

# Unsettling Questions

Guy Longworth<sup>1</sup>

18.12.20

Should we expect someone who knows by seeing invariably to be in a position to settle the questions “How do you know?” “Why do you think so?” or “Are you sure?”? I begin to address that large question by defending the following claims. We should not expect someone who knows that *p* by seeing invariably to be in a position to know how they know that *p* (§2). However, we should expect someone who knows that *p* by seeing to have sufficient reasons for thinking that *p*. But—in light of the first claim—we should not expect their seeing what they do invariably to figure amongst their reasons. A further issue that will figure in the background to the discussion here concerns how, if at all, sensory awareness of things can furnish one with reasons for thinking things so (§3). Despite the fact that one who knows by seeing need not know how they know and need not have amongst their reasons that they see what they do, still their seeing what they do can play an important role in establishing surety (§4).

## *I. Settling questions.*

In *Sense & Sensibilia*, J. L. Austin invites us to consider a case in which one has come upon evidence that there is an animal about, including inconclusive evidence that it is a pig. One naturally asks oneself the question, “Well, is it?” And in seeking to decide the answer to that question, one might seek further evidence. “But...,” Austin writes,

...if the animal then emerges and stands there plainly in view, there is no longer any question of collecting evidence; its coming into view doesn’t provide me with more evidence that it’s a pig. I can now just see that it is, the question is settled. (Austin 1962: 115.)

We settle questions by coming to know their answers. In this case, one asked oneself the question, “Is it is a pig?” and so one settled one’s question by coming to know that it *is* a pig. How did one come to know that it is a pig? Not by seeing *that* it is, for seeing that it is a pig is a form of knowing that it is a pig, rather than a way of coming to know that it is.

---

<sup>1</sup> I’m grateful to Matthew Boyle, Bill Brewer, John Collins, Thomas Crowther, Naomi Eilan, Craig French, Andrea Giananti, Hannah Ginsborg, Anil Gomes, Andrea Kern, Michael Kremer, Hemdat Lerman, Alan Millar, Eylem Özaltun, Johannes Roessler, Genia Schönbaumsfeld, Paul Snowdon, Matthew Soteriou, Andrew Stephenson, Barry Stroud, Lee Walters, and audiences at Fribourg, Reading, Southampton, East Anglia, and Warwick.

What enabled one to see that it is a pig, and so to have knowledge that it is a pig, was one's plainly viewing, or seeing, the pig. It was one's plainly seeing the pig that enabled one to settle the question, and so the way in which one came to know that it is a pig was by plainly seeing it. In cases of this sort, as Austin puts it,

...it is, characteristically, by seeing *the thing* that the question is settled. (1962: 139, my emphasis.)

Suppose, then, that one has settled a question by coming to know its answer. In that case, one is positioned to raise further questions for oneself, or to have them pressed upon one. In particular, one is liable to face versions of the following three questions:

How do you know?

Why do you think so?

Are you sure?

Setting out to settle questions of these further sorts sometimes has the potential to unsettle, by leading one to lose the knowledge that the further questions target. If one can establish no positive answer to the question of how one knows, then one might come to think that perhaps one doesn't. And that might lead, in turn, to one's losing a piece of knowledge that one had previously possessed. If one's best attempt to explain why one thinks so is compatible with its not being so after all, then one might come to believe that one's reasons for thinking so are not sufficient, again with the potential consequence that one loses a piece of knowledge. And in seeking to establish surety, one might reopen one's initial question only to find that one is no longer in a position to settle it. Again, that outcome might lead one to lose the knowledge.

Should we expect someone who knows by seeing invariably to be in a position positively to settle these potentially unsettling questions? In what follows, I begin to address that large question by defending the following claims. We should not expect someone who knows that *p* by seeing invariably to be in a position to know how they know that *p* (§2). However, we should expect someone who knows that *p* by seeing to have sufficient reasons for thinking that *p*. But—in light of the first claim—we should not expect their seeing what they do invariably to figure amongst their reasons. A further issue that will figure in the background to the discussion here concerns how, if at all, sensory awareness of *things* can furnish one with reasons for thinking things so (§3). Despite the fact that one who knows by seeing need not know how they know and need not have amongst their reasons that they see what they do, still their seeing what they do can play an important role in establishing surety (§4).

## 2. "How do you know?"

Where someone knows something, we can reasonably expect there to be an answer to the question, "How do they know?" (See Snowdon 2012: 252, 260–261.) Should we expect a person who knows invariably to be in a position to answer that question? That is, should we expect someone who knows something always to be in a position to know *how* they know that thing? Plausibly, the answer is that we should not, because it is possible, for example, to know, by seeing a pig, that there is a pig there without knowing that one knows, by seeing a pig, that there is a pig there.

The question whether  $p$  is distinct from the question of how  $S$  knows whether  $p$ . Suppose that there is a pig there and that  $S$  knows by seeing that there is a pig there. In that case,  $S$  knows whether there is a pig there by knowing that there is a pig there. That is,  $S$  has settled the question whether there is a pig there by knowing its answer. But that is not an answer to the question, "How does  $S$  know that there is a pig there?" An answer to that question would be that  $S$  knows that there is a pig there by seeing the pig. If we assume that it is the only answer to that question, then  $S$  knows how  $S$  knows that there is a pig there if and only if  $S$  knows that  $S$  knows by seeing that there is a pig there. Unless it is impossible to know by seeing that there is a pig there without knowing that one knows by seeing that there is a pig there, one's having settled the question whether there is a pig there won't settle for one the question how one knows whether there is a pig there.

Can one know by seeing that there is a pig there without knowing how one knows that there is a pig there? On the face of it, one can. Knowing by seeing that there is a pig there plausibly requires possession of an ability to recognise pigs by sight, or perhaps an ability to recognise, by sight, conclusive evidence of the presence of pigs. The successful exercise of that recognitional ability is necessary and sufficient for knowing by sight that there is a pig there. Knowing that one knows by seeing that there is a pig there seems to demand more. Knowing that one knows by seeing that there is a pig there seems to require, in addition, that one possesses abilities to recognise that (and what) one knows and that (and what) one sees. Again, the successful exercise of those abilities is necessary for knowing how one knows. If we think that it is possible to possess and successfully to exercise an ability to recognise pigs by sight without possessing and successfully exercising an ability to recognise that one knows and that one sees, then we should allow that it is possible to know by seeing that there is a pig there without knowing that one knows by seeing that there is a pig there. In that case, we should allow that it is possible to know by seeing without knowing how one knows.

It seems plausible that there are, or could be, creatures that possess the ability to recognise pigs by sight and yet do not possess the abilities to recognise that they know and that they see. It therefore seems plausible that there could be creatures that know that there is a pig before them without knowing how they know. However, we might allow that there could be such creatures whilst denying that adult human beings are amongst them. Perhaps normal adult human abilities to know by seeing depend upon, or involve, abilities to know that one knows by seeing. In

that case, it would be possible to have the ability to know by seeing without having the ability to know how one knows, but impossible for us.

Suppose that creatures like us cannot have the ability to know by seeing without also having the abilities to recognise that they know and that they see. Would accepting that connection amongst abilities serve to protect the claim that where we know by seeing, we are thereby in a position to know how we know? Plausibly, it would not. For one might have the abilities to recognise that one knows and that one sees without being in a position successfully to exercise those abilities on some particular occasion. In that case, there might be occasions on which one successfully exercised one's ability to recognise by sight that there is a pig there, and so to know that there is a pig there, without being in a position successfully to exercise one's abilities to know that one knows by sight that there is a pig there. On such occasions, one would know by sight that there is a pig there without knowing how one knew. In order to exclude that possibility, all of the occasions which present opportunities for successful exercises of the ability to recognise pigs by sight would also have to be occasions which present opportunities for successful exercises of the abilities to recognise that one knows and that one sees. Insofar as there is no reason to expect occasions for successful exercises of these different abilities to correspond in that way, there is no reason to expect that one who knows by seeing is bound to be in a position to know how they know.

Similar remarks apply with respect to views on which the capacity to recognise pigs by sight is a sub-capacity of a more expansive capacity to know how one knows, when one knows by seeing. (A view of this sort is put forward in McDowell 2011.) On this sort of view, exercises of a capacity to recognise pigs by sight are also exercises of a capacity to know how one knows—in this case, to know that one knows by seeing. Exercises of such a capacity that failed to deliver knowledge of how one knows would be defective such exercises. They would be exercises of the capacity that failed to result in all that exercises of the capacity can achieve. However, even if we were to grant that much, it wouldn't follow that exercises of the capacity couldn't deliver knowledge without also delivering knowledge of how one knows. Obtaining that consequence would depend on holding, in addition, that no exercise of the capacity could be at all defective—defective, for example, in failing to deliver knowledge of how one knows—without also being defective in the more specific way of failing to deliver knowledge. Without supplementation, the proposal that the capacity to know by seeing is part of a more expansive capacity doesn't support the claim that that is impossible. At most, the proposal delivers only the weaker claim that any such exercises would be defective.

Suppose, however, that the target capacities were even more strongly connected. More specifically, suppose that it were impossible positively to exercise the ability to recognise pigs by sight without exercising positively the ability to recognise that one knows by seeing. On the natural assumption that positive exercises of these various abilities result in appropriate beliefs, the upshot is a view on which one

cannot form a belief that there is a pig there, on the basis of exercising an ability to recognise pigs by sight, without forming a belief that one knows by seeing, on the basis of exercising an ability to recognise that one knows by seeing. In cases in which positive exercises of the ability to recognise pigs by sight are successful, and so one knows by sight that there is a pig there, one would believe that one knows by sight that there is a pig there. And so, whenever one knew by sight that there is a pig there, one would believe that one knew by sight that there is a pig there. (Various views about the relations amongst these abilities might support this supposition, or the slightly weaker supposition that whenever one is in a position to exercise the former ability, one is in a position to exercise the latter abilities. For one important example, it might be supported by views on which one can always exploit the transparency of belief, in allowing the deliverances of one's first order recognitional abilities to condition exercises of higher order recognitional abilities.)

The supposition invokes a fairly tight connection between knowing by sight and *believing* that one knows by sight. Does it support a similarly demanding connection between knowing by sight and *knowing* that one knows by sight? Plausibly, it does not. The most basic connection imposed by the supposition is between believing on the basis of seeing and believing that one knows by seeing. And now since many of the cases in which one believes on the basis of seeing are not cases of knowing by seeing, many of the corresponding cases of believing that one knows by seeing are cases of believing erroneously. That makes it plausible that even in a case in which one believed correctly that one knew by seeing, one's believing is liable to be correct only accidentally, and so might not amount to knowledge of how one knows.

One might at this stage consider further strengthening the operative supposition. Specifically, one might consider adding to the present condition—that is, that one who knows will believe that they know—the further condition that one who *doesn't* know will *not* believe that they know. However, the addition is implausibly strong. For one thing, the plausible idea that exercises of the ability to recognise that one knows by seeing can be brought about by exercises of the ability to recognise by seeing does not support the idea that exercises of the former ability cannot be brought about in any other way. For another thing, even someone inclined to allow that whenever one knows by seeing, one is in a position successfully to exercise an ability to recognise that one does, needn't be committed thereby to the impossibility of unsuccessfully exercising the same ability. (The issues here are related to those discussed in Williams 1978: 309–313; for earlier iterations, see Gassendi's contribution to Descartes 1641: 231 and More 1553: book 2, §16.)

It seems reasonable to allow that there can be cases in which one doesn't know by seeing and in which one nonetheless comes to believe that one knows by seeing through exercising unsuccessfully an ability to recognise that one knows by seeing. However, allowing that possibility potentially has far-reaching consequences for the relationship between knowing and knowing how one knows. We can draw out those consequences by noticing that the claim that one who knows by seeing is

in a position to know that they know by seeing treats knowing by seeing as a *luminous* condition, in Timothy Williamson's sense. That is, it requires that for every possible case, if in that case one knows by seeing, then in that case one is in a position to know that one knows by seeing. We can therefore bring to bear a version of Williamson's powerful arguments against there being luminous conditions. (I draw in what follows on Williamson 2000: 93–134, 2005, 2009, 2020, together with the helpful discussion in Srinivasan 2016. For relevant discussion and counter-considerations, see Das and Salow 2018; Greco 2014; McHugh 2010; Stalnaker 2015; and the critical review of earlier work in McGlynn 2014.)

The potential consequences of there being cases in which one doesn't know by seeing and in which one nonetheless comes to believe that one knows by seeing through exercising an ability to recognise that one knows by seeing arise via a further plausible idea. The further idea is that amongst this range of cases are some in which the underlying explanation of how the exercise of the ability to recognise that one knows by seeing was brought about is very similar to the underlying explanation of exercises that result in instances of *correct*, rather than erroneous, believing. If we allow that there can be unsuccessful such exercises, it will be natural to allow that they are susceptible of a variety of explanations. But it is plausible that amongst those explanations will be some that appeal to features of situations that are closely similar to those that figure in explaining successful exercises.

The target supposition seeks to explain successful exercises by appeal to a connection between exercises of an ability to recognise by sight and exercises of an ability to recognise that one knows by seeing. It is helpful to descend to a lower level of explanation. When considered at the lower level, the supposition is that there is a corresponding connection between the underlying features of situations that underwrite exercises of the ability to recognise by sight and the underlying features of situations that underwrite exercises of the ability to recognise that one knows by seeing. Now it is a reasonable conjecture that corresponding to successful exercises of the ability to recognise pigs by sight are unsuccessful exercises with a closely similar underlying explanation. For example, some such unsuccessful exercises might be underwritten by similar operations of the visual system that were brought about by similar patterns of light on the retina—say, patterns that were brought about by non-pigs with a look similar to the look of pigs. And it is a reasonable conjecture that just as exercises of the ability to recognise pigs by sight manifest some insensitivity to underlying features of their situations, so do exercises of the ability to recognise that one knows by seeing that there is a pig there. Thus, just as underlying similarities in the operation of the visual system might figure in explaining exercises of the ability to recognise by sight, so such underlying similarities might also figure in explaining exercises of the ability to recognise that one knows by sight. If so, then there will be cases in which the underlying similarity between a case of knowing, by seeing, that there is a pig and a case of believing, without knowing, that there is a pig figures in explaining why the ability

to recognise that one knows by seeing was exercised erroneously in the latter case. (These cases are cognitive analogues of barn façades. It is unsurprising that there should be such cases. If there were not, then it would be puzzling that mistakes about whether  $p$  are often accompanied by correlative mistakes about whether one knows whether  $p$ .)

Now consider a pair of cases with this profile. The first element of the pair is a case in which one knows by seeing, with underlying explanation  $\alpha$ , and in which one believes that one knows by seeing, with underlying explanation  $\beta$ . The second element of the pair is a case in which one believes on the basis of seeing, but doesn't know, with underlying explanation  $\alpha'$ , and in which one believes erroneously that one knows by seeing, with underlying explanation  $\beta'$ , and where  $\alpha'$  and  $\beta'$  are closely similar to  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . Given the close similarity between  $\langle \alpha', \beta' \rangle$  and  $\langle \alpha, \beta \rangle$ , the following seems to be true: if one's actual case were the first member of such a pair, it could easily have been the case that—that is, there is a very close possibility in which—one's case was the second member of the pair.

Although one's belief, in the actual case, that one knows by seeing would be correct, one could easily have believed incorrectly that one knows by seeing. That is, there is a close possibility in which one has a similar belief to one's actual belief, and in which the underlying explanation for one's having that similar belief is similar to the underlying explanation for one's having one's actual belief, and yet in which one's belief is incorrect. It follows that one's actual belief fails to meet the following *safety* condition:

(Safety)            One believes safely in a case  $c$  if, and only if, in any case,  $c'$ , close to  $c$ , in which one believes very similarly, and on a very similar underlying basis, one believes correctly. (See Williamson 2009: 325; Williamson 2020: 16–17.)

It follows, in turn, that the claim that one's actual exercise of an ability to recognise that one knows by seeing resulted in one's knowing that one knows by seeing conflicts with a plausible necessary condition on knowing, according to which one knows that  $p$  only if one believes safely that  $p$ .

The supposition that exercises of an ability to recognise by sight always bring about exercises of an ability to recognise that one knows by seeing fails to guarantee that the latter exercises result invariably in knowledge that one knows by seeing. If there are cases in which exercises of the ability to recognise that one knows by seeing have a relevantly similar underlying explanation, then there will be cases in which one knows by seeing, but in which one's believing that one knows by seeing is unsafe, and so does not amount to one's knowing that one knows by seeing. With decreasing plausibility, a further supposition is required to exclude such cases, to the effect that no cases in which one knows by seeing are paired with relevantly similar possible cases in which one

believes erroneously that one knows by seeing. Since it is plausible both that there can be erroneous exercises of the ability to recognise that one knows by seeing, and that some such exercises have an underlying explanation that is relevantly similar to correct such exercises, it is plausible that there are cases in which one knows by seeing and where one is not in a position to know that one knows by seeing.

It is important to see that even the implausibly strong additional supposition wouldn't obviously be enough to protect the claim that one who knows by seeing is always in a position to know that they know by seeing. For, as Williamson points out, there are plausible safety requirements on knowledge that apply not only with respect to belief, but also with respect to *confidence*, construed as willingness to rely on a proposition in one's practical and theoretical reasoning:

(Confidence) One is safely confident in a case  $c$  if, and only if, in any case,  $c'$ , close to  $c$ , in which one is very similarly confident, and on a very similar underlying basis, one is correctly confident.

It is plausible that one knows only if one is safely confident. Suppose, now, that one's ability to recognise that one knows by seeing is so closely connected with one's ability to recognise pigs by sight that one positively exercises the former ability when, and only when, one successfully exercises the latter ability. Thus, one believes that one knows by seeing, through exercising the recognitional ability, when, and only when, one knows by seeing. One's belief that one knows by seeing therefore meets the *Safety* condition. However, that is consistent with its failing to meet the *Confidence* condition. For it is consistent with there being pairs of cases with the following profile. In the first member, one knows by seeing and has just enough confidence that one knows by seeing to believe that one knows by seeing, all with underlying explanation  $\alpha$ . In the second case of the pair, one doesn't know by seeing, and has not quite enough confidence that one knows by seeing to believe that one knows by seeing, all with an underlying explanation  $\alpha'$ , closely similar to  $\alpha$ . If safe confidence is a necessary condition on knowing, the first member is a case in which one knows by seeing but in which one is not in a position to know that one knows. To exclude the possibility of such pairs, an even stronger, and so even less plausible, supposition is required. Minimally, it must be assumed that despite there being cases in which one knows by seeing that are paired with cases in which one doesn't and in which the underlying explanation of one's attitudes is closely similar, one's degree of confidence is *far* lower in the second member of the pair than it is in the first. (See Srinivasan 2015: 308–318; Williamson 2000: 96–102.)

The upshot is that protecting the claim that anyone who knows by seeing is in a position to know that they know by seeing requires the imposition of implausibly strong assumptions about the relations between exercises of the ability to recognise by sight and exercises of the ability to know that one knows by seeing. As Williamson points out, plausible safety conditions on knowledge impose a margin around the



cases in which one is in a position to know some truth, such that the truth still obtains within that margin, but within which one is not in a position to know that truth. Thus, the cases in which one is in a position to know that one knows by seeing are surrounded by a margin of cases in which one knows by seeing, and in which one may believe that one knows by seeing but one is not in a position to know that one does. (See figure 1.) Because the cases within that margin are surrounded by closely similar cases in which one does not know by seeing but in which one nonetheless believes that one knows by seeing, safety conditions on knowing preclude one from knowing there. And it is worth noticing that the argument to this point has focused on what we can expect someone to know about how they know at the point at which they acquire the first-order knowledge. Even where someone knows at that point how they know something, there is no obvious reason to expect their retention of the first-order knowledge to depend on their remembering how they came to know. (See e.g. Strawson 1974.) There are, therefore, solid seeming grounds for holding that it is possible for one to know that there is, or was, a pig there, on the basis of having seen the pig, without being in a position to know that one knows that there is, or was, a pig there. Plausibly, there are reasons to allow that it is possible for one to settle the question whether there is, or was, a pig there without being able to settle the question how one knows whether there is.

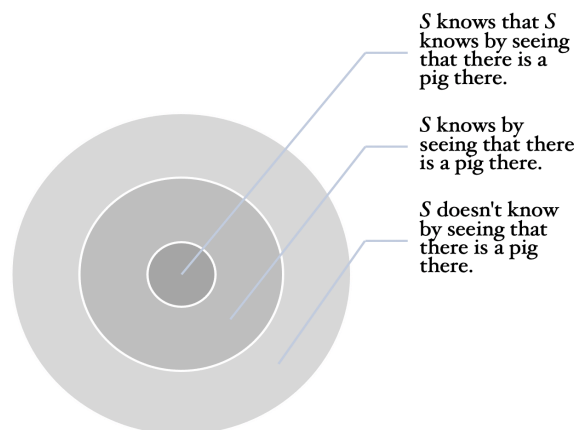


Figure 1.

The inner ring represents cases in which someone knows and also knows how they know. The middle ring of cases, in which someone knows without knowing how they know, is required in order that subjects in the inner ring meet *Safety*, providing a layer of insulation between those subjects and those in the outer ring, who fail to know.

### 3. “*Why do you think so?*”

We typically ask *why* someone believes, rather than *how* they believe, and we ask *how* someone knows, rather than *why* they do. And we expect quite different sorts of answers to these different questions. Thus, we think of accounts of how someone knows as distinct from explanations of why they believe, or think, something to be so. (See especially Austin

1946.) Nevertheless, such accounts and explanations are plausibly connected by a principle like the following:

(Reasons)                      One knows that  $p$  if and only if one believes that  $p$  because  $q$ , where the fact that  $q$  is a conclusive reason in light of which one believes that  $p$ .

For example, according to one initially plausible proposal, one knows by seeing that there is a pig there if and only if one believes that there is a pig there because one can see that there is a pig there, where one believes that there is a pig there in light of the fact that one can see that there is a pig there, and where the fact that one can see that there is a pig there is a conclusive reason for believing that there is.

The *Reasons* principle is supported by three plausible features of the relationship between knowing and believing. The first plausible feature is that knowing that  $p$  entails believing that  $p$ . Given that entailment, we should expect any full account of the fact that someone knows to sustain an account of the fact that they believe. The second plausible feature is that believing that  $p$  is reasons-hungry, in the sense that a case of believing is imperfect to the extent that it fails to be supported by reasons that guarantee the believing's correctness. That is to say, we expect an account of why someone believes something to advert to reasons in light of which they believe what they do, and if those reasons are not conclusive, then we view the believing as imperfect. The third plausible feature is that where someone's knowing that  $p$  is dependent on their believing that  $p$ , in accord with the first feature, their believing that  $p$  is a perfect instance of its kind. Thus, given the second plausible feature, we expect that the explanation of such cases of believing that  $p$  will advert to conclusive reasons in light of which the subject has the belief.

I'll say more about reasons shortly. Before doing so, I want to consider a question about how the *Reasons* principle should be understood. Like any biconditional, the principle will be understood differently depending upon how priority is accorded to its right- and left-hand sides. And so, the question I wish to consider is a question of priority: should we prioritise *Reasons'* right-hand side or its left-hand side, or should we grant equal priority to both sides?

Resistance to the *Reasons* principle is fostered by prioritising its right-hand side. Prioritising in that way sponsors the idea that we should be able to explain someone's believing that  $p$ , and so any reasons in light of which they believe that  $p$ , in advance of accounting for their knowing that  $p$ . Given that assumption, we would naturally seek materials for our explanation of this case of believing that  $p$  from amongst the elements that figure in accounting for how the subject came to know that  $p$ . But we cannot appeal to the subject's seeing that there is a pig there, for that is a form of knowing, and so is excluded. We might therefore try appealing to what the subject saw. But a pig is not a fact, and so is not a fact in light of which the subject can believe that there is a pig there. If the pig, and other non-facts, exhaust the materials that are available to

serve as reasons in light of which the subject believes, then it seems that the subject does not believe in light of reasons. And yet it seems obvious that they can know that there is a pig there by seeing one. Thus, prioritising the right-hand side of *Reasons* fosters resistance to the principle.

Alternatively, adherence to the *Reasons* principle, still understood in a way that prioritises its right-hand side, might lead one to question otherwise natural accounts of how someone knows something. Again, it is natural to allow that our subject's seeing the pig figures in the way they know that there is a pig there. But since their seeing the pig fails to provide them with a reason in light of which they can believe that there is a pig there, our account of how they know must look beyond the pig. What is needed is an account of their having available to them a fact in the light of which they can believe that there is a pig there. One can be led in that way to the idea that there must be a mode of access to the fact that there is a pig there that does not depend on knowing that fact. Alternatively, one can be led to the idea that the subject's knowing that there is a pig there must be accounted for by appeal to their having other pieces of knowledge that do not depend upon their knowing that there is a pig there—for example, knowledge of evidence of porcine presence. Since neither idea figures naturally in our accounts of how someone knows something by seeing, one can be led in this way to view those natural accounts as, at best, incomplete and, at worst, unable to sustain the natural verdict, that the subject knows that there is a pig there.

Let's consider, by way of contrast, the outcome of prioritising *Reasons'* left-hand side. In one version, our understanding of the right-hand side of the principle is exhausted by our understanding of its left-hand side: our understanding of what it is to believe that  $p$  in light of conclusive reasons is exhausted by our understanding of what it is to know that  $p$ . Accordingly, any otherwise adequate account of someone's knowing that there is a pig there would be an adequate account of their believing for conclusive reasons that there is a pig there. Thus, prioritising *Reasons'* left-hand side finesses concerns that the principle, or its applications, might be undermined by challenges to its right-hand side. However, insulating *Reasons* in that way is costly, since it involves denying that we have an independent grip on *Reasons'* right-hand side. In particular, it involves repudiating the attractive view that the reasons in light of which one believes must be facts which one knows. If that view is correct, then we have reason to adopt something closer to a no-priority understanding of the principle.

At this stage, it will be helpful attend to our partly independent understanding of the right-hand side of the principle. The right-hand side appeals to the idea of someone's believing that  $p$  because  $q$ . It thus has the form of a standard reason-employing explanation, as when we explain that (I):

- (I) Kim fell over because they were drunk.

Here, the fact that Kim was drunk was a reason why they fell over. And the target explanation is *factive* at two points, in that it cannot be true that they fell over because they were drunk unless they fell over *and* they were drunk. However, when understood in one natural way, the fact that they were drunk was not a consideration *in the light of which* they fell over. Put another way, they didn't fall over *for the reason* that they were drunk. Consider, then, another example of a reason-giving explanation:

- (2) Kim stopped drinking because they believed that they were drunk.

Here, again, the fact that Kim believed that they were drunk was a reason why they stopped drinking, and this could not have been so unless they stopped drinking and they believed that they were drunk. But in this case, an aspect of the reason why they stopped drinking *was* a consideration, or seeming consideration, in the light of which they stopped drinking: that they were drunk. That is, they stopped drinking for the reason that, as they believed, they were drunk. Unlike the fact that they believed that they were drunk, that they were drunk need not be a fact in order to play its allotted role in this type of explanation. Now consider (3):

- (3) Kim stopped drinking because they were drunk.

Here, there is one natural understanding of (3) on which the explanation it offers is akin to the one offered by our natural understanding of (1). On this understanding, Kim stopped drinking because, for example, their drunkenness rendered them unable to drink more. However, another natural understanding of (3) is available. According to that understanding, the fact that they were drunk was a reason why they stopped drinking, but it was also a consideration in light of which they stopped drinking. They stopped drinking for the reason that they were drunk. As in (1), that they were drunk figures factively in what (3) states, and so (3) entails that they were drunk. But that they were drunk also figures as its analogue does in (2), and so was their reason for stopping drinking. The same thing plays both explanatory roles: the fact that they were drunk explains why they stopped drinking by figuring as a reason in light of which they stopped drinking. Thus, we reach the idea that figures on the right-hand side of the *Reasons* principle, of one's believing that *p* because *q*, where the fact that *q* is a consideration in light of which one believes that *p*.

How can a fact that explains one's believing that *p* also be a fact in light of which one so believes? One's believing in light of the fact seems to require that one stands to the fact in something close to the way in which one stands to the proposition that *q* when one believes that *q*. One's being in a position to believe that *p* because *q* also requires that *q*—that it is a fact that *q*. What is required, then, is a state of the individual that is akin to belief in its capacity to make available to the subject considerations, or seeming considerations, in light of which to believe, and yet which guarantees that the considerations it makes available are facts. Adopting the plausible hypothesis that any state of a subject fitting

those requirements will be a state of knowing, we reach the attractive view mentioned earlier:

- (Light) If one believes that  $p$  because  $q$ , where the fact that  $q$  is a reason in light of which one believes that  $p$ , then one knows that  $q$ .

In addition to being supported by reflection on its role in underwriting reason-giving explanations, *Light* can be supported by consideration of examples in which failures of its consequent seem to provide the best explanation of failures of its antecedent. The following example is due to Jennifer Hornsby:

The example concerns Edmund who believes that the ice in the middle of the pond is dangerously thin, having been told so by a normally reliable friend, and who accordingly keeps to the edge. But Edmund's friend didn't want Edmund to skate in the middle of the pond (never mind why), so that he had told Edmund that the ice there was thin despite having no view about whether or not it actually was thin. Edmund, then, did not keep to the edge *because* the ice in the middle was thin. Suppose now that, as it happened, the ice in the middle of the pond was thin. This makes no difference. Edmund still didn't keep to the edge *because* the ice was thin. (Hornsby 2008: 251.)

Hornsby focuses on Edmund's keeping to the edge, and her case provides grounds for thinking that they could have done that *because* the ice in the middle was thin only if they had known that the ice in the middle was thin. But an equivalent judgement seems apt with respect to Edmund's believing that they should avoid skating in the middle of the pond. Edmund could have had that belief *because* the ice in the middle was thin only if they knew that the ice in the middle was thin. (For versions of the plausible hypothesis that any appropriately belief-like state that is factive is a state of knowledge, see Hyman 1999, 2006; 2015: 159–190; Williamson 2000: 33–41. For further defences of the attractive view about acting or believing for reasons, see for example Alvarez 2010; Hawthorne and Magidor 2018; Hornsby 2008; Hyman 1999, 2006, 2015: 133–158; Littlejohn 2018; McDowell 2013; Neta 2009; Raz 2002; Unger 1975; Williams 1972; Williamson 2000: 184–208. The view is assumed in Moore 1905–6 and Prichard 1932.)

Returning to the *Reasons* principle, we have that our subject knows, by seeing a pig, that there is a pig there, and so we have that they believe that there is a pig there in light of conclusive reasons for believing that there is a pig there. Our question is, what is the fact in light of which our subject believes that there is a pig there?

We saw that the fact in light of which they believe that there is a pig there couldn't be the pig, for that is not a fact. An alternative candidate would be the fact that they saw the pig. (See e.g. Decartes 1641: 22; McDowell 2006: 134; Millar 2019: 109–117.) According to this alternative, the proposal is that one knows, by seeing a pig there, that

there is a pig there if and only if one believes that there is a pig there in light of the fact that one sees a pig there. In any case in which one knows, by seeing a pig, that there is a pig there, it will be a fact that one sees a pig, and so such a fact will be available to serve as a reason for believing that there is a pig there. And furthermore, since one cannot see a pig there unless there is a pig there, the fact that one sees a pig there is a conclusive reason for believing that there is a pig there. To that extent, the proposal is a good one. However, the conclusion of the previous section provides reasons to doubt that it is ultimately acceptable.

The proposal combines with the *Light* principle to deliver the consequence that if someone believes that there is a pig there in light of the fact that they see a pig there, then they *know* that they see a pig there. Thus, we have that one who knows, by seeing a pig, that there is a pig there must know that they see a pig there. But independently of the proposal, there is no obvious reason to accept that in order to know by seeing, one must also know that one sees. And the idea that this is a general requirement closely approximates the idea that knowing by seeing is luminous—an idea that was found to be implausible in the previous section.

The general requirement only approximates, and does not entail, that either knowing by seeing, or seeing itself, is luminous. A luminous condition is one such that, whenever it obtains, one is in a position to know that it obtains. The general requirement would require that knowing by seeing is a luminous condition if it entailed that if one knows by seeing, then one is in a position to know that one knows by seeing. And it would require that seeing is a luminous condition if it entailed that if one sees then one is in a position to know that one sees. However, the general requirement carries neither entailment. All that it requires is that in any case in which one knows, by seeing a pig, that there is a pig there, one knows that one sees a pig. It allows that one can know by seeing that there is a pig there without knowing that one knows that there is a pig there, requiring only that in those cases one knows that one sees a pig. And it allows that one can see a pig without knowing that one does in any case in which one doesn't also know that there is a pig there.

Although the general requirement is not in direct conflict with the conclusion that neither knowing nor seeing are luminous, it still comes under pressure from the conclusion of the previous section. The first reason for this is that the claim that one who knows by seeing must know that they see lacks the immediate intuitive pull of the stronger claim that one who knows by seeing must know how they know. Thus, it is natural to seek to support the less intuitive claim by appeal to the more intuitive. But that putative source of support is undercut by the conclusion that knowing by seeing is not luminous.

A second, related difficulty for the general requirement is this. As illustrated by figure 2, the general requirement entails that the boundary of the cases within which one can know by seeing that there is a pig there doesn't lie outside the boundary of cases within which one can know that one sees a pig there. We saw in the previous section that the locations of those boundaries are determined by the boundaries at which *Safety* fails.

Thus, the boundary around the cases within which one can know, by seeing, that there is a pig there is determined by the proximity of cases in which there isn't a pig there and yet one nonetheless believes that there is. Similarly, the boundary around the cases within which one can know that one sees a pig there is determined by the proximity of cases in which one doesn't see a pig there and yet one nonetheless believes that one does. It is far from obvious why we should expect the former boundary to fall inside the latter. And it is hard to see why the boundaries' aligning in this way should be anything better than happenstance.

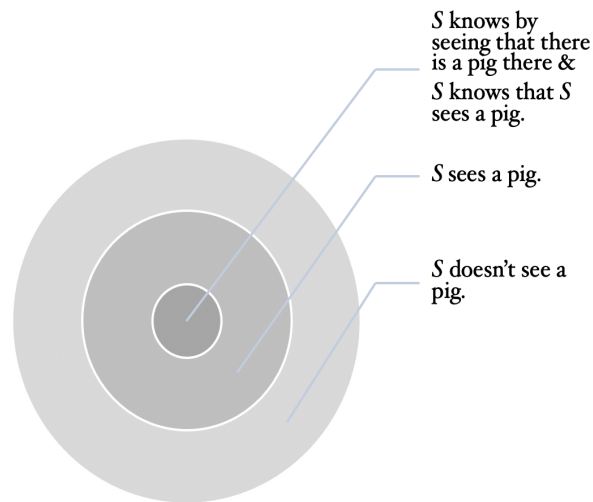


Figure 2.

The inner ring represents cases in which someone knows by seeing and also knows that they see. The middle ring represents cases in which one sees a pig without knowing that there is a pig there and without knowing that one sees. All of the cases in which one knows by seeing are cases in which one knows that one sees.

The second difficulty gives rise to a third. The general requirement is apt to seem most plausible where one knows by seeing and where the closest cases in which one doesn't see are also cases in which what one believes doesn't obtain. For where that is so, there is some plausibility to the idea that the proximity of cases in which one doesn't see would preclude one's knowing that one sees only if the proximity of cases in which what one believes doesn't obtain would also preclude one's knowing by seeing. However, there are cases in which that is not so. Suppose, for example, that one were a fluent lipreader. And consider a case in which one knows what someone said by hearing their speech. Now suppose that the closest cases in which one doesn't hear what they said are cases in which what they said is the same and in which one knows what they said by seeing the movements of their lip. Suppose, finally, that one is both close to the boundary between cases of hearing and cases of seeing and also sufficiently insensitive to that boundary that if one were to cross it, one would still believe that one heard their speech rather than

seeing their lips (Cp. Descartes 1664: 79). Given that set up, it is plausible that one might know by hearing. And yet since the nearby cases that exclude one's knowing that one heard are cases in which one nonetheless gets right what was said, their proximity needn't prevent one from knowing what was said. If cases of that sort are possible, then it is possible to know by hearing without knowing that one hears, and so it cannot be that in all cases in which one knows by hearing, one's reason for believing is that one hears.

At that stage, one might be tempted to reconsider the standing of the *Reasons* principle. Perhaps the considerations that we've considered to this point indicate that where one knows, one sometimes believes without reason (see e.g. Millar 2019: 35, 109–117; Strawson 1974; Stroud 2015; Williams 1972). However, it would be premature to concede *Reasons* without considering whether there is a viable alternative to the proposal that where one both knows by seeing and believes in light of a reason, then that reason is the fact that one sees. And there is at least one alternative:

(Reasons\*) One knows that  $p$  if and only if one believes that  $p$  because  $p$ , where the fact that  $p$  is a conclusive reason in light of which one believes that  $p$ .

For instance, where one knows that there is a pig there by seeing it there, one believes that there is a pig there in light of the fact that there is.

*Reasons\** has at least two advantages. First, any fully adequate answer to the question, "How do you know?" must specify sufficient conditions for one's knowing. But since one's knowing that  $p$  entails that  $p$ , sufficient conditions for one's knowing that  $p$  also guarantee the obtaining of the fact that  $p$ . So, any fully adequate answer to the question, "How do you know that there is a pig there?" will guarantee that it is a fact that there is a pig there, and so guarantee that the fact required by *Reasons\** is available to serve as a reason for believing that there is a pig there. Second, and differentiating *Reasons\** from the proposal we just considered, other proposals are liable struggle to adhere to *Light*. *Light* requires that one knows the reasons in light of which one believes. And we have just seen that one's knowing that  $p$  by seeing fails to guarantee that one knows that one sees. Furthermore, this issue will be faced by any proposal on which one's reason for believing is the fact that  $q$  and yet one's knowing that  $p$  doesn't guarantee one's knowing that  $q$ . By contrast, one's knowing that  $p$  by seeing *does* guarantee that one knows that  $p$ , and so secures, in accord with *Light*, that one can believe in light of the fact that  $p$ . So, where one knows, by seeing, that there is a pig there, the fact that there is a pig there is fitted to serve as a reason in light of which one believes.

Those are significant advantages. However, they would be worthless if *Reasons\** were ruled out from the outset. And it has seemed to some of those who have considered proposals like *Reasons\** that it is. For example, John McDowell writes as follows:



...an experience is, or least provides, a reason for believing that things are as they appear to be. But even if we go for “is” rather than “provides,” this does not warrant leaving out any allusion to one’s experience in a specification of one’s reason for believing what one does. This would imply the absurdity I am resisting, that merely restating what one believes might be an appropriate response to an inquiry into one’s reason for believing it. The circumstance of a fact’s making itself manifest to a subject cannot be equated with the fact itself, in contrast with any fact about the subject... (McDowell 2006: 134)

If McDowell were right that merely restating what one believes were never an appropriate response to an inquiry into one’s reasons for believing it, then the considerations that we have seen to this point would indicate that one who knows will not always have available to them an appropriate response to such an inquiry. However, we might reasonably wonder why we should accept that that represents a failure on behalf of the *believer* rather than the *inquirer*. It would represent the believer’s failure only if their inability to supply an appropriate answer indicated that they did not have a reason for believing as they do. That might be so if, for example, they were restating what they *merely* believe, and lacked reasons for believing as they do. But there is no more reason to think that it is bound to indicate that they lack reasons for believing than there is to think that a knower’s inability to say how they know is bound to indicate that they don’t know.

We quite often learn from what others who know by simply accepting what they tell us. And if we were unwilling to do so, then it is unclear why we should find appropriate *any* answer to an inquiry into someone’s reasons for believing or into how they know what they do. Where we are willing simply to accept what others tell us, rather than challenging their epistemic credentials, it is not obvious that we would find it worrying if the best they could do by way of articulating their reasons involved restating the fact.

Now, McDowell is right that where someone believes in light of a fact, there must be more to say about how that is possible. Specifically, it must also be true that they know the fact, and plausible that there should be an account of how they know. (McDowell endorses *Light* in his 2013.) But there is no obvious reason to require of the believer that they be in a position knowledgeably to say it. (We’ve left it open that the believer may have mere beliefs about how they know and why they believe. But their being able to express opinions about these matters would not obviously represent an improvement in their abilities appropriately to address questions about them.)

Similarly, Alan Millar offers the following:

...it is a condition of a reason’s being an adequate reason for believing something that believing it for that reason, and so believing it in the light of the consideration that constitutes it, adequately explains one’s believing it. The relevant sort of explanation is explanation adverting to the subject’s perspective—how things seemed from his or her point of

view. When believing something for an adequate reason it should be possible to make intelligible to oneself that one should believe this thing in the light of the truth that constitutes the reason. This has a bearing on the requirement...that truths that constitute a reason to believe that *P* should not include the truth that *P*. Suppose it is suggested that in a case in which I see that *P*, and therefore believe that *P*, the truth that *P* is my reason, and a good reason, for believing that *P*. If this were so I ought to be able to make it intelligible to myself that I believe that *P* in the light of this truth, but I cannot do so. The problem is that the truth that *P* tells me nothing as to how I relate to its being the case that *P*. (Millar 2019: 34.)

Millar proposes that in order for the reasons in light of which one believes to be adequate, they must adequately explain one's believing as one does. This proposal, as Millar seems to understand it, conflicts fairly immediately with the conjunction of *Reasons* and *Light*. For as Millar seems to understand the proposal, an adequate explanation of one's believing for reasons must include an explanation of how it is possible for one to believe in light of those reasons. For instance, given *Light*, it must incorporate an account of one's knowing the reasons. But now, if this explanation—say, one's knowing the reasons—is itself an aspect of the reasons in light of which one believes, then, given *Light*, one must know the explanation, and so forth. Hence, Millar's grounds for excluding *Reasons\** also exclude *Reasons*. (Millar endorses a principle close to *Light* (2019: 32) and rejects *Reasons* (2019: 35).) An alternative, less demanding understanding of Millar's initial proposal would be one according to which where one believes in light of a fact, there must *be* an account of how that is possible that involves factors over and above the fact. Specifically, it must be true that the believer knows the fact. But as we saw in discussing McDowell, there is no obvious reason to require that believers themselves must be apprised of any such account. That is, there is no obvious reason why believers must always be in a position to make intelligible to themselves their believing in light of their reasons.

The upshot is that *Reasons\** has not been shown not to be a viable candidate account of the reasons in light of which one who knows also believes. It remains plausible that one who knows that there is a pig there by seeing the pig believes that there is a pig there because there is a pig there, where the fact that there is a pig there is a conclusive reason in the light of which they believe that there is.

#### 4. "Are you sure?"

Our third target question was, "Are you sure?" and I want to consider this question through considering the idea that knowing by seeing is distinctively authoritative, an idea that has been defended by Michael Ayers. The idea, in rough, is that where one knows by seeing—or, more generally, by sensorily perceiving—one is entitled to a form a surety that need not attend one's knowing in other ways. A question that we face at this stage is whether accepting the conclusions of the previous two

sections will make it impossible to explain the special surety that can attend knowing by seeing.

Ayers explains what he has in mind by the authority of perceptual knowledge in the following passage:

...[L]et us imagine that a military observer on the lookout for enemy aeroplanes has had the visual impression of a plane entering a small cloud, but that this experience was unaccompanied by the usual blips on the radar screen, noise or supporting observations of others who were looking in the same direction. Moreover nothing comes out of the cloud.... [S]econd, let us suppose that he did in fact see a plane, a silent secret weapon still hovering undetectably in the cloud.... Finally,...let us make the...supposition that...in the face of all the reasons he refuses to be persuaded and continues to believe that he saw what he in fact did see.... [I]t seems not improper to attribute knowledge, perceptual knowledge, to such a person, i.e. to condone his plumping for 'sense' in preference to 'reason'. He knew that there was something there because he saw it. If that is correct, the principle that sensitive knowledge has independent authority receives some endorsement. (Ayers 1991: 170-1.)

Ayers' plausible thought here is that there are circumstances in which sensory perception can sustain the acquisition and preservation of sensitive knowledge, not only in the absence of auxiliary supporting considerations, but also in the face of what might otherwise seem to be counter-considerations. More specifically, the claim here is that where one sees a plane, one can be rationally permitted to believe that there is a plane there, even in the face of considerations that would permit one rationally to suspend judgment with respect to the questions whether there is a plane there and whether one saw a plane. That is the sense in which Ayers thinks that sensitive knowledge can be distinctively authoritative. Can more be said about why sensitive knowledge has this power?

Ayers' own explanation of the authority of sensitive knowledge has it that knowing by, for example, seeing

...is perspicuous in that one who has it knows how he knows what he knows: its ground and *ipso facto* its causality, in broad terms, are perspicuous. (Ayers 1991: 183. The account is developed in greater detail in Ayers 2019.)

It is not clear whether Ayers' suggestion is that perspicuity is a feature of cases of perceptual knowledge that *explains* their subjects' knowing how they know or that cases of knowing are perspicuous just in case their subjects know how they know. (This unclarity is preserved in Ayers 2019. See Longworth Forthcoming.) If Ayers' suggestion is the latter, then it faces two significant difficulties. The first is that, as we saw in §2, it is plausible that one can know by seeing without being in a position to know how one knows. In that case, the thought would have to be that only some cases of sensitive knowledge are authoritative. The second

difficulty is that knowing how one knows is just another piece of knowledge. It isn't obvious why the addition of a further piece of knowledge, even knowledge about knowledge, should sustain a distinctive form of authority. That is, it is unclear why this additional piece of knowledge should play the required role in outweighing or silencing putatively conflicting or undermining considerations. Put another way, it is unclear why considerations that are liable to cast doubt on there being a plane there aren't also, and equally, liable to cast doubt on one's knowing that there is. Alternatively, if Ayers' suggestion is that the perspicuity of sensitive knowledge furnishes a distinctive explanation of how one knows how one knows, it would seem to depend on the assumption that knowing by perspicuity is distinctively authoritative. In that case, we would face the challenge of explaining why knowing in *that* way is distinctively authoritative without having made clear progress.

Let's try a different tack. As mentioned earlier, the question "Are you sure?" can be an invitation to reopen a question—say, to check one's working—with the aim of avoiding error (Cp. Hampshire 1969). One can ask oneself this question, and when one does so this can be either as part of an ongoing self-critical review or at the prompting of specific practical or theoretical considerations. Suppose that one knows that there is a plane there. Still, one might reopen the question with the aim of avoiding error. Reopening the question whether there is a plane there involves *bracketing* that piece of knowledge and then attempting afresh to answer the question, without appeal to the bracketed knowledge. Matthew Soteriou provides a helpful characterisation of the bracketing operation:

When one brackets one's belief that  $p$  one does not use  $p$  as a premise in the reasoning one is engaged in. Of course, the fact that a subject engages in reasoning without using  $p$  as a premise in her reasoning does not in itself entail that the subject has bracketed a belief that  $p$ . Such a subject may not believe that  $p$ , and even if she does, the truth of  $p$  may not be relevant to the reasoning she is engaged in, and even if it is, she may not realize that it is. We have a case in which a subject is bracketing her belief that  $p$  only when the fact that the subject is not using  $p$  as a premise in the reasoning she is engaged in is a constraint on that reasoning that the subject has imposed on herself, and one which the subject treats as a constraint that she has imposed on herself. (Soteriou 2013: 267.)

Bracketing knowledge is consistent with retaining it. However, where bracketing figures in reopening a question with the aim of avoiding error, it can lead one to lose knowledge. For given that one's aim is to avoid error, if, having reopened a question, one was unable to resettle the question, then it might be reasonable for one to suspend judgement on the question, with a consequent loss of the knowledge that was initially only bracketed. For example, one might have reasons to reopen the question, "Is there a plane there?" with the aim of avoiding error. Doing so would involve bracketing one's knowledge that there is a plane there and then attempting to resettle the question whether there is. Now suppose that one were unable to resettle that question, because, for

example, one were no longer in visual contact with the plane. In that case, given that one had reasons to re-open the question with the aim of avoiding error, it might be reasonable for one to suspend judgement on the question whether there is a plane there. And if one did so, one would thereby cease to know that there is. (I draw here on the fine discussion in Soteriou 2013: 265–271, 355–370.)

One way of treating the counter-considerations in Ayers' case is to see them as motivating one to reopen the question whether there is a plane there, with the aim of avoiding error. That is, the lack of expected auditory or testimonial corroboration of one's view that there is a plane there are reasons to bracket one's knowledge that there is a plane there in order to see whether, in the setting of that bracketing, one is able to resettle the question whether there is. We've just considered the circumstance in which one is unable to resettle the question. But suppose that one reopened this question whilst one was watching the plane, and so whilst one could still see the plane. In that case, one's seeing the plane would often enable one positively to resettle the question whether there is a plane there. Having checked, with the aim of avoiding error, and having found oneself able, through checking, to re-establish knowledge that there is a plane there, one is entitled to surety. So, seeing the plane can enable one to respond appropriately to counter-considerations. It does so by enabling one to reopen the question in order to avoid error without thereby discovering that one is unable to re-settle it. For that reason, one's concurrent seeing can underwrite knowledge that is authoritative.

That is true of one's concurrent seeing of the plane; but seeing is by nature ephemeral. Knowledge that was first acquired by seeing can be preserved to later times at which one no longer sees. Indeed, the case that Ayers presents is of that sort: the plane is now occluded by cloud, and so is no longer seen. In some cases of that sort, having reopened the question whether there is a plane there, one might lack the resources to resettle the question by re-establishing knowledge that there is a plane there. By comparison with the knowledge that one has in cases of that sort, knowing by concurrently seeing is *distinctively* authoritative in the way that Ayers characterises.

Does this mean that knowing by seeing the plane can be authoritative only whilst one sees the plane? No, and for at least two reasons. The first reason is that although, as we have seen, it is plausible that one can know by seeing without knowing how one knows and without knowing that one sees, one who knows by seeing will often have acquired and retained those additional pieces of knowledge. Where one retains this additional knowledge, it can be used to resettle a question. For example, if one bracketed one's knowledge that there was a plane there whilst retaining one's knowledge that one saw a plane there, then the latter piece of knowledge could enable one to re-establish knowledge that there was a plane there. Sometimes, however—and as we noted in discussing Ayers' account of authority—reasons to reopen the question whether *p* are also reasons to reopen the questions whether one knows and whether one sees. In those cases, one would need to exploit other

resources in order to resettle the question whether  $p$ . Furthermore, there are, as we've seen, reasons for allowing that one can acquire or retain knowledge that  $p$  without also acquiring or retaining such additional pieces of knowledge. In either case, one might not have at one's disposal pieces of knowledge that could be used in order to resettle the question whether  $p$ . Authority in such cases must depend upon awareness of *things* rather than *facts*.

A second reason, then, for denying that knowing by seeing can be authoritative only whilst one sees is this. Memory might figure in a different way in furnishing resources that would enable one to resettle questions. Rather than enabling one to retain knowledge that one knew by seeing, or knowledge that one saw, memory might instead enable one to remember seeing the plane. That is, one might retain episodic or experiential memory of seeing the plane. And one might do so despite failing to retain knowledge that one knows by seeing the plane, or knowledge that one saw the plane. Where one retains episodic or experiential memory of seeing the plane—that is, where one remembers seeing the plane—this can enable one to reinstate knowledge that there was a plane there. For similarly to seeing the plane, remembering seeing the plane can sustain the successful exercise of capacities to recognize the plane's past presence, and so the acquisition of knowledge that the plane was there. If that is right, then, remembering seeing can play a role akin to the role played by concurrent seeing in sponsoring the distinctive authority of knowledge that was initially acquired by seeing.

Insofar as seeing naturally gives rise to remembering seeing, knowing by seeing naturally possesses a distinctive authority. And where one possesses knowledge with that distinctive authority, one is in a position to provide an affirmative answer to the question, "Are you sure?" Since one's being in that position doesn't depend on knowing how one knows, knowing that one has seen, or knowing that one remembers seeing, it is possible to explain the special surety that can attend knowing by seeing compatibly with the conclusions of the previous two sections.

##### 5. *Conclusion.*

My aim has been to examine three questions that arise naturally wherever one knows something:

How do you know?

Why do you think so?

Are you sure?

My focus has been on the further question, whether we should expect someone who knows by seeing invariably to be in a position positively to settle those three questions. My answer to that question comprises the following three claims. First, since it is possible to know that  $p$  by seeing without being in a position to know how one knows, we should *not* expect

someone who knows that  $p$  by seeing invariably to be in a position to know how they know. Second, and in contrast with the first claim, we *should* expect someone who knows by seeing that  $p$  to have sufficient reasons for thinking that  $p$ . However, we should not expect the fact that they have seen what they did to figure amongst their reasons. Rather, where one knows that  $p$ , the conclusive reason in the light of which one believes that  $p$  can be the fact that  $p$ . Third, despite the fact that one who knows by seeing need not know how they know, and despite the fact that they need not have amongst their reasons that they see what they do, still their seeing the things that they do can play an important role in their establishing an affirmative answer to the question, “Are you sure?”

### References.

- Alvarez, M. 2010. *Kinds of Reasons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Austin, J. L. 1946. “Other Minds.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Suppl. Vol.* 20: 148–187. Reprinted in his 1979.
- Austin, J. L. 1962. *Sense and Sensibilia*. Reconstructed from the manuscript notes by G.J. Warnock. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ayers, Michael. 1991. *Locke: Epistemology and Ontology, Volume 1*. London: Routledge.
- Ayers, Michael. 2019. *Knowing and Seeing: Groundwork for a new empiricism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Das, N. and Salow, B. 2018. “Transparency and the KK Principle.” *Noûs* 52: 3–23.
- Descartes, R. 1641. *Meditations on First Philosophy with Objections and Replies. The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Volume II*. Trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Descartes, R. (1664) “The World or Treatise on Light.” In *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Volume I*. Trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothof, and D. Murdoch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985: 79–98.
- Greco, D. 2014. “Could KK be OK?” *The Journal of Philosophy* 111: 169–197.
- Hampshire, S. 1969. “Some Difficulties in Knowing.” In S. Morgenbesser, P. Suppes, and M. White eds. *Philosophy, Science and Method*. Basingstoke: Macmillan: 26–47.
- Hawthorne, J. and Magidor, O. 2018. “Reflections on the Ideology of Reasons.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*, ed. D. Star. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 113–140.
- Hornsby, J. 2008. “A Disjunctive Conception of Acting for Reasons.” In *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*, ed. A. Haddock and F. Macpherson. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 244–261.
- Hyman, J. 1999. “How Knowledge Works.” *Philosophical Quarterly* 49: 433–451.
- Hyman, J. 2006. “Knowledge and Evidence.” *Mind* 115: 891–916.
- Hyman, J. 2015. *Action, Knowledge, & Will*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Littlejohn, C. 2018. "Reasons and Theoretical Rationality." In *The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*, ed. D. Star. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 529–552.
- Longworth, G. Forthcoming. "Knowing, Knowing Perspicuously, and Knowing How One Knows." To appear in *Grazer Philosophische Studien*.
- McDowell, J. 2006. "Response to Jonathan Dancy." C. Macdonald and G. Macdonald eds. *McDowell and His Critics*. Oxford: Blackwell: 134–141.
- McDowell, J. 2011. *Perception as a Capacity for Knowledge*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Marquette University Press.
- McDowell, J. 2013. "Acting in the Light of a Fact." In *Thinking about Reasons: Themes from the Philosophy of Jonathan Dancy*, ed. D. Bakhurst, B. Hooker, and M. O. Little. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 13–28.
- Millar, A. 2019. *Knowing by Perceiving*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- More, St. T. 1553. *A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation. The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Volume 12*. Ed. T. Manley. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Neta, R. 2009. "Treating Something as a Reason for Action." *Noûs* 43: 684–99.
- Prichard, H. A. 1932. "Duty and Ignorance of Fact." In his *Moral Obligation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949: 18–39.
- Raz, J. 2002. "Agency, Reason, and the Good." In his *Engaging Reason: On the Theory of Value and Action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 22–45.
- Snowdon, P. 2012. "How to Think about Phenomenal Self-Knowledge." In A. Coliva ed. *The Self and Self-Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 243–262.
- Stalnaker, R. 2015. "Luminosity and the KK Thesis." In S. Goldberg ed. *Externalism, Self-knowledge, and Scepticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 17–40.
- Strawson, P. F. 1974. "Does Knowledge Have Foundations?" *Conocimiento y Creencia*, Valencia: 99–110. Reprinted in *Philosophical Writings* ed. G. Strawson and M. Montague. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011: 100–108.
- Stroud, B. 2015. "Perceptual Knowledge and the Primacy of Judgement." *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 1, 3: 385–395
- Unger, P. 1975. *Ignorance: A Case for Scepticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, B. A. O. 1972. "Knowledge and Reasons." In G. H. von Wright ed. *Problems in the Theory of Knowledge*. The Hague: 1–11. Page references to the reprint in his *Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline*. A. W. Moore ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Williamson, T. 2000. *Knowledge and Its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Williamson, T. 2005. "Replies to Commentators." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 70, 2: 468–491.



- Williamson, T. 2009. "Replies to Critics." In P. Greenough and D. Pritchard eds. *Williamson on Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 280–384.
- Williamson, T. 2020. "The KK principle and rotational symmetry." *Analytic Philosophy* 00: 1–18.