Knowledge as a Non-Normative Relation

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Abstract

According to a view I'll call *Epistemic Normativism* (EN), knowledge is normative in the sense in which paradigmatically normative properties like justification are normative. This paper argues against EN in two stages and defends a positive non-normativist alternative. After clarifying the target in §1, I consider in §2 some arguments for EN from the premise that knowledge entails justification (the "Entailment Thesis"). I first raise some worries about inferring constitution from entailment. I then rehearse the reasons why some epistemologists reject the Entailment Thesis and argue that a non-normativist picture provides the best explanation of all the intuitions surrounding this thesis, favorable and unfavorable. On this picture, human knowledge is a structured non-normative complex that has as one of its parts a justification-making property, analogous in role to good-making properties like pleasurableness. After giving three arguments against EN in §3 and answering an objection in §4, I turn in §5 to further develop the positive view sketched in §2. In §6, I take stock and conclude.

1 Introduction

It is widely believed that epistemology is a normative enterprise. A central reason for this belief is that some central objects of epistemological study—e.g., epistemic justification—are themselves plausibly normative. Kim (1988: 383) articulated this reason well in his response to Quine's "Epistemology Naturalized":

> [J]ustification manifestly is normative. [...] Just as it is the business of normative ethics to delineate the conditions under which acts and decisions are justified from the moral point of view, so it is the business of epistemology to identify and analyze the conditions under which beliefs...are justified from the epistemological point of view. It is probably only a historical accident that we speak of 'normative ethics' but not 'normative epistemology'. Epistemology is a normative discipline as much as, and in the same sense as, normative ethics.

Importantly, it doesn't follow from Kim's initial claims that epistemology is a *wholly* normative enterprise. One might agree that justification is normative but hold that there are other important objects of epistemological study that aren't. Indeed, one might hold that

epistemology's *core topic*—viz., knowledge—is not normative. Predictably, however, Kim assumed that knowledge is to be analyzed in terms of justification and hence that "[i]f justification drops out of epistemology, knowledge itself drops out of epistemology" (389). Granting Kim's background assumptions, this reasoning is attractive: since justification is normative and it is a constituent of knowledge, knowledge is normative too.[1]

Such thoughts are, of course, not uniquely intimated by Kim (1988). They remain part of the orthodoxy about knowledge. While not all analyses of knowledge invoke justification, most that don't appeal to similar normative properties (e.g., rationality, evidence, obligation, or entitlement), or to some other kind of normative property (e.g., virtue or responsibility).[2] Many epistemologists not actively engaged in Gettierology also agree that knowledge is normative. The view is, for example, upheld by fans of the Sellarsian dictum that knowledge is a "standing in the space of reasons", though these epistemologists seem not to be in the business of analyzing knowledge.[3] I'll call this widespread idea *Epistemic Normativism* (EN), with "epistemic" used in the etymologically strict sense.

On the most interesting version of EN—*Metaphysical EN*—knowledge has a normative nature in the way that paradigmatically normative properties like virtue, permissibility, and goodness have a normative nature. Note that the claim is not merely that knowledge has normative *significance*. In discussing normativism about meaning, Horwich (1998: 98) illustrated the distinction we need by noting that while the property of being a human being is (perhaps) normatively significant, "no one would dream of arguing [that it isn't] an intrinsically non-normative, biological property." Metaphysical EN claims that knowledge is "intrinsically" normative—or, better, has normativity as part of its *constitution*—not merely something we have reason to care about. Hence, one cannot establish EN just by noting that knowledge features in normative principles (e.g., of assertion) or is a fundamental epistemic value. Non-normative items in relevant sense can feature in such principles (e.g., truth) and be fundamental values (e.g., pleasure).

Not all who sound friendly to EN hold Metaphysical EN. A different view—*Conceptual EN*—holds that the concept of knowledge is normative. This view isn't, of course, incompatible with Metaphysical EN. Followers of Jackson (1998) and Chalmers (2012) who give

[1]Kim (1988) seems to endorse this reasoning, but attribution is complicated by the fact that he alternates between talking about justification and knowledge themselves and talking about the *concepts* of justification and knowledge. The alternation occurs within single sentences. Consider: "Justification is what makes knowledge itself a normative concept" (383) and "Knowledge itself is a normative concept" (389). I think Kim is charitably interpreted as holding that knowledge itself is normative because it has a normative property as a constituent. His vacillation between concept and phenomena talk is perhaps explicable by the fact that "concept" exhibits something like the content/state ambiguity of "belief": "concept" can refer to an *object* of conception as well as a *vehicle* of conception, much like "belief" can refer to a proposition believed or to a state of belief.

[2]Representatives of the first class of theories include Swain (1981) and Schroeder (2015b), who invoke reasons, Peacocke (1986: 153), who appeals to rationality, Chisholm (1977), who invokes being evident, Ginet (1975), who appeals to justification but defines it in terms of obligation, Ayer (1956), who invokes the right to be sure, and Burge (1993, 2003), Wright (2004), and the later Peacocke (2004), who appeal to warrant and entitlement. While Plantinga (1993) also nominally invokes warrant, "warrant" is a technical term for him. Representatives of the second class of theories include Zagzebski (1996), Napier (2008), and ostensibly Greco (2010) and Sosa (2007)—though as I'll note later, Sosa in fact disavows EN.

[3]See McDowell (1995), Brandom (2000), and Rosenberg (2002).

conceptual analysis a central role in serious metaphysics may argue from Conceptual to Metaphysical EN. But some interested in both the concept of knowledge and the nature of knowledge might want to pry the views apart. Others who think that knowledge talk lacks a descriptive function might hold Conceptual without Metaphysical EN.[4] And yet others—e.g., fans of non-realist cognitivism *a la* Skorupski (2011) or Parfit (forthcoming)—might resist the "Metaphysical" label but accept the "Conceptual" label because they think normative properties are mere shadows of normative concepts.[5]

I will focus on Metaphysical EN and when I use "EN" without explicit qualification I will mean "Metaphysical EN". While my arguments will rely mainly on metaphysical premises, some might insist that the appeal of some premises rests on intuitions about concepts, or on assuming that concepts are infallible guides to phenomena. While I don't think my arguments trade on such intuitions or assumptions, I will note in §4 that it is anyway hard to separate Conceptual and Metaphysical EN if one isn't an expressivist (a view I set aside here), owing to special features of the concepts of normativity and knowledge.[6] So I think we may move from the negation of Conceptual EN to the negation of Metaphysical EN. But that argument isn't my main one.

Although EN is popular in one or the other form, it is not universally accepted. Assuming Kim got him right, Quine rejected EN. Other naturalized epistemologists may as well. Of course, it would beg the question against some versions of naturalism to assume that whatever is naturalistically acceptable is *ipso facto* non-normative. But if one accepts an analysis of knowledge that features only uncontroversially naturalistic properties, it is at least *coherent* to reject EN. Similar points apply to epistemologists like Foley (2004) who deny that justification is necessary for knowledge and divorce the theory of knowledge from the theory of justified belief: they reject a central motivation for EN and could coherently reject EN too. A third class of epistemologists worth mentioning as potential opponents are fans of Williamson's view that knowledge is a mental state. They could coherently reject EN as well, viewing knowledge as no more normative than other mental states.[7]

My aim is to oppose EN and sketch a positive non-normativist alternative. In a slogan, the alternative I'll recommend holds that knowledge is not a standing in the space of reasons but rather a non-normative precondition for standing in that space. My plan is as follows. In §2, I attack arguments for EN that proceed from the thesis that knowledge entails justification (the "Entailment Thesis"). I first raise some worries about inferring constitution from entailment. I then rehearse why some epistemologists reject the Entailment Thesis and argue that a non-normativist picture provides the best explanation of all the intuitions surrounding

[4]Consider the epistemic expressivism of Chrisman (2007) and Ridge (2007).

[5]Given the problem of creeping minimalism (see Dreier (2004)), it is unclear how this view differs from sophisticated expressivisms. Parfit (forthcoming) himself suggests a convergence between his outlook and that of some contemporary expressivists, though the latter insist on differences.

[6]Concepts can, of course, be understood in several ways, each with important roles to play. The version of Conceptual EN I consider the most interesting is one on which the concept of knowledge understood as a *Fregean sense* is normative. Concepts could also be understood as token Mentalese symbols; like Fodor (1999), I wouldn't claim that these often have any content beyond reference, and don't have them in mind.

[7]There may be a sense in which mental states like belief are "normative", but it is not the sense at issue here. See the disclaimer below.

this thesis, favorable and unfavorable. On this picture, human knowledge is a structured non-normative complex that has as a part a justification-making property, analogous in role to the good-making property of pleasurableness. After giving three arguments against EN in §3 and addressing an objection in §4, I develop in §5 a more detailed version of the positive view from §2. In §6, I take stock and conclude.

A Disclaimer

A disclaimer is in order before I proceed. There are several things that one may use "normative" to mean, and I should stress that I wouldn't deny that knowledge is normative in *some* senses. Here is a rough gloss on the sense I have in mind, which will get less rough. Something is normative in the sense I have in mind iff it is either identical to or partly constituted by a *paradigmatically normative item*. These items can be grouped into at least three classes:

- *Deontic* items, which include properties like permissibility, rightness, and wrongness;
- *Evaluative* items, which include thin properties like goodness *simpliciter* and goodness of a kind (a.k.a. attributive goodness), and thick ones like gloriousness and grossness;
- *Hypological* items,[8] which include the properties of blameworthiness, praiseworthiness, and excusability.

In meta-ethics, there is a project of trying to analyze all normativity in terms of a sparse class of normative items—consider, for example, the "reasons first" program, which proposes that the reason-relation is the sole fundamental normative item. If successful, this project would give us a much neater specification of "normative" along the above lines—e.g., a fact is normative iff it is a fact about reason-relations or analyzable in terms of such facts. But not everyone will like this kind of project. For that reason, I hesitate to invoke any such view in refining this rough gloss on what I have in mind by "normative".

Nonetheless, one might think that the normative domain has *some* structure even if one doesn't opt for a sparse fundamental level. Some things are normatively fundamental—perhaps there is no brief list—and some are derivatively normative. The hope of naturalism is to directly ground the normatively fundamental in the natural. The normative derivatives, though, have further normative structure, and so they get grounded in more normative stuff before being grounded in the natural. Accordingly, we should accept the following equivalence as non-trivial:

> (N) X is normative iff either (a) X is normatively fundamental or (b) X is at least partly analyzable in terms of something normatively fundamental.

(N) will play an implicit role in my argument. I think it is clear that knowledge is neither normatively fundamental nor a paradigm normative item. Accordingly, if knowledge has no

[8]This term is from Zimmerman (2002).

normative structure, we should deny that it is normative at all. My strategy, then, is to argue that knowledge has no normative structure.

To be maximally explicit, I should mention a few things that I wouldn't place under the heading of "normative":

- I wouldn't automatically place things that are "the norm" or "a norm" of some other things under this heading. Truth is a norm of assertion and belief, but it is not—or so most traditional epistemologists would agree—normative.
- I wouldn't automatically place things that are intrinsically good under this heading. Pleasure is (perhaps) intrinsically good but it is paradigmatically non-normative.
- I wouldn't automatically place something that is necessarily *subject to* a standard of correctness, even *essentially* subject to a standard of correctness, under this heading.

The last bullet point merits a comment. Many traditional epistemologists assume that belief is merely a psychological state that raises no questions for naturalism. Many fans of EN belong to this tradition. A few would part company by claiming that belief is "normative".[9] But proponents of the normativity of belief do not, or need not, claim that beliefs have as constituents *instantiations* of normative properties.[10] Rather, they claim that beliefs are essentially *subject to* normative standards which *may or may not be satisfied*. There is a clear distinction between the sense in which these writers deem belief "normative" and the sense in which justification is normative. I won't be using "normative" in such a way that knowledge would count as normative *merely because* it is constituted by a state essentially subject to a standard of correctness.

2 Against Entailment Arguments

2.1 Entailment Arguments

Why do so many epistemologists accept EN? The answer presumably has something to do with the widely endorsed connection between knowledge and justification. But a non-question-begging argument for EN cannot proceed from the premise that justification is a *constituent* of knowledge. Opponents of EN will reject that premise and give an alternative explanation of why it might seem appealing. The most that can be invoked non-question-beggingly on behalf of EN is the following weaker claim:

> **The Entailment Thesis**: As a matter of metaphysical necessity, if S knows that p, then S is justified in believing that p.[11]

[9] See McHugh and Whiting (2014) for an overview of the literature on this view.

[10] Davidson (1980) might be an exception.

[11] The consequent could be understood as concerning doxastic justification or merely propositional justification. The weaker version is all that the most explicit defender of EN—Schroeder (2015a)—invokes:

One argument from the Entailment Thesis to EN is the *Simple Entailment Argument*:

1. The Entailment Thesis is true.
2. If the Entailment Thesis is true, EN is true.
3. So, EN is true.

This argument is too simple. (2) is dubious. It is not implausible that some non-normative truths metaphysically entail some normative truths.[12] An uninteresting version of this thought is enshrined in the supervenience of the normative on the non-normative. More interestingly, the existence of any necessary principles of the form:

> If non-normative condition C obtains, then A-ing is justified/right/permissible/good. . . .

would underpin metaphysical entailments from the non-normative to the normative. And we don't have to go as far as defending generalism about normativity to find such principles. For there are some principles that anyone ought to accept, such as:

> If P is false, believing that P would be suboptimal from an epistemic point of view.

If we can specify necessary and sufficient conditions for justification in non-normative terms—a project executed by epistemologists of many stripes—we get an illustration of the same possibility of normative entailments from the non-normative.

Some might reply that invoking a stronger version of the Entailment Thesis could revive the Simple Entailment Argument. If one held that claims about knowledge *semantically* or *conceptually* entail claims about justification, and assumed that Conceptual EN supports Metaphysical EN, (2) might be more plausible. But it is implausible that claims about knowledge semantically or conceptually entail claims about justification. Epistemologists who reject the Entailment Thesis do not reveal an incomplete grasp of the meaning of "knows" or incomplete mastery of the concept of knowledge. Some further counterevidence is that

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> If you know that P, then it is rational—that is, not irrational—for you to believe that P. My claim that it is rational for you to believe that P is helpfully contrasted with the claim that you are rational in believing that P. Epistemologists often make a similar distinction between propositional and doxastic justification.... I happen to believe that it is also clearly true that if you know that P then not only is it rational for you to believe that P, but you are rational in believing that P. But it is only the weaker claim...that I will be assuming here.... (384)

While he mentions rationality here, elsewhere in the paper he equates rationality and justification.

Of course, most epistemologists assume that knowledge implies doxastic justification, since they also assume that knowledge implies belief. I doubt both assumptions for reasons that will become clear. I do think that knowledge entails some *ex post* normative status, to use Goldman (1979)'s more neutral terminology. I just doubt that the status is *justification* and the mental state to which it attaches is *belief*. For the moment, however, I will grant the stronger version of the Entailment Thesis.

[12]For doubts about the claim that non-normative propositions cannot *logically* entail normative ones, see Prior (1960), Karmo (1988), and Maitzen (2010). I'm focusing on a *metaphysical* entailment thesis. Below I also discuss and reject the theses that knowledge *semantically* and *conceptually* entails justification.

many entries found in a standard thesaurus under "knows" are non-normative: "is aware that", "is cognizant that", "recognizes that", "fathoms", "understands that", etc., all sound non-normative in the same way factive mental state verbs like "remembers that" do. It would be a mark against a semantic analysis of these words that it includes a normative constituent term. *Mutatis mutandis* for the concepts they express.

Of course, the Simple Entailment Argument is not the only route from the Entailment Thesis to EN. If the Entailment Thesis is true, its truth demands explanation. So the defender of EN could argue that EN provides the best or perhaps the only plausible way to explain its apparent truth. Call this the *Abductive Entailment Argument*.

This argument works only if the Entailment Thesis is both true and EN's opponent cannot provide a better explanation of its truth than EN's proponents. The opponent of EN can, I believe, do better. Indeed, I think the best alternatives to EN have an explanatory advantage that extant versions of EN lack: they can explain the intuitions that militate against the Entailment Thesis in a way that is consistent with its truth, and hence provide a more satisfying overall story. The Entailment Thesis is, after all, *controversial*. It conflicts with pre-theoretical intuition in cases of "low-grade" and animal knowledge.[13] Even if it is true, we need an explanation of the full range of intuitions surrounding it. This desideratum will yield an abductive argument *against* EN.

In what remains of this section, I'll rehearse the intuitive pull against the Entailment Thesis, and sketch a non-normativist picture that explains the full range of intuitions.

2.2 Animal Knowledge, Justification, and the Explanatory Order

Cases of "low grade" knowledge have struck a number of epistemologists as rendering the Entailment Thesis doubtful. While I hesitate to reject the Entailment Thesis just on the basis of these examples, I do think they suggest something important. What they suggest is that even if the Entailment Thesis is true, its truth is not best explained by a view on which knowledge is partially grounded in justification. These cases are better explained by a different kind of view which, though it preserves the Entailment Thesis, denies that justification partially grounds knowledge. This view will not, I should stress, ground justification in knowledge instead; rather, it will view *part* of knowledge as a justification-making characteristic, analogous in role to good-making features like pleasurableness.

Let's consider some familiar putative counterexamples to the Entailment Thesis, starting with the chicken-sexer. Many epistemologists find it plausible that the chicken-sexer can know the sex of a chick in virtue of the fact that his true belief about its sex manifests a reliable discriminatory ability. Some also find it implausible to describe the chicken-sexer as justifiably believing that the chick is of a particular sex, at least when he first begins to exercise this ability. Such examples were among Foley (1987)'s reasons for divorcing the theory of knowledge from the theory of justified belief. While Goldman (1967) didn't use

[13] While Schroeder (2015a) mentions the non-normative analyses of early Goldman, Armstrong, Dretske, and Nozick, he fails to discuss the main motivation for preferring these analyses to normative analyses, which is precisely that they seem to better fit cases of low-grade and animal knowledge.

this example in defending his causal theory of knowing, he suggests in his (1975: 112–114) that the chicken-sexer furnishes an example of knowledge without justified belief and provides further support for his (1967) approach. And perhaps the earliest use of the example is in Armstrong (1963), who later defended a causal theory much like Goldman (1967)'s.

One response is to insist that as long as we distinguish the activity of justifying and the status of being justified, we can still claim that the chicken-sexer has a justified belief.[14] I agree that this distinction is worth making. But notice that once the distinction is drawn, it becomes less plausible to think that the chicken-sexer's knowledge is explained by a justified belief that the chick is male. If there is an explanatory priority relation on display here, it is more plausibly that the chicken-sexer justifiably believes that the chick is male because he knows it is male. While I'll ultimately endorse neither order of explanation, it feels more intuitive to me to run the explanation from knowledge to justification rather than *vice versa*. So, even if cases of low-grade knowledge don't refute the Entailment Thesis, they still undermine the Abductive Entailment Argument.

The same point arises when we consider less radical putative counterexamples. While Goldman (1999) uses cases of forgotten evidence against internalist accounts of justification, he originally used these cases in his (1967) against the Entailment Thesis. As with the chicken-sexer, one could reply that one's knowledgeable belief that the Battle of Hastings was fought in 1066 can have the status of justification even if one does not "have a justification" for it. But again, it is more plausible to claim here that one's belief that p is justified because one remembers that p and therein knows that p, rather than *vice versa*.

Even some cases of perceptual knowledge illustrate the point. Consider proprioceptive knowledge. As Anscombe (1957: 13) wrote: "[N]othing shows [a person] the position of his limbs; it is not as if he were going by a tingle in his knee, which is the sign that it is bent and not straight. Where we can speak of separately describable sensations... then we can speak of observing [a] thing; but that is not generally so when we know the position of our limbs." While one may "have a sense" that one's leg is slightly bent via proprioception, having that sense plausibly just is knowing that one's leg is slightly bent. Here too it is implausible to appeal to some metaphysically prior justification that explains one's knowledge.

If human examples weren't enough, we could consider the knowledge of non-human animals. It is hard to accept that mice, birds, and donkeys have justified beliefs. While animal knowledge might helpfully be analyzed via some TB+ theory, it will do little to illuminate the nature of animal knowledge to invoke justification. One could *stipulatively* use "justification" to refer to one of the extra conditions that pushes true belief a step closer to animal knowledge. But this description doesn't limn the metaphysics here as it might seem to do

[14]Perhaps recognition of this distinction explained Goldman's later embrace of the Entailment Thesis and turn to reliabilism about justified belief. For Goldman (1979: 2) is a classic source of the thought that a belief can be justified even if the believer doesn't "have a justification" for it: "I... leave it an open question whether, when a belief is justified, the believer can state or give a justification for it. I do not even assume that when a belief is justified there is something 'possessed' by the believer which can be called a 'justification'. I do assume that a justified belief gets its status of being justified from some processes or properties that make it justified.... But this does not imply that there must be an argument, or reason, or anything else, 'possessed' at the time of belief by the believer."

with inferential knowledge and some perceptual knowledge. It merely allows us to postpone a deeper metaphysical explanation and preserve the same JTB+ analysis that seemed illuminating in one range of cases. One might try to appeal to some different normative property—say, a paradigmatically evaluative one like virtue—and I will consider that option later. But justification of the familiar kind—the kind with a practical as well as an epistemic species—is not found in the animal case.

We need a theory that explains the intuitions that disfavor the Entailment Thesis just as much as we need a theory that explains the intuitions that favor it. While defenders of EN might concoct a story, we have good reason to consider alternatives.

2.3 Non-Normativist Explanations of the Full Range of Intuitions

One alternative is to reverse the order of explanation and claim that whenever we are justified in believing that p, it is in virtue of knowing that p. I reject this strategy because I think justification without knowledge is possible. A better alternative is to maintain that knowledge and justification are *commonly grounded*, though in importantly different ways, in something non-normative. I'll call this strategy the *asymmetric common ground strategy*. I will now flat-footedly describe an oversimplified version of the strategy, saving the full development for §5. Right now I merely intend to illustrate its form and how it better explains the full range of intuitions surrounding the Entailment Thesis.

Let's consider the oversimplified view about knowledge first. I will focus mainly on non-inferential knowledge, since it is here that the inversion of the standard explanation is plainest. Non-inferentially knowing that p, on this view, is equivalent to having access to the fact that p via some determinate factive mental state. Determinate factive mental states (e.g., seeing that p) are then analyzed as veridical representations whose sheer verdidicality manifests a reliable capacity of some cognitive system (e.g., a perceptual system). On the final view in §5, these veridical representations will not *necessarily* be ones the cognitive agent is disposed to use in her reasoning.[15] But on the simpler view here, they manifest a reliable capacity not only of some module, but also of a *central system* in Fodor (1983)'s sense. To be in a factive mental state on the simpler view amounts to *your* registering a fact, not just a module *giving you* access to a fact.

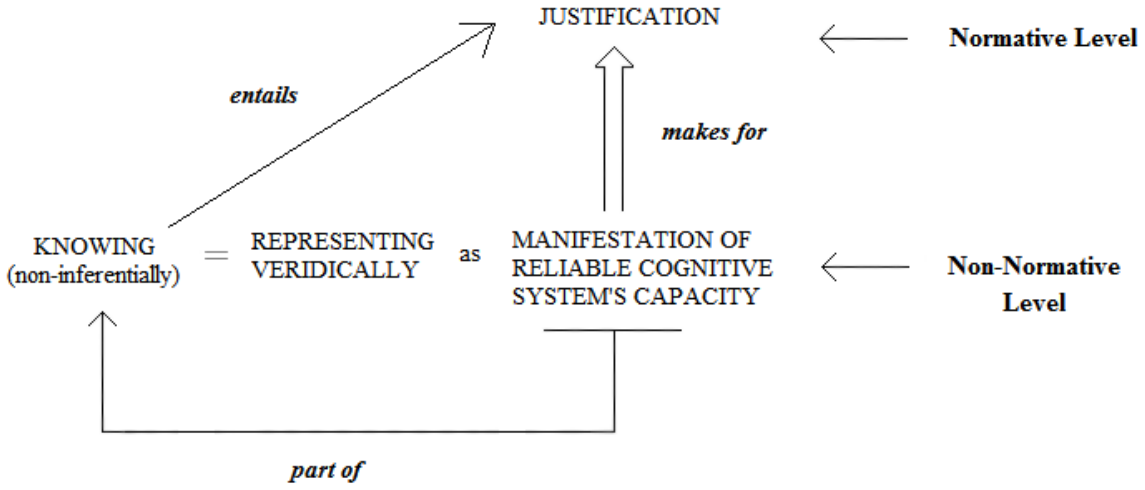
I take this simpler view to be equivalent to what Greco (1999) calls "agent reliabilism", since the reliable capacities of central systems plausibly ground person-level cognitive abilities. This view is also reminiscent of reliabilist virtue epistemology, and perhaps equivalent. But notice that it does not even superficially appeal to normative properties, even in the broad sense that includes attributive evaluative properties like *being a good performance* and *being epistemically virtuous*.[16] Of course, a belief's being true as a manifestation of reliable cog-

[15] And I ultimately hesitate to hold that knowledge implies belief—at least of the sort that contrasts with Gendler (2008)'s alief—since I think subjects must be disposed to use their beliefs in their reasoning but need not be so disposed vis-a-vis their knowledge (consider underconfident examinees). The relevant veridical representations are, as Block (1995: 231) says, "poised for use as [premises] in reasoning". To be *poised for use* in reasoning seems different from being something the agent is *already disposed to use*.

[16] I say "superficially appeal" because Ernest Sosa informs me (p.c.) that he does not take his reliabilist virtue

nitive ability *makes it* epistemically good, but it does not follow that the property of *being an epistemically good belief* or any other normative property is part of the analysis. Reliability is paradigmatically non-normative, as are truth, manifestation, and abilities and capacities, which are naturally viewed as a person-level psychological species of the *powers* that mere objects also have.[17] Similarly, reliable cognitive abilities may have the property of being intellectual virtues, and their exercises may have the property of being achievements. But normative properties do not thereby figure in the account. Many non-normative properties are virtues and many non-normative doings are achievements, just as many non-normative things are goods. If I analyze X in terms of something that is a good, I don't thereby give a normative analysis of X. Pleasure is a good, but equating X with a constellation of things that includes pleasure isn't equating X with a constellation involving the property of goodness.

While this approach identifies non-inferential knowledge with a structured constellation of non-normative properties, it does not identify justification with anything non-normative. Rather, it views one of the non-normative properties that is part of non-inferential knowledge as a *justification-making property*. What I have in mind is familiar from discussions of right-making characteristics in ethics.[18] Non-normative properties like being happiness-maximizing can *make* acts have normative properties like rightness. It would, however, be a mistake to *identify* rightness with any right-making feature. Similarly, a certain manifestation of reliable cognitive ability makes for justification, but it is not identical to justification. Nor is it part of justification, though it is, I claim, part of knowledge. This asymmetry is why I call the view the "asymmetric common ground" view. In a picture:



epistemology to imply EN, stressing that 'apt', 'adroit' and 'accurate' are technical terms that need not have the normative content of the corresponding ordinary terms. The other main reliabilist virtue epistemologist, John Greco, is less easy to read on this score, writing for example that "[k]nowledge *is* robustly normative, but that normativity is not internalist" (2010: 7), though his view is fundamentally similar to Sosa's.

[17]For this conception of abilities, see Kenny (1975), Alvarez (2013), and Hyman (2015).

[18]Goldman (1979: 1) understood process reliabilism as a theory of what makes for justification on a par with a first-order moral theory of what makes for rightness. This fact is intriguing because it suggests that process reliabilism needn't be a contribution to naturalistic meta-epistemology. Non-naturalists like Parfit (2011) agree that naturalistic facts (e.g., the maximization of happiness) can make acts right, after all.

This picture secures the Entailment Thesis for non-inferential knowledge. It also explains the intuitions that motivate some to resist the Entailment Thesis. In the putative counterexamples, it is tempting to deny that one's knowing is explained by one's having a justified belief. But it is hard to simply reverse the order of explanation, given that there can be justification without knowledge. A better explanation would propose that something less demanding than knowledge but at the same non-normative level as knowledge explains justification. The present view does that: *part* of knowledge explains justification.

This direction of explanation would already have looked appealing if we had thought about the relation between justification and the factive mental states Williamson (2000) sees as determinates of knowledge. Seeing that p plausibly consists in having a visual belief whose truly representing that p manifests a reliable perceptual ability. Yet it is implausible that seeing that p is explained by justifiably believing that p, and also seems too strong to claim that perceptual justification is always explained by a factive mental state. More plausibly, justification is explained by part of a factive mental state. The proposed story is just the foregoing writ large.

It would be dialectically unwise for a defender of EN to reject this picture on account of it cheapening justification. Chicken-sexers and animals plausibly have knowledge that is well understood via a reliabilist story. If their knowledge doesn't refute the Entailment Thesis, justification must come cheaply. If this cheapening should be avoided—as my final view in §5 will itself suggest—we must restrict the Entailment Thesis or follow Foley in divorcing the theory of knowledge from the theory of justified belief. So whatever resistance there might be to this picture of justification provides no consolation for EN.

Now, I've so far only talked about non-inferential knowledge. The story for inferential knowledge is structurally closer to the standard one, though still non-normativist. Inferential knowledge that p entails justification for believing that p because when you know p inferentially, you know p in virtue of knowing a fact q that indicates that p. It also implies doxastic justification, since the outputs of inference are necessarily representations endorsed by central processing. Still, inferential knowledge is not normatively constituted: although the known premise has the property of being a sufficient reason to believe the known conclusion, the normative relation of *being a sufficient reason for* is not a constituent of your knowledge of the conclusion. Since one knows that p iff one either non-inferentially knows that p or inferentially knows that p, and each disjunct entails justification given the view, the story I've told explains the full-fledged Entailment Thesis.

3 Three Direct Arguments for Non-Normativism

Having seen that the non-normativist can provide a better explanation of the intuitions surrounding the Entailment Thesis, let's turn to consider more direct arguments against EN.

3.1 The Argument from Determination

My first argument is inspired by Williamson (2000)'s claim that knowledge is the most general factive mental state. It will not, however, rely on this strong claim but rather on a weaker consequence of it. The weaker consequence is that knowledge is a determinable under which a certain class of factive mental states fall; using Yablo (1992)'s terminology, I'll say these mental states *determine* knowledge. Which factive mental states are in this class? One answer is to list factive perceptual states like seeing that p, remembering that p, intuiting that p, etc. Ultimately, I won't rely even on the unqualified claim that these states determine knowledge. But to illustrate my strategy, I'll temporarily assume it.

Suppose that factive states like seeing that p and remembering that p determine knowledge. We could then offer the following *Bold Argument from Determination*:

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

We are assuming (1) for the sake of argument, so questions about it can be bracketed for now. I think (2) is exceedingly pre-theoretically plausible. EN's fans might accept on theoretical grounds that seeing that p, remembering that p, etc., are normative, and different from other mental states in being normative. But this commitment is counterintuitive. As a result, it is no surprise that EN's proponents oppose (1) in other work.[19]

A brief defense of (3) is in order, though I think (3) should not be controversial. Determinates are ways of being determinables (e.g., scarlet is a way of being red). Plausibly, if being F is just a way of being G, then if X has the constitutive features of an F, X also has the constitutive features of a G (e.g., if something has the constitutive features of a car, it has the constitutive features of an automobile). In a slogan: determinables transmit their constitutive features to their determinates. The slogan implies (3). Hence (3).[20]

If (1) were uncontroversial, the argument would stand. But McDowell (2002), Turri (2010), Pritchard (2012), and Schroeder (Ms) reject (1).[21] They give three arguments. One turns on the claim that seeing that p, unlike knowing that p, is compatible with environmental luck. This argument is hardly airtight. Like Sosa (2007), I think there might well be

[19] See Schroeder (Ms).

[20] Here is another defense from Worley (1997: 287): "Clearly there cannot be any constituents essential to a determinable which are not also constituents of each of its determinates. If there were, then some object might be an instance of one of the determinates (in virtue of having all of its constituents), but not be an instance of the determinable (by not having this extra constituent). And this would violate the definition of determination. So it does seem that the determinable constituents must be a subset of the constituents of each determinate."

[21] They all focus on the visual case, but similar arguments appear in the literature on memory; see Bernecker (2007) and, in reply, Moon (2013).

knowledge in fake barn cases. Alternatively, like Millar (2010) and Littlejohn (2014), one might doubt that the accuracy of our beliefs does manifest our relevant visual-recognitional ability in such cases, and hence doubt that we see *that there is a barn* as opposed to bearing the simple seeing relation to the state of affairs of there being a barn.[22] Similar points apply to the second argument, which assumes that one can see that p even if one's justification for believing p is defeated. The third argument turns on the thought that one can see that p without believing that p. It is problematic for reasons noted by Ranalli (2014). The only clear intuition in the relevant cases is that one can see that p without occurrently believing that p. But we have a similar intuition in the cases invoked by opponents of the claim that knowledge entails belief. It is no less implausible to ascribe masked dispositional belief in the present cases than to ascribe it in these putative counterexamples to the claim that knowledge entails belief.[23] So the supposed cases in which one can see that p without believing that p stand or fall with supposed cases in which one can know p without believing that p.

There is a further upshot here for the second argument, since one can retool the purported counterexamples to the thesis that knowledge entails belief as cases involving higher-order apparent defeat. Underconfident examinees lack justification to believe that they have sufficient evidence to believe what they know. There is an intuition here too that one can know despite not clearly having justification. Whatever one wants to say to save the Entailment Thesis can also be said to save the claim that seeing that p entails justification; e.g., one could say the defeat is merely apparent or say the intuition is just about occurrent propositional justification and overlooks dispositional justification.

So I am unmoved by the objections to (1), though I don't pretend to have settled the underlying debates. Fortunately, one doesn't need anything as strong as (1) to get my conclusion. For one can appeal to weaker analogues of (1) and (2) to get the conclusion.

I can imagine two possibilities. French (2012)'s discussion of arguments against (1) suggests the first. Citing Gisborne (2010), he notes that "see" is massively polysemous, and more importantly that "sees that" admits of two readings, one of which is both visual and epistemic. He argues that it is false that we see that p in this sense in the putative counterexamples to (1). If so, we can offer the *Modest Argument from Determination*:

1*. The perceptual relation that is the primary semantic value of one visual use of "sees that" is a determinate of the knowledge relation.[24]

2*. This perceptual relation is not normatively constituted; rather, it is non-normative just like other perceptual relations.

[22]The distinction between simple seeing and propositional seeing goes back to Dretske (1969). It is crucial here, since no one denies that we can see the barn or states of affairs or events involving it.

[23]See Radford (1966) and Myers-Schulz and Schwitzgebel (2013) for the putative counterexamples and Rose and Schaffer (2013) for critical discussion.

[24]The "primary" in "primary semantic value" is that of two-dimensional semantics *a la* Chalmers (2002b). I would personally prefer something more fine-grained than primary intensions—which correspond to abundant properties in Lewis (1986)'s sense—and for that reason don't use the term "primary intension". But my purposes here would be served perfectly well by primary intensions.

3. If a determinable is normatively constituted, its determinates must be too.

4. So, knowledge is not normatively constituted.

There is a yet more modest argument which doesn't rest on any claims about "sees that". To see the basis for the argument, recall what I said in §2.1 against the thesis that knowledge attributions semantically entail justification attributions. I noted that when one looks at thesaurus entries for "knows", one encounters a list of non-normative expressions: "apprehends that", "recognizes that", "is cognizant that", etc. While it is not clear to me that the relations that are the primary semantic values of these expressions are *identical* to the knowledge relation, it is plausible that they are *determinates* of the knowledge relation. Another way to make the Bold Argument more modest, then, is to appeal directly to them in this *Very Modest Argument from Determination*:

1**. Recognizing that p, apprehending that p, being cognizant that p, etc., either determine knowing that p or are identical to knowing that p.

2**. Recognizing that p, apprehending that p, being cognizant that p, etc., are not normatively constituted; they are non-normative, like other mental states.

3. If a determinable is normatively constituted, its determinates must be too.

4. So, knowledge is not normatively constituted.

The argument hearkens back to the roots of the knowledge-first program. Early knowledge-firsters John Cook Wilson (1926) and H. A. Prichard (1909, 1960), as well as fellow Oxford realist H. H. Price (1932, 1960), often referred to knowledge under the label of "apprehension". Apprehension is a mental state if any factive states are mental states, and the term "apprehension" is not plausibly a normative term. One might respond by observing that we can pick out normative phenomena with non-normative language (e.g., "the property Moore famously called 'simple, indefinable and non-natural'") and say that "apprehension" is case in point. I will return to this response in §4. It is striking, however, that virtually all of the common synonyms for "knows" are equally non-normative. If knowing were constitutively normative, why would none of the common verbs for it be normative?

One can imagine other normativist responses. Fans of JTB+ analyses will be keen to reject either (1**) or (2**). They might say: "(1**) is false precisely because (2**) is true: it is because apprehending that p is not normative but knowledge is that apprehension isn't itself knowledge." Or they might say: "(2**) is false precisely because (1**) is true: given that apprehending that p is knowing that p, apprehending that p is also normative." But once we level the playing field by showing that Entailment Arguments fail, these responses look desperate. The likes of (1–1**) and (2–2**) have far greater antecedent plausibility than JTB+ analyses or other normative analyses.

3.2 The Argument from Elimination and Redundancy

I turn to a second argument, which has two parts. The first part involves eliminating all but one type of normative analysis of knowledge. The second part involves showing that the normative parts of this analysis are explanatorily redundant.

To understand the first part, recall the distinct classes of normative properties from §1:

- *Deontic* properties, such as permissibility, rightness, and wrongness, which apply to acts, attitudes, and other states over which we have rational control.
- *Hypological* properties, such as blameworthiness, praiseworthiness, and excusability, which apply to persons, their acts, and perhaps their attitudes.
- *Evaluative* properties, which apply to all sorts of things. They divide into thin ones like goodness (including attributive goodness), middling-thickness ones like virtue, and thick ones like gloriousness.

Since non-rational creatures like animals can have knowledge, we can immediately rule out analyses of knowledge in deontic and hypological terms.

Although it isn't crucial to my argument, I think "justified" is a paradigmatic deontic term, and the primary semantic value of "justified" is a paradigmatic deontic property. Following Beddor (forthcoming), I'd view "justified" as the dual of the weak necessity modal, standing in between "permissible" and "required".[25] If justification is deontic, we can appeal to animal knowledge again to set aside JTB+ analyses. Alston (1989: 175) nearly did so before suggesting that justification is evaluative. To be fair, I will say only that we should set aside all but evaluative analyses and focus on analyses that appeal to paradigmatic evaluative properties. If one's preferred use of "justified" is synonymous with any paradigmatic evaluative terms, feel free to substitute it back in mentally.

There are few examples of evaluative analyses of knowledge. Alston spoke of "positive epistemic status", but this term is unhelpful because there are many different positive epistemic statuses, and it is unclear how some could be constitutively relevant to knowledge. For the same reason, it won't prove helpful to appeal to thin evaluative properties like *goodness*, or the attributive evaluative property of *being a good belief*. It will also not prove helpful to

[25]The falsity of doxastic voluntarism, together with the assumption that voluntary control is a prerequisite for deontic assessment, led many epistemologists after Alston (1988) to deny the applicability of deontic language in epistemology. But epistemologists ought to have been led by these assumptions to stop using the term "justified" and use evaluative language instead. It was only the desire to avoid rephrasing JTB+ accounts of knowledge that led epistemologists instead to suppose that "justified" also has an evaluative sense. The desire for convenience is a bad reason to ignore the facts.

I would, however, deny that voluntary control is a prerequisite for deontic assessment. As Hieronymi (2008) and McHugh (2014) observe, we also cannot intend just anything at will, but intention is paradigmatically subject to deontic assessments. Indeed, having direct voluntary control over intentions would undermine our responsibility for them, by undermining the reasons-responsiveness constitutive of responsibility. The kind of control we have over intentions is rational control: we can modify them by simply deliberating on the object-given reasons for and against them. We have this kind of control over beliefs.

appeal to the thickest evaluative properties (e.g., intellectual courage, a property discussed by some responsibilists), since it is doubtful that any of these is required for knowledge. It is no surprise, then, that the canonical example of an evaluative analysis of knowledge appeals to a middling-thickness property—viz., virtue.

Virtue epistemology comes in two flavors—responsibilist and reliabilist. Responsibilist virtue epistemologists appeal to evaluative properties that only cognitive agents who are responsible for their beliefs can instantiate, like intellectual conscientiousness, intellectual courage, and open-mindedness. As critics like Baehr (2011) maintain, it is for this reason implausible that they can provide a satisfying general analysis of knowledge (thanks, once again, to animals). Reliabilist virtue epistemologists, by contrast, have no such trouble. Indeed, I think they have provided the most compelling analyses of knowledge so far and that anyone interested in analysing knowledge ought to learn from them. The question to ask is whether it is either necessary or helpful to incorporate those insights by adding a normative component to knowledge. My answer will be "No".

Let's first ask whether reliabilist virtue epistemologists do appeal to anything normative. It is not so clear that they do.[26] Sosa (1991: 225) originally glossed intellectual virtue as a "quality bound to help maximize one's surplus of truth over error", a characterization that changed little in his (2007), where he views epistemic competences as dispositions to hit the mark of truth. While we can call such qualities and dispositions "virtues", doing so is like calling pasta and tomato sauce "goods". If all we use to analyze knowledge are such qualities and dispositions, our analysis is no more normative than an analysis of spaghetti in terms of long, thin pasta and tomato sauce.

Indeed, if we have such a thin conception of intellectual virtue, it is difficult to see what we gain by appealing to intellectual virtue *as such* in the analysis rather than to the disposition to hit the mark of truth. Even if spaghetti were necessarily good, adding the property of goodness contributes nothing helpful to the analysis of spaghetti, when it might be viewed more simply as a certain kind of pasta and tomato sauce. And just as we cannot replace the property of being long, thin pasta in tomato sauce with the property of having good ingredients, so we cannot replace dispositions to hit the mark of truth with intellectual virtues, since there may be intellectual virtues not best understood in externalist terms.[27] If so, we must appeal to something more specific, like dispositions to hit the mark of truth. But if we do appeal to dispositions to hit the mark of truth, it seems superfluous to add "intellectually virtuous" beforehand.

It would be superfluous, at any rate, if the intellectual virtues needed to analyze animal knowledge were *just* dispositions to hit the mark of truth. But Sosa has further refined his view. In his (2015: 100), he claims that intellectual virtues are not just dispositions to hit the

[26] Dancy (1995) and Zagzebski (1996) complained that Sosa understood virtue in an anaemic manner. Goldman (2012: Introduction) wonders why we need to use normative language, suggesting (in effect) that process reliabilism can do everything a normativist view can do. Of course, there is a lot of space between process reliabilism and a normativist virtue epistemology. The positive view I'll sketch below occupies this space. Sosa himself suggests (p.c.) that his view does not imply Epistemic Normativism and hence occupies this space too.

[27] After glossing intellectual virtues as truth-conducive qualities, Sosa (1991: 225) admits that there are other kinds of intellectual virtue, saying that he intends to set them to aside for his analysis of knowledge.

mark of truth but rather a "very special case" of them. And he denies that any neat characterization of which dispositions to hit the mark of truth are competences is possible, saying that we have a hard-to-codify tacit knowledge of which such dispositions are competences, analogous to our knowledge of what kinds of conduct are polite.[28]

One might worry now that we will need to invoke normativity on pain of letting in the wrong dispositions. But this conclusion is a mistake. To bring out why, we must understand why Sosa claims that epistemic competences are a special case of dispositions to hit the mark of truth. His central reason for this claim is that competences are reliable only relative to a certain situation and "shape". A person isn't shown to lack archery competence if she cannot hit the target in abnormally high winds, though she does lack the propensity to hit the target in such conditions. This point reveals the importance of relativizing the propensity to hit the target only to certain kinds of circumstances. Notice furthermore that a person isn't shown to lack archery competence if she fails to hit the target only because she is drunk or has a broken wrist. This point shows the importance of relativizing the propensity to hit the target to cases in which the archer is "in shape".

Relativity to shape and situation does not make the relevant dispositions normative. Other dispositional properties are relativized in this way too. Consider flammability and irritability. Matches won't light in oxygen-free environments, but it doesn't follow that their tips cease to be flammable. Flammability is relativized to ordinary earthly tropospheric conditions. Similarly, a person in an abnormally irritating environment may respond with irritation at everything without thereby revealing that she is an irritable person. On the other hand, an irritable person who is suitably drugged might not respond with irritation to irritating stimuli. These two points together reveal that people's dispositions are relativized to situation and shape. But irritability is not a normative property. Similar points apply to a wide range of other non-normative dispositions of persons and animals, like introversion, sociability, restlessness, assertiveness, being an energetic person, and so on.

How might we specify the dispositions relevant to knowing, if not with normative terms? We do have ordinary non-normative expressions for these dispositions. But they are recognitional or discriminatory expressions of use only to knowledge-firsters. To use Millar (2010)'s favorite phrase, we often talk about abilities *to tell Fs from non-Fs*, and invoke these abilities to explain some kinds of perceptual knowledge. These are recognitional or discriminatory abilities. Now, I think that it is plausible that recognition is no more normative than apprehension and cognizance. Nevertheless, because I'm not a full-fledged knowledge-firster, I must appeal to purely truth-related abilities.

A suitable language isn't hard to concoct. We could speak of being attuned to the truth, or of truth-attuned cognitive abilities. We could also speak of being sensitive to the truth, bearing in mind that the ordinary notion of sensitivity is a fine-grained dispositional notion distinct from Nozick's coarse-grained counterfactual notion. In the ordinary sense of "sensitive", we are sensitive to the truth of some external world propositions even though we would go astray in distant worlds. Again, abilities and powers as such are not normative. Mere objects have them. While person/agent-level abilities and powers are different from

[28] See Sosa (2015: 101–2) for the analogy with politeness.

non-person/agent-level abilities and powers, they are not automatically normative (consider, again, sociability and assertiveness).

With this language in hand, we can express the insights of Sosa's theory using an explicitly non-normative analogue of his normative-sounding 'AAA' pattern.[29] We can distinguish (i) believing truly, (ii) manifesting a truth-attuned cognitive ability, and (iii) doing (i) in virtue of (ii). We could view cases of animal knowledge as cases of (iii). Whatever briefer name we choose for this third thing, its deeper analysis involves nothing normative.

Nothing is lost when we turn to explaining the value of knowledge. We can still call the third thing an "achievement" if we want, just like we call pleasure "good". We can appeal to the fact that the third thing has the property of being an achievement in explaining why it is better than (i) and the conjunction of (i) and (ii). Doing so doesn't require putting the property of being an achievement, if that is normative, into the analysis of knowledge. More generally, to explain why something is epistemically valuable, we needn't put the property of being epistemically valuable into that thing's analysis.

3.3 The Argument from the Analysis of Justification

My third argument for non-normativism is that it is required for preserving an appealing reasons-based picture of justification and the distinction between justification and excuse.

Let's back up to understand the picture I have in mind. The status of having justification to believe or do something is naturally understood as an all-things-considered status resulting from the balance of the normative reasons one has to believe or do that thing. Some epistemologists use the term "*prima facie* justification", but this term is stipulative, like Ross's "*prima facie* duty". Ross (1930: 20) was honest about the nature of his phrase:

> [T]he phrase '*prima facie* duty' must be apologized for, since it suggests that what we are speaking of is a certain kind of duty, whereas it is in fact not a kind of duty, but something related in a certain way to duty. Strictly speaking, what we want is not a phrase in which 'duty' is qualified by an adjective, but a separate noun.

"Reason", used as a count noun, fits the bill. While we could use the technical phrase "*prima facie* justification", I prefer to respect the all-things-considered nature of justification suggested by ordinary thought and talk. If we do so, it is eminently plausible that what it is to be justified in ϕ-ing is to have normative reasons that on balance favor ϕ-ing.

What are normative reasons? Like many philosophers of practical reason, I would deny that they are mental states and hold that they are either facts or apparent facts that count in favor of acts and attitudes. I and others argue elsewhere that this is the best unified account of the ontology of reasons,[30] and I will assume it for the sake of argument.

This picture can be made more precise if we reflect on the fact that our thought and talk about normative reasons is Janus-faced. Sometimes we think of reasons as facts to which we

[29] Sosa emphasizes (p.c.) that 'apt' and 'adroit' are for him technical terms for properties that needn't be viewed as normative—or at least not in the sense relevant to Epistemic Normativism.

[30] See Sylvan (2014, forthcoming) and Sylvan and Sosa (forthcoming).

don't necessarily have access. The fact that some drink is arsenic-laced is a conclusive reason not to imbibe it, whether or not one is in a position to know it. Such reasons are *objective normative reasons*. Our thought and talk about normative reasons, especially practical ones, is often concerned with them. But our thought and talk about normative reasons also has a perspectival strain. If all the appearances suggest to someone that the glass is not arsenic-laced but rather contains a life-saving elixir, it is also natural to say think that this person has no reason not to drink and indeed has an excellent reason to drink. What reason? A natural idea is that the reason is the apparent fact that the glass contains a life-saving elixir. Such reasons are *subjective normative reasons*.

Subjective and objective reasons can overlap, and ideally do. But the ideal case is not merely one in which one does what happens to be supported by the objective reasons, but one in which one does it *for those reasons*. To be poised to act or believe for an objective reason, one must stand in a privileged relation to it: the relation of *possession*. Possessed objective reasons are a special case of both subjective and objective reasons. They are not just subjective reasons that correspond to objective reasons. If you veridically hallucinate that P, where the fact that P is an objective reason to believe Q, you do not possess the fact that P as an objective reason to believe Q. One needs access to the fact that provides an objective reason to possess it, and veridical hallucination isn't sufficient for such access.

If justification should be analyzed in terms of reasons, which kind of reason is the relevant kind? Well, if there is a distinction between justification and excuse, we cannot allow that justifying reasons might simply lack objective force. Indeed, in the most sophisticated literature on the distinction between justification and excuse, one sees this distinction understood in terms of the distinction between having objective support and having merely apparent support.[31] Of course, one might worry that if the justification/excuse distinction is understood in this way, we will be forced to conclude that justification is factive.[32] But this is a mistake. If some fact makes it highly objectively probable that p, that fact may be a sufficient objective reason to believe that p, but p might nonetheless be false.[33]

With those objections out of the way, it is appealing to see justification as fixed by the balance of objective reasons that one possesses, and to see the justification/excuse distinction as tracking the distinction between objective reasons one possesses and merely subjective reasons. But if we do analyze justification in this way, we can exclude an analysis of knowledge in terms of justification via the *Metaphysical Circularity Avoidance Argument*:

1. Justification is grounded in possessed objective reasons.

[31] See Gardner (2007).

[32] See Littlejohn (2011), who embraces this conclusion.

[33] One might still worry that the analysis makes justification too rare. Consider a world in which the appearances are reliable but fallible indicators of the facts, and in which p-type propositions, when true, are objective reasons for ϕ-ing. And suppose the reason one cites for ϕ-ing is p, but that p is only apparently true, due to bad luck. Does it follow that one has only an excuse and not any justification for ϕ-ing? We needn't embrace this verdict, because there are other accessible facts that give objective reasons here, like facts about things' looks, which are often, as McGrath (forthcoming) notes, objective features of the situation. They are also ones to which one is sensitive, dispositionally and often counterfactually.

2. Possession of objective reasons is grounded in knowledge.

3. So, on pain of metaphysical circularity, knowledge is not grounded in justification.

I already partly defended premise (2). When the fact that p constitutes an objective reason to believe q, it doesn't follow that one possesses the objective reason given by the fact that p even when the proposition that p is among one's subjective reasons. Cases of veridical hallucination are counterexamples. More generally, if the accuracy of one's representing that p is plagued by intervening luck, the representing won't yield access to the fact that p, which is required for possessing the objective reason constituted by the fact.

These points make having access to facts look a lot like being in a position to know them. While cases of environmental luck might seem to block this conclusion, observations from §3.1 repeat here. Some embrace the conclusion that we can know that there is a red barn before us. Others argue that when plagued by this environmental luck, we lack the recognitional abilities required to see that there is a red barn before us. Either story helps. Moreover, we must remember that there are nearby facts that we can see—e.g., that the thing has the public look of a barn—that yield justifications. With all these options for diagnosing environmental luck cases, little stands in the way of our conclusion.

Now, justification-based analyses of knowledge aren't the only normative analyses. But similar arguments exclude deontic analyses, since it is no less plausible that permissibility and obligation are a function of objective reasons that one possesses than that (1) is true. Moreover, if we accept the popular view in meta-ethics that all normativity is analyzable in terms of reasons, the argument extends to all plausible normative analyses. For plausible analyses of epistemic standings would appeal not merely to objective reasons but to possessed ones. So, given attractive background assumptions, the argument generalizes.

But even if those assumptions are dropped, this third argument combines with our earlier arguments to strengthen the case for non-normativism. And in the end, I don't view the arguments of this section as standalone arguments. It is their collective strength, together with the argument from the last section, that persuades me.

4 An Objection Addressed

I've so far aimed to oppose Metaphysical EN, though I also happen to reject Conceptual EN. In discussing my arguments, I sometimes hear the following objection: "Your arguments only clearly show that the concept of knowledge is non-normative. But there can be non-normative concepts of normative phenomena. So you have more work to do."

Now, the premises of the arguments I've given were metaphysical.[34] Metaphysical conclusions do follow from them. But perhaps the objector thinks I am not entitled to some of

[34] A possible exception: (1*) in the Modest Argument from Determination mentions the primary semantic value of a use of "sees that". But the premise is not therefore merely semantic. Semantic values include items of full-fledged metaphysical interest, such as worldly individuals (which are among the semantic values of names) and properties (which are among semantic values of predicates). Viewed as intensions—functions from possible worlds to extensions—the primary semantic values of predicates are the same things as abundant properties/relations in Lewis (1986)'s sense. Claims about abundant properties/relations are metaphysical.

these premises without implicit reliance on some further argument from conceptual premises and principles connecting concepts to phenomena. Perhaps, for example, the objector agrees that concepts of determinates of knowing like seeing that p and remembering that p are non-normative, but insists that the best account of the phenomena will make them normative. So although I find the premises sufficiently evident independently of such considerations, the objection deserves a response.

To bring the response, let's first consider what seems to recommend divorcing facts about the (non)normativity of concepts from facts about the (non)normativity of the phenomena they pick out; note that I will be setting aside reasons that would arise if one were an expressivist, since our objector is standing up for Metaphysical EN. The objector is surely right that there can be non-normative concepts of normative phenomena. The concept PARFIT'S FAVORITE RELATION, for example, picks out the favoring relation, but it is not a normative concept. But our case is at least superficially different. The concept KNOWLEDGE and concepts of its determinates (SEEING-THAT, REMEMBERING-THAT, etc.) plausibly allow us to think directly about knowledge and its determinates, while the concept PARFIT'S FAVORITE RELATION only allows us to indirectly think about the favoring relation. One might think this difference is unimportant, since Kripke and Putnam taught us that being able to think directly about something gives us little access to its nature. One can think directly about water, for example, without knowing its constitution. So, one might reasonably insist, the mere fact that (i) we can directly think of (determinates of) knowledge and (ii) can coherently conceive of them as non-normative implies nothing about the metaphysics.

But again I think our case is different, and for Kripkean reasons. To see what I have in mind, consider what might be wrong with the following *Naïve Argument*:

1. It is not conceptually necessary that knowledge is normative.
2. If (1), then one can coherently conceive of non-normative knowledge.
3. If the consequent of (2) is true, then non-normative knowledge is possible.
4. Hence, non-normative knowledge is possible.

(4) yields Metaphysical ¬EN, given that the kind of constitution under discussion holds necessarily if at all. Now, while it is a Kripkean theme to reject simple conceivability-to-possibility inferences, it is also a Kripkean theme to explain cases in which one seems to conceive of some impossibility as cases in which one is successfully conceiving of some different possibility and misdescribing it. Hence, on the textbook Kripkean line, when we seem to conceive of the falsity of <water=H_2O>, what we are doing is successfully conceiving of watery stuff that isn't H_2O.

As Kripke noted in arguing against the identity theory, there is not always a plausible alternative possibility that we are simply misdescribing. Assuming we can coherently conceive of pain without C-fibers firing and *vice versa*, there are two available just-so stories:

Philosophy is rightly interested not only in fundamental properties/relations but also abundant ones far from the fundamental level that interest us as humans, plausibly including knowledge.

we are conceiving of something that feels like pain but isn't pain, or we are conceiving of something that "looks like" C-fibers firing but is not. The first is a non-starter. The second suggests something as striking as dualism (viz., panpsychism).

Similar thoughts apply here, and reveal the move from the negation of Conceptual EN to the negation of Metaphysical EN to be not so naïve. I will also suggest a good reason to think the burden of proof is on the opponent of this move in this particular case. So, while there is of course much discussion of such arguments in the literature responding to Kripke, Jackson (1998), and Chalmers (2012), my burden will be relieved.

Suppose one wants to oppose (3) in a textbook Kripkean way. There are two objects of conception which one might claim we mistake for non-normative knowledge:

i. A knowledge "lookalike" that is non-normative—i.e., a non-normative state that satisfies the ordinary conception of knowledge—but that is not really knowledge.[35]

ii. Knowledge with a constituent that "looks" non-normative—i.e., that ordinary thought either does not cast as a normative property or casts as a clearly non-normative property—but is really normative.[36]

But these are uncompelling alternative objects of conception. Take (i) first. Just as what feels like pain is plausibly pain, so what satisfies the ordinary conception of knowledge plausibly is knowledge, setting aside revisionary epistemologies (e.g., ones that imply skepticism). Here knowledge doesn't differ from psychological states like belief and intention, which are plausibly the ones that satisfy the core platitudes of commonsense psychology.[37] Admittedly, one might claim that knowledge and other psychological kinds are natural kinds in the same sense in which water is a natural kind.[38] This claim is not required for their being naturalistically kosher: toasters are kosher, but *toaster* isn't a natural kind. And the claim is implausible.[39] While many concepts are Twin-Earthable, ordinary psychological concepts like KNOWLEDGE and BELIEF—content held fixed!—are not. Twin-knowledge and twin-belief with different non-psychological constitutions but that live up to the core platitudes of commonsense psychology plausibly just are knowledge and belief. Both seem multiply constitutable at all levels below the commonsense psychological level.

One might deny that we can conceive of something living up to the folk conception of knowledge that isn't normatively constituted. But that is a *different objection*. It is consistent

[35] I follow Jackson (1998: 37–41) in taking satisfiers of ordinary conceptions to be the more general things that play the role lookalikes played in Kripke's account of modal illusions. Jackson compellingly argues that the Kripkean strategy is just a special case of this more general strategy, since what "looks like" (e.g.) water plausibly just is what satisfies the (pre-scientific) folk conception of (e.g.) water.

[36] The concept of normativity isn't part of ordinary thought. But ordinary thought can *cast* something as normative—i.e., give it features that entail normative constitution—which is why I use that phrasing.

[37] Psychofunctionalists like Fodor and Pylyshyn needn't disagree; see, e.g., Fodor (1987: Ch.1) and Pylyshyn (1984 : Ch.1) on the harmony between commonsense psychology and scientific psychology.

[38] Some—e.g., Fodor (1974)—write as if figuring in scientific laws suffices for natural-kindhood. But water is a natural kind in a stronger, more familiar sense linked to intrinsic structure (cf. Ellis (2001: 20)), so that X and Y instance the same natural kind only if they share some intrinsic structure.

[39] For a long and persuasive case against Kornblith (2002)'s version of this view, see Horvath (2016).

with concepts being good guides to phenomena. The objection under consideration concedes that the earlier arguments got the concept of knowledge right.

So much for (i). Similar considerations extend even more forcefully to (ii), and bring us to a further point that shifts the burden of proof to my opponent. Just as what fails to be painful isn't pain, so what the manifest image casts as non-normative is not plausibly normative. Here there is even less wiggle room than in the case of (i), since it is even less plausible that normative kinds are natural kinds whose nature could diverge from the ordinary conception, and again for reasons that should please fans of the Kripke/Putnam arguments.[40] It doesn't follow that normative kinds are non-natural. Something doesn't have to be a natural kind to be naturalistically kosher, as artifactual and functional kinds illustrate. What does follow is that there is not a plausible gap between whether F is cast as a (non)normative property in the folk conception and whether F is one *simpliciter*.

Since textbook Kripkeanism supports rather than undermines the Naïve Argument, I conclude that it is not after all so easy to pry apart Conceptual and Metaphysical (¬)EN. To be sure, not everyone buys textbook Kripkeanism.[41] But for reasons special to this case, I think the burden of proof is on the opponent. Remember that the divorce we are considering is one that grants that the concept of knowledge is non-normative but insists that the phenomenon is normative. While the form of this insistence has force in some cases—e.g., folk concepts of physical phenomena might fail to depict them as having properties *a posteriori* inquiry reveals to be essential—our case is quite different.

Call a constitutive feature of a phenomenon that is not *a priori* scrutable from our folk conception and the facts depictable by it *conceptually invisible*. There are conceptual invisibilia, as science teaches. But is *normativity* among them? To echo Chalmers (2002a: 186), one needn't embrace verificationism to think that the burden of proof is against a "Yes" answer. The point doesn't change if normativity is understood weakly, as attributive goodness. For while there is no burden against regarding many non-normative things as having the property of being good Fs, there is a burden against treating things that lack conceptually visible attributively evaluative *constitutions* as having such constitutions.

5 A Different Bi-Level Epistemology

So far I've done three things. I've undermined the case for EN, presented several arguments for non-normativism, and answered an objection. But I've offered no detailed outlook to supplant the orthodoxy. I'll now describe a new bi-level epistemology that some of my arguments have intimated, and explain why it gives a better account of the distinction between mere animal epistemology and human epistemology than the dominant account.

[40] See, e.g., Horgan and Timmons (1994) on the fact that normative concepts are not Twin-Earthable. While they were trying to raise a broader problem for naturalism, period, one can doubt that they were successful in that bolder aim while agreeing that they showed normative kind concepts not to be natural kind concepts.

[41] Cf. Block and Stalnaker (1999) and Yablo (2000) for objections and Chalmers (2002a, 2012) for replies.

5.1 The Backdrop

Like many writers in meta-ethics,[42] I think normativity in general ought to be analyzed in terms of reasons, where reasons are viewed in the first instance as facts that count in favor of acts and attitudes. For reasons so understood to play most important roles in epistemology, they must be possessed. For commonly discussed statuses like epistemic justification, rationality, blameworthiness, and permissibility are not determined by all the reasons out there, but rather by reasons that lie within our perspective.[43]

I take there to be two conditions on possessing a fact as a reason for an attitude: a condition of access to the fact, where this is a non-normative condition, and a condition of sensitivity to the reason-for relation between the fact and the attitude it supports. This is the point of departure for my positive non-normativist agenda. I view knowing a fact as accessing that fact and hence as a non-normative precondition for possessing the reasons given by that fact. This is part of why knowledge lies beneath the space of reasons.

In the next three subsections, I'll give a more detailed account of the access condition, explain in greater detail why more than access is required for reason possession, and show how my account entails a restricted version of the Entailment Thesis for human knowledge. A major attraction of my picture is that it is consistent with the denial of an unrestricted version of the Entailment Thesis and with groundless animal knowledge.

5.2 Access

What is it to have access to a fact? Obviously, I think it is equivalent to being in a position to know that fact. But rather than saying that having access to a fact consists in being in a position to know it, I want give an independent account of access and use this to motivate my specific non-normativist account of knowledge.

Let's consider perceptual access first. Perceiving that p is a way of accessing the fact that p. To begin to analyze perceiving that p, we might start by extending a promising reliabilist story from Lyons (2009). On that story, a perceptual seeming is a seeming that is an output of a perceptual system, which is a kind of input system—one that has the function of producing representations of the current environment on the basis of the raw data delivered by sensory transducers. Lyons doesn't think of cognitive systems as modules in Fodor (1983)'s sense, though he agrees that perceptual systems are informationally encapsulated.[44] Either way, perceptual systems have a function.[45] As a result, a familiar pattern of evaluation applies. A perceptual seeming that p can be

accurate, when it veridically represents that p;

[42] See Parfit (2011), Scanlon (1998), Skorupski (2011), Raz (1999), and Schroeder (2007), to name a few.

[43] Some of these properties might be treated in a perspective-independent way, but given their roles in epistemology, such a treatment would prove unhelpful. We ought to suspend judgment in propositions for which we lack sufficient evidence in the sense relevant to traditional epistemology.

[44] Lyons (2009: 94).

[45] Facts about functions are not even weakly normative, though they *make for* such normativity. While it is because the function of X is to Y that X *mal*functions when it fails to Y, the *explanans* is not normative.

well-issued, when it manifests a reliable capacity of a perceptual system;

apt, when its sheer veridicality manifests a reliable capacity of a perceptual system.

Because I think it clear that perceiving that p is not a normative relation, I do not want to build aptness as such—if it is normative—into the analysis. I want to identify perceiving that p with a veridical output of a perceptual system whose sheer veridicality manifests one of the system's reliable capacities. While perceiving that p entails aptly representing that p, this entailment should be understood like the entailment of goodness from pleasure.

To generalize this proposal to other cases of accessing facts, we can appeal to other cognitive systems that function to veridically represent specified domains of facts. The fine differences between these systems can be left to cognitive science. For our purposes, what matters is what the resultant forms of access have in common: they consist in seemings whose veridicality is a manifestation of a reliable capacity of some cognitive system. Here's another way to describe what they have in common: they are ways of knowing facts.

One might balk at the idea that knowledge could be the mere output of a cognitive system, especially a perceptual one. If perceptual systems are modules, their outputs ought to be informationally encapsulated and hence unresponsive to background knowledge. Whatever knowledge is, one might insist that it is sensitive to all the background information available to central processing. If it keeps seeming to one that p even though background knowledge indicates that ¬p, one might think that seeming can't be knowledge even if it is veridical and its veridicality manifests a reliable capacity of some perceptual system.

There are, however, responses to this worry. One is to deny that the relevant cognitive systems must be informationally encapsulated, and to allow that their outputs are responsive to background knowledge. Perhaps they are not Fodor-modules but rather modules in Carruthers (2006)'s sense. Or perhaps they are not modules at all, as Lyons suggests: perhaps perceptual systems can be responsible for the fixation of belief, and revisable doxastic attitudes rather than mere non-doxastic seemings can rank among their proper outputs. Indeed, perhaps the capacities of the relevant cognitive systems can constitute person-level discriminatory abilities. This is, I suspect, the view to take if we think seeing that p entails believing p, and often involves the exercise of person-level discriminatory abilities.

Suppose we prefer to uphold modularity for perceptual systems, and hold that seeing that p only requires an apt seeming that p rather than an apt disposition to judge that p in the light of all the information available to central processing. What of the intuition that one cannot know that p if one has misleading background knowledge suggesting that one's perceptual system is malfunctioning? It could, after all, still be true that one hosts an apt seeming in such cases. A second idea is to say that such cases are ones where first-order knowledge is possible but higher-order knowledge is not. In cases of KK failure, the internalist intuition that we don't *really* know persists. Perhaps this is a case in point.

I leave it open which response is right. But I do want to mention a reason to take the second seriously, which the ensuing subsections will echo. There is reason to think that the lower animal mind is "massively modular" in the sense that it lacks a central processor

or "faculty of judgment".[46] If lower animals can know stuff, we ought to conclude that knowledge predates central processing and *ipso facto* that known propositions don't require endorsement by the faculty of judgment. And if so, we should be open to allowing that seemings can constitute knowledge. But then unless one allows that knowledge is itself bifurcated, one ought to allow knowledge to have this constitution even in the mature human case. Of course, Sosa would take the foregoing as an argument for distinguishing between animal and reflective knowledge; I'll return to a comparison of our views in §4.5. But if we think knowledge is unified, there is pressure to opt for the second response.

Either way, knowledge is a form of access to the world that our cognitive systems sometimes afford, when they yield veridical representations whose sheer veridicality manifests some cognitive system's reliability. Perhaps these cognitive systems are informationally encapsulated and do not constitute competences of the agent (=the central processor), in which case the view I've described coincides with the process reliabilism of Lyons (2009). Alternatively, perhaps the relevant cognitive systems are not informationally encapsulated and can constitute competences, in which case the view is an agent reliabilist picture.

5.3 Standing in the Space of Reasons Requires More than Access

If we think of reasons as facts, the story about access that I've told is naturally viewed as a partial account of the relation one must bear to a fact to possess the reason given by that fact. And if accessing a fact is knowing it, we can see the case for thinking that knowledge is a precondition for standing in the space of reasons: it is the way to access the reason-giving facts. But access is not the whole story about reason possession, and this fact provides further support for both non-normativism and my specific bi-level approach.

Suppose the fact that p is a reason to believe that q. If possession consisted in access to the reason-giving fact, it would follow that having access to the fact that p would be sufficient for having a reason to believe q. But one might not be attuned to the relation of support between p and the belief that q, or even have the ability to become attuned to it. Suppose q follows from p only via an incredibly difficult proof none of us can do. Even if one has access to the fact that p, one doesn't *ipso facto* have a reason to believe q.

At any rate, that conclusion is both plausible on its face and defensible on the basis of arguments I've given elsewhere.[47] So what more is required for possessing a specific reason given by some fact? One could insist that access to the reason-for relation between the fact and the response it supports is required. If such access is understood as *de dicto* access to the relevant normative truth, such insistence would be an overintellectualization.

Yet access to a fact that subvenes the reason-for relation between p and ϕ-ing is either insufficient or unnecessary for possessing the reason given by p for ϕ-ing. On one understanding of the Lewis Carroll problem, access to conditional truths that subvene reason-for relations isn't sufficient for possessing the relevant inferential reasons: the Tortoise had access to the true conditional that underwrites the reason-for relation, but still lacked the infer-

[46] See Carruthers (2006).
[47] See Sylvan (2015).

ential competence to have the reason. Of course, one might say that the Tortoise is impossible and that possession of the relevant logical concepts entails possession of the relevant competences. But it seems clear that one could have the native competence to make inferences that are not constitutive of possession of any relevant concepts. And once one has the competence to ϕ on the basis of a reason r, one needn't represent to oneself the relevant inferential relation: one can just make the inference directly from r to ϕ-ing. So even if access to some conditional truth that underwrites the reason-for relation between p and ϕ-ing is sufficient for possessing the reason given for ϕ-ing, it isn't necessary.

I suggest we stop trying to analyze the further condition on possession as a second access condition. I argue elsewhere that we can instead understand it in terms of *competently treating something like a reason*, where the relevant competence is a reasons-sensitive competence. Roughly, to treat a consideration of a reason of some sort is to be disposed to reason in the ways that would be correct if it were a reason of that sort. Treatings so understood can display a familiar trio of properties. A subject's treating a consideration r like a good reason of kind K to believe p is

> *correct*, if r is a normative reason of kind k to believe p,
>
> *competent*, if the treating manifests a cognitive ability to correctly treat r-type considerations like reasons of kind k to believe p-type propositions,
>
> *apt*, if the correctness of the treating manifests such competence

Another thing one must do to possess the reason to believe q provided by p is to be in a position to aptly treat p as the kind of reason to believe q that it actually is.

If one thinks that brains in vats and demon victims can be as rational as us in holding their external world beliefs, it may be unwise to demand that they form their beliefs on the basis of facts and hence to demand apt treating. Still, one might also think that a subject in the good case has better support for her beliefs. So I suggest we distinguish rationality and justification. Rationality is determined not by any balance of objective reasons, but rather by the apparent reasons. These are apparent facts. Having "access" to them involves degenerately exercising the capacities that poise one to know in good cases.

Since apparent reasons aren't always real reasons, we can still uphold the slogan that knowledge is a precondition for standing in the space of reasons. It is, however, only one of the preconditions for standing in that space, as we have learned. It is partly for this reason that knowledge does not belong to the space of reasons but rather lies beneath it.

5.4 The Entailment Thesis Reconsidered

These observations return us to the Entailment Thesis, suggesting a better account of the mixed intuitions surrounding it. Plausibly, possessing the reason given by a fact requires one to aptly treat that fact like the reason it is. Treating facts as reasons requires being disposed to reason in certain ways. So understood, treating facts as reasons requires the

faculty of Reason. If so, it doesn't follow from the fact that a creature has access to a perfect-reason-giving fact that it can rationally believe what that fact supports. Without the faculty of Reason, one cannot respond to a fact *as a reason*, and so cannot rationally (or justifiedly believe) anything if rational (or justified belief) is belief for apparent (or objective) reasons.

If this is right, there is a gap in the explanation of the Entailment Thesis I gave in §2. Non-inferential knowledge, I had suggested, entails justification because non-inferential knowledge that p gives one access to the fact that p, which is a perfect reason to believe p. Inferential knowledge that p, I had suggested, entails justification because when one knows inferentially that p, one knows that p in virtue of knowing a proposition q that indicates the truth of p, and when q indicates the truth of p, that makes it the case that q is a good reason to believe p. The explanation assumes in both cases that having access to a reason-giving fact is sufficient for possessing that reason. But that isn't true if possession requires competent treating-as-a-reason and treating-as-a-reason requires the faculty of Reason.

The foregoing explanation is the one I'd give if I believed the Entailment Thesis in an unrestricted form. For I think justified belief requires reasons; so if knowledge entails justification, it requires reasons too. But for beings that lack rational capacities, I am inclined to reject the Entailment Thesis. I do think the two-part argument for the Entailment Thesis I just gave works for human beings with rational capacities. For if one has rational capacities, it is hard to see how one could have access to the fact that p without being in a position to exercise one's rational capacities by responding to that fact and judging that p. And since inference requires rational capacities, the second half of the argument works as well as before.

One might resist this reasoning and insist lowly animals can respond to reasons. While they cannot respond to reasons by *reasoning*, perhaps reasoning is just a special case of responding to reasons. While I'm not unsympathetic to this claim, I don't find it chauvinistic to hold that there is a central kind of reasons-responsiveness that requires the faculty of Reason. If we focus on the lowliest of animals to which we attribute knowledge, it is implausible to attribute to them reasons for belief, understood as rationales rather than mere causes. While some animals have rational capacities, not *all* knowers stand in the space of reasons. Access to the facts is a precondition for standing in the space of reasons, and such access can be achieved by beings lacking the faculty of Reason.

5.5 A Better Bi-Level Epistemology

According to the picture on offer, then, epistemology splits into a higher tier analyzable in terms of reasons and a lower tier analyzable in broadly reliabilist terms. The higher tier is parasitic on the lower tier, since reasons are understood as facts, and for them to justify us we must have access to them. But the lower tier can exist without the higher tier, as cases of animal knowledge suggest. Indeed, the lower tier is not normatively constituted. The study of it belongs just as much to philosophy of mind as it does to epistemology.

The resulting bi-level epistemology has many attractions. It inherits some attractions of knowledge-first epistemology, though it is no part of my view that knowledge is unanalyzable. If we don't view justification as a constituent in knowledge, we could analyze justification in terms of knowledge: specifically, by seeing justification as determined by

accessible reasons, which are facts we are in a position to know. As we saw in §3.3, this approach provides a natural way to combine factualism about reasons with a reasons-based account of justification, thereby solving a problem for reasons-based epistemology.

A related payoff is that this view provides a new way to stop the regress of reasons that avoids the usual worries for foundationalism. If knowledge isn't constituted by justification, it can provide justification without itself standing in need of it. Knowledge is more satisfying as a regress stopper than the other usual suspects (well, the ones that don't look suspiciously like knowledge). Mere sensations aren't satisfying foundations. They lack propositional content, and there aren't enough to go around: what sensations justify foundational *a priori* beliefs, for example? Seemings aren't satisfying foundations either, since seemings are evaluable in a way that undermines their status as foundational. Seemings stemming from biases don't plausibly provide foundational justification.

The view inherits the attractions of other epistemologies that separate the theory of knowledge from the theory of justified belief (e.g., Foley (1987)'s and Kornblith (2008)'s). It allows us to attribute knowledge to creatures that lack capacities intuitively required to have "justified" beliefs, and to claim that if we stretch talk of justification to lower animals, the explanatory priority will be reversed: if these creatures have justified beliefs, it is because their beliefs have features that in normal conditions are knowledge-making. I see this feature as a great virtue, since it allows us to avoid committing to implausible claims about justification. It was, I believe, only the desire to preserve a JTB+ analysis of justification that led Goldman (1979) to offer a reliabilist theory of justification. Reliabilism gets animal knowledge right, but it is *prima facie* implausible as a theory of justification.

A final and central payoff I'll mention is that the present view has all the attractions of Ernest Sosa's bi-level epistemology while avoiding its unattractive features. Sosa famously distinguishes between animal and reflective tiers of epistemic assessment. His reflective tier is analyzed in terms of higher-order epistemic achievements: reflective knowledge is first-order knowledge that is guided in a certain way by higher-order knowledge. It is unclear whether this higher-order characterization gets at the heart of the difference between non-rational and rational animals. Some of the distinctive abilities of rational creatures—e.g., the ability to engage in reasoning—aren't obviously best understood in higher-order terms. Must we think about the epistemic status of our beliefs when proving theorems in mathematics? Such navel-gazing seems unnecessary and indeed counterproductive.

On my approach, by contrast, the epistemic difference between non-rational and rational animals is a first-order difference. Non-rational and rational animals alike have the ability to know, though only rational creatures have justified beliefs. Nevertheless, justification doesn't necessarily involve anything higher-order. It is just an epistemic status that one can achieve in virtue of basing one's beliefs on good reasons. The ability to achieve that status derives partly from our animal endowment: knowledge puts us into contact with reason-giving facts. The difference is that rational creatures have not only access to reason-giving facts, but a distinctive kind of sensitivity to the reason-giving relations that hold between facts and beliefs, a kind constitutive of the ability to reason.

5.6 The Upshot

This section has argued that we can comfortably live without EN. Indeed, the outlook I've sketched is independently attractive. This matters: one might have thought that even if we should take the negative claim made by non-normativists seriously, we should to remain normativists until we are shown how non-normativist epistemology works. But we should be drawn to non-normativism precisely because it fits with an independently appealing systematic outlook. Even if one has questions about the fine details of the outlook, I hope I've shown that there is a positive agenda in addition to the *via negativa* of earlier sections.

6 Conclusion

Let's take stock. I began in §2 by attacking the main argument for EN, which proceeds from the Entailment Thesis. We found the argument to be doubly flawed. Firstly, there is no direct route from entailment to constitution. Secondly, while EN's defenders insist that it provides the best explanation of the intuitive plausibility of the Entailment Thesis, this insistence is mistaken. There are non-normativist explanation of the Entailment Thesis that are preferable because they are consistent with the full range of intuitions surrounding that thesis, which are not wholly positive. This last observation is crucially neglected by the most explicit defense—viz., Schroeder (2015)'s—as is the style of non-normativist explanation I offered: his arguments simply don't impugn this strategy.

I turned in §3 to give three further arguments against EN. The first drew the conclusion that knowledge is non-normative from the premise that it determines factive mental states that are themselves paradigmatically non-normative. The second rested on the observation that normativist analyses of knowledge add an idle wheel, and that there are simpler non-normativist analyses that are more attractive overall. The third pointed to a theoretical payoff of non-normativism: it provides the best answer to a serious objection to the conjunction of a reasons-based account of justification with the best general ontology of reasons, and more generally paves the way for a reasons-first approach to epistemic normativity. These arguments together mount a substantial case for non-normativism.

§5 offered a positive view, one that provides a more detailed explanation of the intuitions surrounding the Entailment Thesis than the one sketched in §2. On this view, epistemological reality splits into a normative level analyzed in terms of reasons and a non-normative level containing knowledge and its non-normative constituents. The story has many attractions. Four principal ones I mentioned were as follows. Firstly, it has many of the attractions of knowledge-first epistemology, but allows that knowledge is analysable—just in non-normative terms. Secondly, it has all the attractions of Sosa's view, but some key advantages. Thirdly, once knowledge is freed from any analytic tie to justification, we can analyze access to reasons in terms of knowledge and uphold a reasons-based analysis of justification. This analysis has all the attractions of evidentialism, but is consistent with the best general ontology of reasons. Fourthly, it captures the main intuition behind JTB+ accounts while taking seriously the priority of knowledge over justification.

Since the picture has the virtues of many different standard normative views and lacks some of their vices, it ought to be as serious a contender as any standard normative view, which is the main positive thesis that this paper sought to establish.

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