons for which an agent actually acts. So, for instance, the fact that more people getting vaccinated will help to control the pandemic may be a normative reason for me to get vaccinated. If I do in fact get vaccinated, but only do so because the government provides certain incentives to do so (for instance by affording special privileges to vaccinated people), then my motivating reasons have more to do with my

self-interest than with public health. Self-interest might of course provide its own normative reasons too: that it will enable me to enter a nightclub could genuinely count in favour of getting vaccinated. If so, one kind of normative reason motivates me, but another does not. We might say that one motivating reason is also, or corresponds to, a motivating reason, while the other isn't or doesn't. This example also illustrates one reason why we might be interested in the normative–motivating distinction: normative reasons and motivating reasons bear in different ways on our evaluation of an action. Roughly, if we want to know whether someone did the right thing, we should consider the normative reasons that applied to them at the time of acting, while if we want to know about their motives in acting, we need to look at their motivating reasons. Asking about a person's motives might serve a range of interests. Perhaps we want to form a judgement about the person's character (whether they are a good, civic-minded citizen) or their beliefs (whether they accept mainstream scientific opinion).

Motivating reasons can only address such specific concerns, however, in virtue of performing a more basic function. Motivating reasons show us what point the agent saw in doing what they did, or 'the light in which' they acted. In so doing, motivating reasons make intentional actions intelligible as such. Motivating reasons, that is, play a central role in the special form of explanation known as *rationalisation*. While it is important to distinguish the normative and motivating roles of reasons, we should also not lose sight of the fact that we are very often concerned with both at once, and in particular with whether they align in a certain kind of way. That is, we are very often concerned with whether someone acts *for a good reason* (a point emphasised by, e.g., Dancy 2000). This is

a question both about what reasons the agent acts for (motivating) and whether those reasons were good (normative).

Although the ‘motivating’ label is rather less aptly applied to reasons for belief, it is clear enough that we can draw a similar kind of distinction.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the relevant authorities have approved the use of a vaccine might be a good (normative) reason for me to believe that it is reasonably safe and effective. I might believe that the vaccine is reasonably safe and effective, but not for that reason: perhaps I have nothing but contempt for the government and their advisers but have absolute faith in the responsibility and reliability of big pharmaceutical companies, so that my motivating reason for believing in the vaccine’s safety is simply that it was produced by such a company. This case perhaps also illustrates that motivating reasons need not necessarily correspond to good normative reasons.

Again, consideration of the different kinds of reasons serves different interests. Roughly, normative reasons for belief concern what a person ought to believe (what they have ‘propositional’ or ‘*ex ante*’ justification for believing, in epistemological terminology), while their motivating reasons tell us more about their reasoning and rationality. Again, though, we are often concerned with both issues at once: whether the reasons for which they believe what they

---

<sup>1</sup> It is less apt in part because talk about a belief’s being ‘motivated’ suggests something like wishful thinking or ‘motivated reasoning’, rather than simply the idea of believing for a reason. Nonetheless, I will, for ease of exposition and consistency with the usage of other authors, continue to use the ‘motivating reasons’ label. In applying the normative–motivating distinction to belief with a view to characterising epistemological disjunctivism, I follow Mitova (2019, 198).

believe are good ones (whether they have ‘doxastic’ or ‘*ex post*’ justification). In particular, if we take it that knowing that *p* entails having the justified belief that *p*, and that being justified in believing that *p* means believing that *p* for sufficiently good reasons, then to know some fact requires the right kind of alignment between our normative and motivating reasons for belief.

Is the epistemological disjunctivist’s claim about ‘rational support’ a claim about normative reasons, motivating reasons, or both?<sup>2</sup> Mitova (2019) argues that we should understand epistemological disjunctivism as straightforwardly a thesis about normative reasons. She refers to the following passage from McDowell, in which he articulates a ‘disjunctive conception of perceptual appearance’:

[P]erceptual appearances are either objective states of affairs making themselves manifest to subjects, or situations in which it is as if an objective state of affairs is making itself manifest to a subject, although that is not how things are. Experiences of the first kind have an epistemic significance that experiences of the second kind do not have. They afford opportunities for knowledge of objective states of affairs. (McDowell 2008, 380–1)

Mitova claims, not implausibly, that the ‘most natural way of hearing this is that perceptions are good reasons for belief, while mere appearances aren’t’

---

<sup>2</sup> It could of course be that the epistemological disjunctivist’s ‘rational support’ corresponds to something else entirely. However, since I am going to argue for an interpretation in terms of normative and motivating reasons, I won’t consider this possibility further here.

(Mitova 2019, 199). In light of this, she suggests a formulation of epistemological disjunctivism as the claim that a ‘perceptual experience that  $p$ ’ ‘provides a normative reason for [its subject] to believe that  $p$ ’, while a merely ‘apparently perceptual experience’ does not provide such a reason (Mitova 2019, 199). I will call this idea Normative Reasons Disjunctivism (NRD). We will come back to the question whether NRD adequately characterises McDowell’s epistemological disjunctivism. For now, I want to consider the relationship between NRD and possible views about motivating reasons and rationalisation.

### **3. Disjunctivism about motivating reasons**

Mitova argues that combining epistemological disjunctivism (interpreted in terms of NRD) with perceptual (or ‘metaphysical’) disjunctivism—the view (defended by, e.g., Martin 2006) that veridical perceptual experience is a fundamentally different kind of state from non-veridical experience—leads to a disjunctivism about *motivating* reasons for belief. Mitova argues, further, that such a disjunctivism about motivating reasons is implausible and should be avoided. The lesson she draws from this is that we should avoid simultaneous commitment to both epistemological and perceptual disjunctivism. So, on Mitova’s view, not only is epistemological disjunctivism not a view about motivating reasons, but it had better not be. Let’s look at the reasoning behind this view.

Mitova formulates the third disjunctivist thesis as follows:

#### **Motivating Reasons Disjunctivism**

Motivating reasons are of two different ontological kinds: they are (provided by) *either* factive states partly external to the agent, *or* non-factive states, purely internal to the agent. (Mitova 2019, 201)

Motivating Reasons Disjunctivism (MRD) is implausible, Mitova argues, because it implies that a subject's motivating reasons differ across cases in which things are, from the agent's perspective, the same in all relevant respects. She presses this thought through an example in which a subject, Manish, spends an hour gazing in the direction of a banana tree, during which time a 'Perverse Demon' intermittently interposes, between Manish and the tree, an indistinguishable hologram of the latter. MRD seems to imply that the motivating reasons for Manish's belief that there is a banana tree before him change each time the Demon inserts or removes the hologram. But this conclusion, Mitova argues, runs against the 'whole point of positing motivating reasons', which is 'to give an account of reasons the resources to represent the agent's perspective on what she does and believes':

The concept of motivating reason, in other words, is tied to what the agent saw in favour of the action or belief, something that makes acting and believing as she does intelligible. Although we are not, of course, infallible about our motivating reasons, to have them float completely free of our perspective would seem to undermine the whole point of positing motivating reasons. (Mitova 2019, 202)<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Mitova actually presents this as the first of three reasons why MRD is implausible. As I understand the three reasons, though, they are not really independent, but rather

I believe that Mitova identifies a genuine challenge here, but that it is not in fact best understood as a challenge to MRD. MRD is not clearly implausible or, I will suggest, even particularly interesting. At least, there are plausible ways of thinking about motivating reasons that make it uninteresting. However, there *is* an interesting and substantive disjunctivist thesis in the neighbourhood of MRD which is subject to a worry of the sort Mitova raises. To gain clarity here, we need to consider the relationship between motivating reasons and rationalisation.

As Mitova observes in the passage quoted above, and as I suggested earlier, the point of talking about motivating reasons is to show what made an action or belief intelligible to its agent or subject as something to do or think. When we consider someone's motivating reasons, we are interested in a certain kind of explanation of their doing or thinking what they did or thought: one that represents the agent's perspective on it. An explanation of this kind is what I earlier called a rationalisation. One possible way to characterise motivating reasons is to say that they are simply those considerations that provide such rationalising explanations. This conception naturally leads to what Fogal (2018) has called a deflationary pluralism about motivating reasons: in any given case of action or belief we can identify a whole set of interrelated facts, states, conditions or what-have-you that can be cited in perfectly good rationalisations of the action or belief. To illustrate, consider Manish in the moments before the Demon interposes the hologram, when he is veridically perceiving the banana

---

different ways of bringing out a central worry about MRD—or rather, as I will argue, with disjunctivism about rationalisation.

tree. On any relevant account of the metaphysics of perceptual experience, it is true that in this case, it appears to Manish that there is a banana tree before him.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, all should accept that Manish believes that there is a banana tree before him because it appears to him that there is a banana tree before him. In this ‘good case’, of course, the appearances do not give the whole story, since things appear that way to him because there really is a banana tree there. To explain Manish’s belief just by reference to appearances rather than by reference to his actually seeing the banana tree will generally be pragmatically infelicitous, since there are more informative explanations available that can be given just as easily (he believes that there is a banana tree because he can see one). But that doesn’t mean that the less committal explanation is not true (Fogal 2018). The explanation in terms of appearances *is* true, and moreover it is a genuine rationalisation: it makes Manish’s belief intelligible from his perspective. Even the perceptual disjunctivist, then, should accept that facts about how things appear are motivating reasons for belief, even in the good case—at least, if we assume that motivating reasons are simply those considerations that provide rationalising explanations.

On the other hand, even an anti-disjunctivist about perceptual experience should accept that we can say, in this case, that Manish believes that there is a banana tree before him because there is a banana tree before him and he can see it. This is, after all, obviously true. Again, though, this explanation is a

---

<sup>4</sup> Perceptual disjunctivism simply claims that what makes this true, when it is true, is *either* that he perceives a banana tree *or* that he merely seems to perceive a banana tree. See, in particular, Hinton (1973).

rationalisation: it shows us, just as well as the explanation in terms of appearances, what Manish sees in favour of believing that there is a banana tree before him. So it seems that his being in a veridical perceptual state of seeing the tree also rationalises and ‘motivates’ his belief. If this is right, then regardless of our view of the metaphysics of perceptual experience, we should recognise that the subject in the good case has at least two motivating reasons for their perceptual belief: a fact about what they can see and a fact about how things appear. Disjunctivists and anti-disjunctivists differ on the nature of the entities in virtue of which these facts obtain, but it is not at all clear that this should matter for the sake of understanding the subject’s belief from the subject’s point of view. In explaining an action or belief, it will always be possible to make reference to a variety of things of different ontological kinds.

Consider a case of action. Suppose there is a fire in my building. Smelling smoke and hearing the fire alarm, I acquire the belief and the knowledge that there is a fire. In light of this, I exit the building. All of the following explanations might be true at once:

1. I leave the building because there is a fire.
2. I leave the building because I believe there is a fire.
3. I leave the building because I know there is a fire.
4. I leave the building because I smell smoke.
5. I leave the building because I hear the alarm.
6. I leave the building because I want to stay alive.
7. I leave the building because I am afraid of fire.

These explanations refer, variously, to facts about my situation, to the fire, to sensory states, epistemic states, and conative and emotional states. The list

could be extended. Each of (1)–(7) reveals something about the point I saw in doing what I was doing: each gives a rationalisation of my action. These rationalisations do not compete. Rather, each one gives a part of the full picture, but a big enough part such that, given the right context and background knowledge, it will suffice on its own to make my action intelligible.<sup>5</sup>

It might be objected that this deflationary line of argument works only if we assume a minimalist characterisation of motivating reasons of the sort Fogal advocates. That is fair enough, but we would then need to be told what further content the notion of a motivating reason is meant to have such that the minimalist characterisation is inadequate.<sup>6</sup> It seems that, to create a genuine issue, it would have to be something more than that a motivating reason makes a belief (action, etc.) intelligible from the subject's perspective. But Mitova's objection to MRD was precisely that it separates motivating reasons too much from the subject's perspective, so it is not clear what further content she might take the notion of a motivating reason to have. At the same time, there is something intuitively compelling about her suggestion that the difference between a factive or world-involving state and a subjectively indistinguishable non-factive state could not make a difference to the subject's perspective in a way that was relevant to understanding their rational response to how things

---

<sup>5</sup> In Fogal's (2018) terms, (1)–(7) form an 'explanatory cluster'.

<sup>6</sup> Cunningham (forthcoming) argues that debates about the ontology of motivating reasons are best understood as motivated by different conceptions of rationality. This would, I think, support my suggestion that the disjunctivism about rationalisation discussed in the next section is a more perspicuous framing of the issue than MRD.

seem to them from that perspective. I want to suggest that MRD is the wrong target for this worry, though: the core issue is better expressed in terms of a further disjunctivist thesis, disjunctivism about *rationalisation*.

#### 4. Disjunctivism about rationalisation

Consider another disjunctivist thesis, adapted from Cunningham (2019, 246):

##### **Rationalisation Disjunctivism (RD):**

In the good case, *S*'s belief that *p* is subject to a rationalising explanation of a kind which in its nature requires that (i) it be the case that *p* and (ii) *S* be related to the fact that *p* or to a relevant truth-maker of the fact that *p* by a factive or world-involving cognitive or perceptual state.

A number of aspects of this thesis will need some clarification.

First, the thesis is formulated in terms of *kinds of explanation*, which Cunningham distinguishes from particular explanations. A particular explanation is a proposition 'concerning some aspect of the world, individuated at the level of Fregean sense, given paradigmatically using a sentence of the form "*p* because *q*"' (Cunningham 2019, 241). A particular explanation involves three elements: an *explanandum* (*p*), an *explanans* (*q*), and a 'mode of presentation of some explanatorily efficacious relation that is represented to hold between the entities corresponding to' *p* and *q* (Cunningham 2019, 241). This last element, as you might expect, corresponds to the 'because' in the paradigmatic statement of the explanation. Our rationalisations (1)–(7) above are all different particular explanations because

each involves a different *explanans*. However, it might seem that they are all explanations of the same *kind*, in that they are all rationalisations. Each one makes its *explanandum* intelligible in the same very general way, namely by showing how the action to which it refers was something that made sense to do from the agent's perspective. Contrast an explanation like *I left the building because I was sleepwalking*, which makes the *explanandum* intelligible in a quite different way. In Cunningham's framework, to say that (1)–(7) are explanations of the same kind would be to say that the 'because' in each of (1)–(7) represents the same kind of explanatorily efficacious relation, which would, in these cases, be a *rational motivation* relation.<sup>7</sup> Since our interest here is in RD as applied to belief, and given the inaptness of talking of 'motivation' in this connection (see n. 1), I will talk instead in what follows of a *rational basing* relation.

RD, when cashed out in this way, claims that there is a kind of rational basing relation that can hold only in the good case: a rational basing relation that can only hold between a belief (or perhaps another cognitive response such as judgement) and a worldly fact, or a truth-maker, or a factive or world-involving state. This implies that the rational basing relation present in the good case is of a different kind from that present in the bad case, which holds only between a mere appearance and a belief. Recall that according to NRD, the subject's veridical perceptual state, in the good case, puts them in a position to

---

<sup>7</sup> It might be more plausible to say that some of (1)–(7) do not directly represent entities that stand in the relevant rational motivation relation to the action but, in context, allow us to infer the presence of some such entity. (4), (5) and (7) seem like strong candidates for this kind of analysis.

believe for a genuine (and conclusive) normative reason. RD adds to this that believing for such a reason provides one's belief with a distinctive kind of rational intelligibility that the subject's belief in the bad case does not possess. This is not to say that the subject's belief in the bad case is unintelligible, but it might be to say that that belief possesses only an inferior, derivative kind of rational intelligibility (compare McDowell 2013; Roessler 2014). If this idea seems somewhat obscure at this point, it will hopefully become somewhat clearer when we come to consider arguments for and against RD.

Second, condition (ii) contains several disjunctions. This is because RD is intended to remain neutral on the debate, live among proponents of epistemological disjunctivism, about the nature of the perceptual states that ground perceptual knowledge. The standard version of epistemological disjunctivism understands this state as one of *seeing that p*: a state of perceptual awareness of a fact (McDowell 1995, 1998, 2008; Pritchard 2012). However, this is not the only way to formulate the core thesis of epistemological disjunctivism, and some have argued that it may be better to understand the perceptual states that ground perceptual knowledge as states of simple object perception or 'thing seeing' (French 2016, see also 2013, 2019). Either view is, I think, compatible with the central idea of rationalisation disjunctivism.

My formulation of (ii) also constitutes a major difference from Cunningham's (2019) formulation of rationalisation disjunctivism. In Cunningham's version, the distinctive kind of rationalisation in the good case depends on *S's knowing that p*. In this he follows a number of authors who have argued that one can act, believe, and so on because *p*—in the rationalising sense of 'because'—only if one knows that *p* (Hornsby 2008; Hyman 1999; Roessler

2014; Williamson 2000). On the view I will propose below, perceptual awareness can put a subject in the position to believe because  $p$ , this perceptual awareness being prior to knowledge. We might understand this as a special case: it may be that in general the ability to do things because  $p$  requires knowledge that  $p$ , *except* where one has some other more direct kind of awareness with respect to that fact. This is, I think, consistent with the main motivation for the view that this ability depends on knowledge, which is that it offers the best explanation of why explanations of the relevant kind are not available in cases where the agent's belief that  $p$  is false, irrational, or 'Gettiered'. I discuss this issue in more detail later.

I suggested earlier that Mitova's argument against MRD raises a genuine concern, but that MRD was perhaps not the most perspicuous way of characterising its target. I suggest that the real issue is better understood as concerning RD. Indeed, Mitova's argument against MRD bears significant similarities to what I have elsewhere argued is the basic argument against RD (Phillips 2021). Briefly, the latter argument runs as follows.<sup>8</sup> Start from the good case: S believes that  $p$  because S can see that  $p$ . Of such a case, we can say that S believes that  $p$  because it seems to S that  $p$ . We can also say that were it not the case that it seems to S that  $p$ , S would not believe that  $p$ . However, if it were the case that it seems to S that  $p$  but in fact not- $p$ , S would still believe that  $p$ . Moreover, in each of the counterfactual cases where S believes that  $p$ , this belief would be intelligible. I argue, adapting Yablo's (2003) framework for assessing

---

<sup>8</sup> My 2021 paper is primarily concerned with action; I here put the argument in terms of belief, but the basic idea is the same.

causal relevance, that this suggests that the non-factive condition—in our examples, its seeming to S that  $p$ —is ‘better proportioned’ to the *explanandum* than the factive or world-involving condition, and that this suggests that the latter’s being factive or world-involving is not explanatorily relevant. Or at least, it is only explanatorily relevant because it is relevant to the obtaining of the more general, non-factive condition: the non-factive condition is, so to speak, the core of the rationalisation. As Mitova says in objecting to MRD, it is how things seem from the agent’s point of view that constitutes the perspective from which a rational response ‘makes sense’.

This might seem to constitute a compelling case against RD. However, it is not in principle irresistible, since the argument depends on an assumption which could itself be challenged, namely that the explanatory condition common between the good case and the bad case is no less fundamental than that which is special to the good case. If a case can be made that this assumption is false, then the disjunctivist about rationalisation has a response to the proportionality argument. I suggest (in Phillips 2021) that we can read proponents of rationalisation disjunctivism as taking just this position. Specifically, McDowell (2013) and Roessler (2014) each seem to endorse a conception of rationality as essentially a capacity to respond to normative reasons, in which *responding to a normative reason* plays a primary role in characterising the nature of the capacity and is ontologically prior to the kind of ‘defective’ exercise exhibited when someone acts or believes for a merely apparent reason.

However, to say that such a conception of rationality is possible does not show that it is correct. Absent some specific motivation for that view of

rationality, we might well think that the proportionality argument gives us sufficient reason to reject RD. However, it does help us to see the form that a defence of RD could take. If a positive case can be made for thinking that we should understand the rationality or first-personal intelligibility of the subject's belief in the bad case as somehow secondary to the kind of rationality or intelligibility that the corresponding belief enjoys in the good case, such that the latter form of intelligibility is primary or more fundamental, this would suggest that the condition in the good case is more fundamental, in the relevant sense, than that in the bad case. I will attempt to make such a case shortly, after making some further clarifications about RD.<sup>9</sup>

## 5. NRD and RD

Having characterised RD, I want to make a few comments about its relationship to the other forms of disjunctivism we have so far considered. I earlier noted a doubt as to whether NRD is an adequate representation of McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism. This is in part because it seems to me plausible

---

<sup>9</sup> Roessler (2014) does make some attempt to motivate the relevant view of rationality, though both Cunningham (2019) and I (Phillips 2021) identify important gaps in his argument. Cunningham also makes his own case for his version of RD. Both Roessler and Cunningham, it is worth noting, are concerned with responding to *known* facts, and neither is concerned with the special issues of perceptual knowledge that are the focus of this paper. If either Roessler's or Cunningham's arguments is successful, they might be seen as complementary to the argument I present below, but they are to a large extent independent and orthogonal, despite the common interest in disjunctivist views of rationalisation.

to read McDowell as committed to something like RD as well. In a relatively recent paper, for instance, he says the following:

Suppose we know that a subject's belief that things are thus and so has the rational intelligibility that a belief has when it is a response to an experience in which things appear to be thus and so. If we only know that much, we do not know something we ought to want to know about the belief's character as a manifestation of the subject's rationality. Is the experience one that reveals things to be thus and so? In that case the belief's rational grounding in the experience is of a sort that qualifies it as knowledgeable. (McDowell 2013, 25)

He goes on to acknowledge that the belief in the good case is intelligible in the same way as the belief in the bad case, but that 'our resources for rational understanding are not limited to the resources that afford that kind of intelligibility':

[T]he kind of intelligibility that is common to both disjuncts [i.e., the good and bad cases] needs to be understood in terms of the kind of intelligibility that is distinctive of the 'better' disjunct. The latter kind of intelligibility is prior in the order of understanding. (McDowell 2013, 26)

This sounds like a statement of RD.

Of course, to say that a leading proponent of view A also endorses view B does not mean that view B is a necessary part of view A, and I do not want to engage in a terminological dispute about what views really count as 'epistemological disjunctivism'. McDowell may endorse both NRD and RD,

but they are still separable, and we might conclude, with Mitova, that we can enjoy the theoretical benefits of epistemological disjunctivism with fewer costs by endorsing only the former. While this seems to me a perfectly coherent position, it is worth considering whether RD might bring any advantages along with its possible costs. I will argue that it does. My central claim is that the conception of rational intelligibility characterised by RD is the best way for one who endorses NRD to make sense of a certain kind of ‘undercutting’ perceptual defeat. In order to develop the argument, though, it will be helpful to have a specific version of NRD to work with.

### *5.1 Normative reasons disjunctivism: a specification*

I propose to adopt a view that is somewhat unorthodox even within epistemological disjunctivism: the view that, paradigmatically, the normative reason that justifies one’s belief that  $p$  when one believes that  $p$  directly on the basis of visual experience is the very fact that  $p$ . Call this the *fact view*. Epistemological disjunctivists more commonly identify the reason for a perceptual belief that  $p$  with the fact that the subject sees that  $p$  (e.g. McDowell 1995, 2008; Pritchard 2012). Call this the *seeing-that view*.

As Schnee (2016) argues, the fact view has a number of advantages over the seeing-that view. First, the fact view seems to correspond better to what kinds of things we attend to in forming beliefs about our environment through perception: we attend in the first instance to the visible things in our environment, not to our visual experience of them as such. Second, Schnee argues that the fact view better addresses the basing problem, one of the major challenges to epistemological disjunctivism. There is a strong case for thinking

that what it is to see that  $p$  is simply to know that  $p$  on the basis of vision (Williamson 2000; French 2012, 2013). Assuming that knowing that  $p$  entails believing that  $p$ , this would mean that one who sees that  $p$  necessarily already believes that  $p$ , and indeed that what it is to see that  $p$  is in part to believe that  $p$ . This strongly suggests that the seeing-that view is viciously circular.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, its being the case that  $p$  does not already involve the subject's believing that  $p$ , and it is clear that its being the case that  $p$  could in principle be causally and explanatorily prior to a subject's believing that  $p$ . To that extent, the fact view does better than the seeing-that view.

One might nonetheless have reservations, because it might seem that for one's basis for believing that  $p$  to be simply that  $p$  would still involve some form of circularity. Indeed, the fact view does involve at least one form of circularity, namely logical circularity. If we represent the justification the subject has for believing that  $p$  in the form of an argument, the fact view will represent it as an argument simply applying the repetition rule:

$$\begin{array}{c} P \\ \hline P \end{array}$$

This argument is clearly logically circular, but as Schnee argues (2016, 1115), this circularity is not in itself vicious but virtuous: logically speaking, it is hard to see what *better* basis there could be for believing that  $p$  than the very fact that  $p$ . What would be vicious is if, for one's belief that  $p$  to be based on the fact that

---

<sup>10</sup> Schnee (2016) presents this argument in much more detail than I can give here, including addressing possible responses from the proponent of the seeing-that view.

*p*, one would need already to believe that *p*. That would be the case, for instance, if a subject is necessarily in the position to believe for the reason that *p* only if they know that *p*—a view we considered earlier. However we can, I think, reject that view, at least in this strict form.

The primary argument for the claim that knowledge is necessary for responding to a fact is an inference to the best explanation. Rationalisations of the form ‘S V-s because *p*’, where that *p* is a fact to which S is responding, seem not to be available in just the kinds of cases in which S does not know that *p*: cases where it is not true that *p*, cases where S’s belief that *p* is unjustified, Gettier cases and so on. The kinds of examples employed in such arguments, though, are ones in which it is already assumed that the subject believes that *p*: Edmund is skating near the edge of the pond because he believes that the ice in the middle is thin; we ask what would make it true that he is skating near the edge because the ice in the middle *is* thin (Hornsby 2008).

There are good grounds for not generalising conclusions drawn from such examples too readily to the kind of case we are interested in. The latter concern beliefs based not on inferences from premises the subject believes, but directly on perceptual experience of the environment. Where the fact in response to which one believes or acts lies beyond the limits of one’s present experience, it is plausible that one’s ability to respond to that fact must be mediated by one’s believing that the fact obtains. The arguments of Hyman, Hornsby and others could be taken to show that in such cases, it is knowledge that makes the difference between acting because *p* and merely acting because one believes that *p*. But if perceptual experience makes one’s environment directly cognitively accessible to one, without mediation by belief, we might think that

this access could put us in a position to respond rationally to facts without the mediation of belief or factual knowledge.<sup>11</sup> This of course raises important questions about how exactly we should understand this state of visual awareness such that we can make sense of the claim that it puts its subject in the position to believe on the basis of facts about their surroundings—whether, for instance, it would have to be a state with conceptual, propositional or representational content, or whether simple object perception could do the job. This issue has been discussed at length elsewhere, including by Schnee (2016, sec. 2; see also, e.g., French 2020; Kalderon 2011). For now I will assume that some adequate account can be given.

## 5.2 *NRD without RD*

I have proposed the fact view as a specification of NRD. The key claim is that the subject in the good case has a normative reason for believing that  $p$  that they do not have in the bad case: the fact that  $p$ . The subject's perceptual experience is what puts them in a position to believe for this reason—that is, to believe that  $p$  because  $p$ , in a rationalising sense of 'because'. This is consistent with the rejection of RD. RD, recall, says:

In the good case,  $S$ 's belief that  $p$  is subject to a rationalising explanation of a kind which in its nature requires that (i) it be the

---

<sup>11</sup> This would be consistent with Williamson's suggestion that the ability to do things for the reason that  $p$  is explained by the knowledge that  $p$ , but not with Hyman's stronger claim that to have that ability is *what it is* to know that  $p$  (see Hyman 1999; Williamson 2000, 46).

case that  $p$  and (ii)  $S$  be related to the fact that  $p$  or to a relevant truth-maker of the fact that  $p$  by a factive or world-involving cognitive or perceptual state.

On the fact view specification of NRD, we can say that a certain rationalisation of the subject's belief in the good case—one of the form *S believes that p because p*—has a special significance in that it both makes  $S$ 's belief rationally intelligible and, at the same time, identifies a conclusive normative reason for which  $S$  believes: it performs a dual function, rationalising and justifying at a single stroke (compare Davidson 1980, 8). The neutral rationalisation *S believes that p because it visually appears to S as if p*, which can be given in both good and bad cases, rationalises  $S$ 's belief, but is (on NRD) consistent with  $S$ 's not believing that  $p$  for a normative reason. To say all this is not yet to endorse RD, because it is consistent with all this to say that the 'factive' rationalisation does not make the subject's belief intelligible or show it to be rational *in a way that essentially depends* on the obtaining of the fact that that rationalisation cites, the fact that  $p$ . It could be that, for the purposes of making the subject's belief rationally intelligible, its being the case that  $p$  matters because it is part of the story as to why it seems to  $S$  as if  $p$ : having the fact that  $p$  made visually manifest is one way in which things can visually seem to one as if  $p$ , and it is (for the kinds of reasons Mitova emphasises) how things seem that matters for making a subject's responses rationally intelligible. So the fact view version of NRD does not immediately entail RD. However, as I will now argue, there are, for the proponent of NRD, significant benefits to adopting RD.

## 6. A case for rationalisation disjunctivism

Consider another example. Nimol, an experienced birder, is out on the lake hoping to see a painted stork, a bird easily recognisable even to the novice by its conspicuous pink tertiary feathers. She sees in a tree before her what appears to be a painted stork. Based on her visual experience, Nimol believes that there is a painted stork in the tree. Her belief is rational and rationally intelligible. As it happens, the belief is also correct: the thing in the tree really is a painted stork. Suppose, though, that a companion now informs her that some practical joker has recently released onto the lake a flock of milky stork (a closely related species) whose feathers have been cleverly painted to make them practically indistinguishable from the painted stork without close inspection. Upon learning this, Nimol rationally suspends judgement as to whether the bird in the tree before her is a real painted stork or a painted milky stork. As things now seem to her, she no longer has an adequate rational basis for believing that there is a painted stork in the tree. And it seems she is right about this, even if there really is a painted stork in the tree. Even if her visual experience is of the right kind to give her the right kind of access to a (logically) conclusive normative reason for believing that there is a painted stork in the tree, as NRD suggests, the rational support provided by that reason is defeated by the salient possibility that her experience is misleading. Why is this?

We can divide the story into a pair of cases, separated by Nimol's discovery that she is on 'fake stork lake'. We might, considering them from her point of view, call them the *apparent good case* and the *possible bad case*. The difference between the cases is just Nimol's knowledge that there are fake painted storks in the area. This knowledge seems to defeat whatever rational support her experience provides for believing that the thing she sees is a real painted stork.

What I want to consider is why that knowledge might have this effect, and in particular how we should explain this if we endorse NRD.

Absent defeaters, Nimol's experience gives her a justification for believing that there is a painted stork before her. As we have seen, that justification can, on the fact view specification of NRD, be represented abstractly as an argument employing the repetition rule. Considering a justification in this way, there seem to be three very general ways in which it might be defeated. First, one might be given 'rebutting' evidence: reason to believe the negation of the conclusion of the argument. Second, one might have reason to doubt one or more of the argument's premises. Third, something might call into question the connection between the premises and the conclusion.<sup>12</sup>

The fact that Nimol is on fake stork lake does not defeat her justification in the first way. Not everything that looks like a painted stork on fake stork lake is a fake painted stork—there are real painted storks too. The fact that she is on fake stork lake does of course provide some statistical evidence that any stork with pink tertiaries might not be a painted stork, but Nimol's initial justification for believing that the thing in the tree is a painted stork was not, for the epistemological disjunctivist, statistical or inductive: it was the fact that the thing in the tree is a painted stork. The relationship between premise and conclusion, when we represent the justification in argument form, is monotonic. It cannot be defeated by merely statistical evidence. Similarly, the fact that Nimol is on fake stork lake cannot defeat her justification in the third

---

<sup>12</sup> Compare the distinction between rebutting and undercutting defeaters in Pollock (1986).

way, by calling into question the connection between 'premise' and 'conclusion'. Again, that connection is straightforward entailment. Indeed, on the fact view specification of NRD, on which the argument employs the repetition rule, it is the clearest and most straightforward kind of entailment there is.

It seems, then, that Nimol's being on fake stork lake must defeat her justification by somehow 'attacking' its premise, the premise that *that is a painted stork*. But there is a puzzle about how to make sense of this. Where a belief is based on inference from other things one believes, this kind of defeat is easy enough to understand. Suppose you believe that A is G because you believe that A is F and that all F things are G, but you then learn that in fact many F things are not G. This information defeats your justification for believing that A is G, and it is easy to explain how: it defeats your justification for believing one of the premises that provided your justification for believing that A is G, namely the premise that all F things are G. You are no longer entitled to make inferences from that premise. This cannot be what is going on in Nimol's case, because her belief is based not on some other belief but on her visual experience. Such an experience is not such as to be justified or unjustified, and whereas defeating information of the kind at issue here will rationally lead to suspension of the premise-belief, the knowledge that there are fake storks in the area has, we can assume, no relevant effect on her visual experience. It cannot be that Nimol's justification for believing that there is a painted stork in the tree is defeated because the attitude on which that belief is based is itself defeated. Why, then, does the new information defeat her justification for believing that there is a painted stork there?

The core of the explanation must, I suggest, be that the presence of fakes in the vicinity gives Nimol reason to doubt that she is seeing a painted stork, which is to say, per NRD, that it gives her reason to doubt that the visual experience to which she is subject is of the right kind to give her conclusive reason to believe that there is a painted stork in the tree (compare Martin 2001, sec. 2; Silins 2014, sec. 3). This explanation should look quite natural to a proponent of NRD. On that view, after all, it is veridical perception and not mere appearance that provides a subject with conclusive reason to form beliefs about the world. At the same time, however, the explanation imputes a disjunctivist structure to the rationalisation of perceptual belief. In other words, it commits us to RD.

Anyone can and will make the relevant distinction between kinds of perceptual state, of course: everyone will agree that there is a meaningful distinction between being visually presented with a painted stork and being in a state in which it seems to one that one is visually presented with a painted stork. But recall that, for the opponent of RD, this difference is not relevant for the purposes of rationalising the subject's beliefs. What matters for these purposes is just how things seem to the subject. Whether things are as they appear makes no difference to the power of appearances to rationalise beliefs. If Nimol's defeating information makes no difference to how things appear to her, then, why is it so significant for the rationality of believing on the basis of that appearance? Here is where a disjunctivist conception of the rationality of perceptual belief, as characterised by RD, comes in. The difference when Nimol learns that she is on fake stork lake is that she now has reason to doubt whether she was believing that there is a stork in the tree *because there is* a stork in the

tree. Veridical perception puts one in a position to believe in response to the facts: evidence that one is not veridically perceiving is therefore evidence that one is not in a position to believe in response to the facts, in other words that one's beliefs that things are thus and so are not rationalised by their actually being thus and so.

Expressed in this way—in terms of rationalisation and believing in response to the facts—it might seem that I am suggesting an excessively intellectualised view about why the subject in the possible bad case would suspend judgement. Surely it is not plausible that Nimol stops believing that there is a painted stork before her because she comes to believe that there is a significant possibility that were she so to believe, her belief would not be rationalised by the fact that there is a painted stork there.<sup>13</sup> It would be an unwelcome implication of my account if an ordinary subject had to entertain such a thought in order to rationally suspend judgement in such a case, but I do not believe that the account does imply this. The central claim is that the paradigmatic rationalisation of the subject's belief in the good case is of the form: S believes that *p* because *p*. If the subject is reflectively self-aware of her reasons for belief, she will be aware of herself as believing that *p* because *p*—she will understand the fact that *p* as her reason for believing that *p*.<sup>14</sup> She will also understand, under some description, that what puts her in a position to believe for that reason is her perceptual experience, her seeing (in our example) a painted

---

<sup>13</sup> Thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this issue.

<sup>14</sup> Again see Schnee (2016) for arguments that this is a plausible view of how we ordinarily understand our own reasons for perceptual belief.

stork.<sup>15</sup> That is just to say: it is not opaque to her *how* she is aware of the fact that *p*. If the subject is, unbeknown to her, in the bad case, then we cannot rationalise her belief by saying that she believes that *p* because *p*, and the fact that *p* cannot be the reason for which she believes that *p*. We have to say that she believes that *p* because it seems to her that *p*, or because it looks to her as if *p*. But this is not a difference that appears from within her perspective in the same way. It is not that she must, since it is not true that *p*, believe *on the basis* that it appears to her that *p*. If we represent her justification for believing that *p* (her 'subjective' justification; her 'justification' that does not in fact justify, or not in the same sense) in terms of an argument, it will still be: *p* therefore *p*. Now, however, the argument is unsound. *That p* (not *the fact* that *p*) is her 'apparent reason' for believing that *p*. We represent this by saying that she believes that *p* because it appears to her as if *p*. This is not to say that she attends to the appearing as such. She attends to her environment, which appears to her in a misleading way. She believes because, as it seems to her, she has a very good reason to: when she attends to her environment, she is attending, it seems to her, to (truth-makers of) the fact that *p*. If she is reflective, it will seem to her that she is aware of that fact through visual perception. Unfortunately, in the bad case, she is mistaken about all this.

---

<sup>15</sup> Some would hold that self-awareness of such conditions is a necessary condition on believing for a reason at all. I won't take a stand on that issue here. It is possible, though, and worth noting, that requiring such conditions would be one way of retaining, consistently with the fact view interpretation of NRD, the McDowellian insistence that the self-consciousness of perception is crucial for perceptual knowledge.

When the subject in the apparent bad case learns about the presence of defeaters, she learns something that raises the possibility that she is not, after all, seeing a painted stork: she learns that she may be in the bad case. Here, she *does* need to reflect at a higher level, on the nature of her experience, or at least on the nature of appearances. For reasons discussed above, if her justification is of the form  $p$  *therefore*  $p$ , the new evidence cannot defeat her justification simply because it is evidence that it might not be the case that  $p$ . The new evidence is relevant because it is evidence that how things visually seem might not be reliable: it raises the possibility, in our example, that something that looks like a painted stork may not in fact be one—that it might merely appear that there is a painted stork before one. It is not excessively intellectualising to think that the subject who rationally suspends belief in light of undercutting defeat entertains such a thought; indeed, it is hard to see how one could characterise her situation without appeal to something like this (Martin 2001). The demand that I am suggesting we should appeal to RD to answer is the demand to explain why, from the perspective of a view on which veridical perception provides conclusion reasons, the defeating evidence should have the significance that it has—why learning that one might be subject to a misleading appearance should mean that it is no longer rational for one to believe on the basis of those appearances. I have argued that one who endorses NRD cannot meet this demand whilst rejecting RD and insisting that whether experiences are veridical makes no difference to their power to rationalise beliefs.

## 7. Conclusion

We began with a question of interpretation, about what is meant by such terms as ‘rational support’ or ‘epistemic grounds’ in statements of epistemological disjunctivism. We found that seeking to articulate these ideas in terms of *reasons* raised a question as to whether epistemological disjunctivism is a purely normative view about the kinds of justifications that can be given for perceptual beliefs in good and bad cases respectively, or whether it is a normative-cum-psychological view about the nature of the rational powers manifested in believing on the basis of perception and, for the same reasons, about the relationships between different kinds of rationalising explanation of belief—a view committed to disjunctivism about the rationalisation of perceptual beliefs. While I suggested that McDowell can be plausibly read as committing to the latter, the central argument of this paper is not in the end primarily interpretative. Rather, I have sought to motivate a substantive claim: that even if epistemological disjunctivists are concerned in the first instance with justification and the idea that the subject in the good case has a conclusive reason for their belief that the subject in the bad case lacks, there is reason for them to endorse disjunctivism about the rationalisation of perceptual belief, because this offers, consistent with that view of normative reasons for perceptual beliefs, the best explanation of a certain kind of undercutting defeat to which those beliefs are potentially susceptible.

To put it in less schematic terms, the point is that if our justification for believing something about our environment in the good case is provided by conclusive epistemic grounds, this should be reflected in some way in how we understand our own perceptually-based beliefs. When we believe that things are thus and so on the basis of their appearing to us to be thus and so, we at

least implicitly understand ourselves as believing this because things really are thus and so. As I have argued, it follows from this that the way in which a belief based on mere appearance makes sense to its subject is derivative from the way in which a belief based on perceptually-accessible facts makes sense to its subject. This means that factors that are ‘outside the subject’s perspective’, on a certain narrow construal of ‘the subject’s perspective’, are not necessarily irrelevant to representing the subject’s perspective on their own beliefs. But this, on the present view, is just to say that this narrow construal of ‘the subject’s perspective’—a construal on which whether the subject’s experience is veridical or not is irrelevant to characterising the subject’s perspective—is too narrow. In believing on the basis of perceptual experience, we implicitly take a view on what kind of experience we are subject to: we implicitly commit ourselves to the view that it is an experience of the kind that puts us in the position to believe in response to the facts. This implicit commitment is part of our understanding of our own beliefs and is thus part of our perspective on our own beliefs. That perspective is not neutral as to whether our beliefs are explained by the very facts in whose obtaining we believe. Because of this, such facts can make sense of a subject’s perceptually-based beliefs in a way that mere appearances cannot.

### **Acknowledgements**

This paper develops an argument that originated in my graduate research at University College London and was presented in a different form in my PhD thesis. The paper itself was initially drafted while I was a postdoc at the University of Fribourg and in the Thumos research group in Geneva. I have

benefited from the input of many teachers, friends and colleagues. I would particularly like to thank Charles Jansen, Ulrike Heuer, Jen Hornsby, Johannes Roessler, Jonathan Dancy, Hallvard Lillehammer, Fabrice Teroni, Arturs Logins and the epistemology reading group at Thumos. I am grateful to the reviewers for this journal, whose comments helped me to improve the paper significantly, especially by encouraging me to make the dialectic clearer, and to the editors for giving me the opportunity to do so. Finally, I am indebted to Mike Martin for his generous guidance and for the many discussions through which the main ideas in this paper, including the central argument, took shape.

### **Disclosure of interest**

The author reports no conflict of interest.

### **Funding**

This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council under a London Arts and Humanities Partnership Research Studentship; and the Swiss National Science Foundation under Grant PP00P1\_157441.

### **References**

- Alvarez, Maria. 2010. *Kinds of Reasons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cunningham, J.J. 2019. The Formulation of Disjunctivism About  $\phi$ -Ing for a Reason. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (275): 235–57.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/pq/pqy019>.
- Cunningham, J.J. forthcoming. The Matter of Motivating Reasons.  
*Philosophical Studies*.

- Dancy, Jonathan. 2000. *Practical Reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Davidson, Donald. 1980. *Essays on Actions and Events*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fogal, Daniel. 2018. Deflationary Pluralism about Motivating Reasons. In *The Factive Turn in Epistemology*, ed. Veli Mitova. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- French, Craig. 2012. Does Propositional Seeing Entail Propositional Knowledge? *Theoria* 78 (2): 115–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-2567.2012.01130.x>.
- French, Craig. 2013. Perceptual Experience and Seeing That p. *Synthese* 190 (10): 1735–51. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-013-0259-3>.
- French, Craig. 2016. The Formulation of Epistemological Disjunctivism. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 92 (1): 86–104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12105>.
- French, Craig. 2019. Epistemological Disjunctivism and Its Representational Commitments. In *New Issues in Epistemological Disjunctivism*, ed. Casey Doyle, Joe Milburn and Duncan Pritchard, 169–93. Abingdon: Routledge.
- French, Craig. 2020. Naive Realism, Representationalism, and the Rationalizing Role of Visual Perception. *Philosophical Issues* 30 (1): 102–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phis.12174>.
- Hinton, J.M. 1973. *Experiences: An Inquiry into Some Ambiguities*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Hornsby, Jennifer. 2008. A Disjunctive Conception of Acting for Reasons. In *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*, ed. Adrian Haddock and Fiona Macpherson, 244–61. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hyman, John. 1999. 'How Knowledge Works'. *Philosophical Quarterly* 49 (197): 433–51.
- Kalderon, Mark Eli. 2011. Before the Law. *Philosophical Issues* 21 (1): 219–44.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-6077.2011.00202.x>.
- Kolodny, Niko. 2005. Why Be Rational? *Mind* 114 (455): 509–63.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzi509>.
- Martin, M.G.F. 2001. Epistemic Openness and Perceptual Defeasibility. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 63 (2): 441–48.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2001.tb00117.x>.
- Martin, M.G.F. 2006. On Being Alienated. In *Perceptual Experience*, ed. Tamar Szabó Gendler and John Hawthorne. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McDowell, John. 1995. Knowledge and the Internal. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55 (4): 877–93.
- McDowell, John. 1998. Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge. In *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality*, 369–94. London: Harvard University Press.
- McDowell, John. 2008. The Disjunctive Conception of Experience as Material for a Transcendental Argument. In *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*, ed. Adrian Haddock and Fiona Macpherson, 376–89. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McDowell, John. 2013. Acting in the Light of a Fact. In *Thinking About Reasons: Themes From the Philosophy of Jonathan Dancy*, ed. David Bakhurst, Brad

- Hooker and Margaret Olivia Little, 13–28. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mitova, Veli. 2019. Either Epistemological or Metaphysical Disjunctivism. In *New Issues in Epistemological Disjunctivism*, ed. Casey Doyle, Joe Milburn, and Duncan Pritchard, 194–214. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Parfit, Derek. 2001. Rationality and Reasons. In *Exploring Practical Philosophy: From Action to Values*, ed. Dan Egonsson, Jonas Josefsson, Björn Petersson, and Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen, 17–41. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Phillips, Edgar. 2021. From the Agent's Point of View: The Case against Disjunctivism about Rationalisation. *Philosophical Explorations* 24 (2): 262–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13869795.2021.1908581>.
- Pollock, John. 1986. *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*. Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Pritchard, Duncan. 2012. *Epistemological Disjunctivism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roessler, Johannes. 2014. Reason Explanation and the Second-Person Perspective. *Philosophical Explorations* 17 (3): 346–57.
- Schnee, Ian. 2016. Basic Factive Perceptual Reasons. *Philosophical Studies* 173 (4): 1103–18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-015-0532-z>.
- Silins, Nicholas. 2014. The Agony of Defeat? *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 88 (3): 505–32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12087>.
- Smith, Michael. 1994. *The Moral Problem*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sylvan, Kurt. 2015. What Apparent Reasons Appear to Be. *Philosophical Studies* 172 (3): 587–606. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-014-0320-1>.

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

Yablo, Stephen. 2003. Causal Relevance. *Philosophical Issues* 13 (1): 316–29.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1533-6077.00016>.