

Introduction: Perceptual Knowledge and Self-Awareness

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Abstract

The chapter introduces the present volume by setting out three sets of issues addressed in the chapters to follow. First, how should we understand the epistemic authority of perception (as illustrated by Austin's famous claim to be able to 'just see' that the animal is a pig)? Second, what is the relationship between the authority of perception and self-awareness? Is it in the nature of the former to be manifest from the first-person perspective? Third, is a perceiver's awareness of seeing or hearing or feeling that p a case of first-person self-knowledge? In what sense is such awareness epistemically 'immediate'? How does reflection on it affect our understanding of the first-person perspective?

Keywords: perception, perceptual knowledge, self-awareness, first-person perspective, perceptual belief, reason-seeking questions

The subject of this volume, as the title indicates, is a set of issues at the intersection of two topics: perceptual knowledge and self-awareness. Both topics are familiar, of course. They are major themes in the history of modern philosophy and they are still intensely debated in contemporary epistemology and philosophy of mind. They are, however, usually treated as quite separate topics in contemporary discussions. Work on perceptual knowledge tends to focus on the nature of perception and the way perception warrants or justifies beliefs about the world around us; work on self-awareness tends to concern itself with questions

concerning ‘privileged access’ or the ‘first-person perspective’. Our aim in this introduction is to bring out something of the rationale for the suggestion informing the present volume, that the two topics are more closely connected than is commonly recognized, and that reflection on their interconnections can shed valuable light on both.

The chapters that follow each pursue their own questions, and they offer a variety of views on our two topics and their relationship. We will not try to provide detailed summaries of them here. Instead, we want to spell out some of their shared concerns and consider some interesting disagreements between them. The following well-known passage from Austin’s *Sense and Sensibilia* (discussed in several chapters) provides a useful starting point:

The situation in which I would properly be said to have evidence for the statement that some animal is a pig is that, for example, in which the beast itself is not actually on view, but I can see plenty of pig-like marks on the ground outside its retreat. If I find a few buckets of pig-food, that’s a bit more evidence, and the noises and the smell may provide better evidence still. But if the animal then emerges and stands there plainly in view, there is no longer a 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)¹

¹ For a view of the authority of perception that, while belonging to a different philosophical tradition and reflecting quite different philosophical concerns, is in some ways strikingly similar to Austin’s, compare Husserl’s remark that ‘the ultimate legitimating source of all rational assertions’ consists of ‘self-giving intuitions’ in which the presence to consciousness of an object renders certain facts ‘self-evident’. Note that Husserl also invokes the first-person perspective: if someone were to ask, in response to an assertion exploiting some such source, ‘why’ [do you think so?], it would be ‘preposterous to attach no value to the response “I see it”.’ (Husserl 1980: 36) For illuminating exegesis of that passage, see Smith 2003: 45-54. For discussion of Austin’s view of perceptual knowledge, see Gomes 2019, Kaplan 2018, Longworth 2017, Martin 2007.

A notable feature of this narrative is that its dénouement consists of a first-person self-ascription. Austin's confidence that his question is settled, in a way that makes evidence expendable, finds expression in a claim to self-knowledge: 'I can just see that it is a pig.' Austin is concerned to direct his readers' (or rather, in the original lectures, his audience's) attention to the pig, and the way its perceptual presence settles his question.² He does not dwell on his claim to self-knowledge. Still, the self-ascription seems to play a significant role in the story, and it raises an interesting set of questions. What sort of knowledge does it express? The term 'first-person self-knowledge' is commonly used to refer to a distinctive way in which, it has traditionally been thought, we are aware of our own current mental states — paradigmatically, of our beliefs, intentions, or sensations. Is Austin's self-knowledge an example of *first-person* self-knowledge?

We can bring out some of the interest and import of that question by contrasting two reactions to it. According to what might be labelled the traditional response, the answer is a firm (though qualified) 'no'. We do occupy a first-person perspective on the *beliefs* implicated in perceptual knowledge of objects around us, and on the *internal perceptual experiences* on which such beliefs are based. (Perhaps also on the explanatory connection between the two.) But there can be no first-person self-knowledge of a 'factive' attitude, such as seeing that *p*. For one thing, we can (in Jane Heal's phrase) be 'in plain honest error' about whether the animal before us is a pig, as we cannot be about the subject matter of first-person self-knowledge. (As Heal puts it, mistakes may be possible even in the latter case but they would implicate such things as 'self-deception or failure of rationality' (Heal 2003: 273).)

² We will here assume that 'I see that *p*' entails 'I know that *p*'. This seems to be the majority view in the literature (though see McDowell 2002 for dissent; for discussion, see French 2012 and Millar 2019: section 4.5). And the view certainly offers a natural gloss on Austin's sense of closure: his experience settles the question by enabling him to know the answer, rendering further enquiry unnecessary. (Unless, perhaps as a result of one of the 'unsettling questions' discussed by Guy Longworth in ch. 11, he may find reason to reopen the enquiry.)

The second reaction starts from a doubt about the traditional (narrow, ‘internalist’) conception of first-person self-knowledge. Consider Michael Thompson’s gloss on what he sees as a central idea of Anscombe’s *Intention*: ‘the overarching thesis of *Intention* was that self-knowledge in this familiar sense [first-person self-knowledge] extends beyond the inner recesses of the mind, beyond the narrowly psychological, and into the things I am doing.’

(Thompson 2011: 200) If the narrow conception falsifies the way we are aware of our bodily intentional actions, might it not also falsify perceivers’ self-awareness? Might first-person self-knowledge ‘extend into’ the *things we perceive* (including such things as that the animal is a pig)?

Call this the First-person Self-knowledge Question. The question is closely connected with a second set of issues raised by Austin’s story, which we’ll label the Perceptual Authority Question. How is it that, with the emergence of the pig, Austin’s question is ‘settled’? Is Austin right that perceptual contact would ordinarily be taken to make ‘evidence’ dispensable? If so, should ordinary usage be taken at face value? By way of a preliminary gloss on Austin’s distinction between evidence and perceptual experience, we might say that while the former provides a basis for inference, the latter yields direct, non-inferential knowledge. The adverb ‘just’ in ‘I can just see that’ seems to hint at the peculiar immediacy (or simplicity?) of Austin’s perceptual knowledge. Correlatively, one reason Austin is telling his story from the first-person perspective may be that the immediacy of perceptual knowledge is particularly salient from that perspective. Earlier we referred to a perceiver’s self-knowledge. We might also have spoken of a perceiver’s self-*understanding*. How is a perceiver herself disposed to find her perceptual judgements and perceptual knowledge intelligible?

In section 1, we consider three kinds of answers to the Perceptual Authority question. We then examine a central issue regarding the relationship between the perceptual authority and self-awareness (section 2). Finally, we return to the First-person Self-knowledge question (section 3).

1. The authority of perception

We start with an antinomy. Here is a plausible thesis: grown-up human perceivers have a substantive understanding of the explanatory link between perception and knowledge. After all, that understanding plays a significant role in our ordinary practice of offering credentials for our claims to knowledge. It may be put to use, for example, in answering the question ‘How do you know?’³ Indeed, if Austin is right, our understanding of perceptual knowledge is sufficiently substantive not only to vindicate our claims to knowledge but also to entitle us to dismiss the request for evidence. Yet, here is a plausible antithesis: our ordinary grasp of the explanatory link between perception and knowledge is notably shallow. We may be able to reflect ‘I can just see that p’, but this merely amounts to a self-ascription of a certain kind of knowledge: visual knowledge, or knowledge that *somehow* derives from sight.⁴

Various chapters in this volume speak to this antinomy, presenting a number of possible diagnoses and resolutions. They differ along several dimensions but they may usefully be sorted into three groups. We call them Minimalism, the Recognitional View, and the Belief-First View. We briefly fill out and illustrate the three sorts of responses to the antinomy, and then elaborate on one of the issues on which they disagree.

³ As Austin remarked, the question may be asked in a ‘pointed’ way, inviting you to account for your knowledge in a way that simultaneously provides a defence of your *claim* to knowledge. (1961: 78)

⁴ Compare Timothy Williamson’s elucidation of ‘I can see it’ (as used in defence of some belief): ‘what the speaker is reporting is not an experience somehow prior to knowledge, but simply a particular kind of knowledge: visual knowledge.’ (2009: 348)

Minimalism holds that the antithesis is quite correct — our ordinary grasp of how perception gives us knowledge does not go deep at all — but also maintains that this point does not stand in any real tension with the thesis, on a reasonable construal of the latter. Barry Stroud's discussion of the possibility and the scope of perceptual knowledge, in chapters 2 and 3, is plausibly interpreted in this way. This may seem surprising. Stroud is best known for his role in the revival of discussions about 'external world scepticism'. Of course, even in his early work Stroud did not advocate scepticism. His point was, roughly speaking, that scepticism looks to be the inevitable result of the quest for a certain kind of understanding of our epistemic position — the sort of understanding sought by epistemology (or modern epistemology). Without abandoning that diagnosis, the later Stroud became interested in the project of articulating a more simple-minded way of understanding perceptual knowledge, one that would make such knowledge intelligible without any sceptical implications and in turn would open up questions about the *possibility* of a philosophical understanding of perceptual knowledge. (See some of the papers collected in Stroud 2019.) Chapters 2 and 3 continue that general project, but they contain some striking novel elements. Stroud recommends that 'the key to understanding perceptual knowledge' — the 'place to start' — 'is to focus on the perceiver or knower as a competent intentional agent.' Perceptual knowledge should be thought of as a 'human achievement': perceiving such things as that there is a red apple on the table is matter of exercising 'a certain ability or capacity — a kind of skill or competence, or expertise.' As in the case of other human achievements, to understand perceptual knowledge we need to ask questions such as 'what a person exercising a particular capacity is doing, what it takes for the person to do it, how the agent knows what he is doing, how he knows he succeeds.' (this volume: [2]) Now, one result of this sort of enquiry, in Stroud's hands, appears to be precisely the correctness of our antithesis. A

perceiver may insist that she can see that things are a certain way, and she may be right about this, yet she may be unable to ‘explain it further’ [11]). Stroud’s illustration is a case of expert perception, an athlete who is said to have ‘good anticipation’ (regarding her opponents’ imminent movements). As for the thesis, Stroud would presumably suggest that we are, and should be, happy to accept the athlete’s claim that she can ‘just see’ that someone is going to move a certain way, regardless of her inability to ‘explain it further’. In chapter 4, Christoph Pfisterer presents an analysis of Stroud’s later work on perceptual knowledge that tallies with a minimalist interpretation. The crux of Stroud’s view, as Pfisterer understands it, is that propositional perception is a ‘primitive perceptual capacity’ (this volume: [9]).⁵

Minimalism endorses the antithesis and seeks to dissolve the antinomy by explaining away the appearance of a conflict with the thesis. By contrast, both the Recognitional View and the Belief-First View regard the conflict as genuine. Their remedy is to reject, or at least significantly modify, the antithesis. The Recognitional View is close in spirit to Minimalism. It agrees that in non-inferentially seeing or hearing or feeling that something is so we exercise ‘primitive perceptual capacities’. It insists, however, that the operative capacities exhibit a richer structure than Minimalism allows. They are capacities to tell or recognize — and in that way, come to know — what a perceived object is like from the way it looks or sounds or feels. That idea is encouraged by some of Austin’s writings.⁶ It has been developed in detail in a series of articles and books by Alan Millar. (See e.g. Millar 2010, 2019) In chapter 5, Millar presents an outline of the view, with some important new elements and emendations. The Recognitional View is also discussed and endorsed in the chapters by Roessler and Giananti. Note that the view does not merely say that in non-inferentially seeing that an

⁵ Lucy Campbell’s discussion of perceptual knowledge in ch. 8 is sympathetic to Minimalism, but she remains neutral about the choice between Minimalism and the Recognitional View: see this volume: [6] n. 13.

⁶ Compare his discussion of perceptual recognition in ‘Other Minds’, see Austin 1961: esp. 83-6.

animal is a pig we typically see the animal, or that the animal will typically show the characteristic visual appearance of a pig. Minimalists need not deny this. What distinguishes the Recognitional View is that it takes perceived objects, and their sensory appearance, to play a key role in the explanatory schema we use in making our perceptual knowledge intelligible to ourselves and others. It is because you see the pig, and because of its visual appearance, that you have the opportunity to exercise your capacity visually to identify a pig.

The Belief-First view advocates a more radical departure from Minimalism. It holds that we take perception to provide for knowledge because we take it to provide a proper basis for *belief*— a basis that explains why we believe what we do and in the light of which our beliefs can be seen to be justified or warranted and hence to ‘amount to’ knowledge. Austin’s contrast between ‘evidence’ and the authority of perception, on this view, is not a matter of having a basis for belief vs enjoying direct knowledge (in the sense of knowledge that is *directly* explained by perception). Both evidence and perceptual experience provide a basis for belief (and yield knowledge, if they do, in virtue of providing a sound basis for belief). The contrast, rather, lies in the nature of the basis provided: ‘evidence’ gives us premises for an inference, perceptual experience yields ‘immediate justification’. Much current work in this tradition invokes the idea that perceptual experience has ‘representational content’. Austin’s visual experience, on this view, may represent the animal before him as a pig and, in virtue of that content, provide adequate grounds for believing that the animal is a pig. In chapter 6, Gianfranco Soldati pursues a version of the Belief-First view that makes no appeal to representational content. Instead, drawing on the phenomenological tradition, it works with the idea that in seeing a pig we are acquainted with the pig’s visual appearance and that, in virtue of this, the experience may constitute a reason for believing the animal to be a pig. There are some interesting points of contact and contrast between Soldati’s account and Paul

Snowdon's discussion (in chapter 7) of our ordinary explanations of 'cognitive states' (such as belief or knowledge) by reference to our perception of objects. As Snowdon focuses on the case of belief, it is natural to assume he too favours a version of the Belief-First view.⁷

Nevertheless, the substance of his reflections supports at least the spirit of our antithesis. One of his questions is 'what are our grounds for accepting explanatory claims' of the form 'I believe that p because I can see O.' (this volume: [2]) His reflections on our ordinary conception of, on the one hand, object perception and, on the other hand, belief lead him to take a dim view of the explanatory value of the target claims: while he stops short of calling such claims 'totally trivial and empty' ([23]), he concludes that 'like many common-sense psychological explanations there is not a great deal of information in the psychological explanations we are considering.' ([24]).

We will not be able to adjudicate the disagreements between the three sorts of views here, but we want to highlight one central point of contention. What is the role of belief in perceptual knowledge? We can set aside the question whether factive knowledge *entails* belief. All parties to the debate may accept that it does. We can even set aside the question whether the concept of knowledge can be analyzed or defined as true belief that meets certain further conditions. In calling the third option the Belief-First view we do not mean to imply that the view is committed to a reductive view of knowledge. What is at issue here is the role of belief in explaining how we know what we know through perception. The Belief-First view holds that it is because perceptual experience warrants or justifies our beliefs that it accounts for our knowledge. The connection between perception and belief comes first in the order of explanation. Minimalism and the Recognitional view reverse that model. They take

⁷ The matter is not straightforward, however. Possibly, Snowdon is simply non-committal on the relative priority of belief and knowledge. He does not elaborate on the relationship between perceptual belief and perceptual knowledge, beyond suggesting that the points he is making about belief apply to knowledge too.

perceptual knowledge to be *direct* in the radical sense that what perception delivers (in a ‘good’ case) is simply knowledge. The explanation does not mention any basis for belief. On the contrary: perception explains belief, in a good case, in virtue of being an intelligible source of knowledge (which entails belief).

This is evidently a deep disagreement, and it is not easy to adjudicate. But the following line of enquiry may seem promising. Perceptual judgements — judgements expressing, or aiming to express, perceptual knowledge — are open to a request for their credentials. And we routinely seem to appeal to perception to establish the credentials of a judgement. Should we not expect that reflection on that practice may help to settle the dispute between the trio of views we have been examining? Consider first a suggestion inspired by McDowell’s ‘internalist’ version of a Belief-First account. (McDowell 2011) The question ‘Why do you think so?’ is often used as a request for your reason for believing something. The McDowell-inspired suggestion says that (a) perceptual judgements are a legitimate target for that question (thus used), and (b) a good answer would consist of a reason for belief that, in turn, would also provide an illuminating answer to the question ‘How do you know?’ The suggestion, then, is that the Belief-First view is not, as its critics may suspect, a remnant of Cartesian epistemology or a reflection of reductionism about knowledge, but really so much common sense.

Defenders of Minimalism or the Recognitional view will argue that this analysis gets things backwards. They will point out that ‘How do you know?’ can itself be a request for the credentials of a judgement (a good answer would corroborate the claim to knowledge that may have been implicit in the judgement). And they will suggest that in the case of perceptual judgements, the credentials for a claim to knowledge come first in the order of

explanation. Suppose that, asked how you know that *p*, you correctly retort ‘I can just see that *p*.’ That would vindicate your right to judge that *p* simply by substantiating your claim to knowledge that *p*, without any reference to a reason for belief. Now, the McDowellian may grant that if we confine our attention to the question ‘How do you know?’ this may look like an appealing analysis. But she will insist that the analysis is incompatible with the two points that motivate her rival analysis: another perfectly natural way to probe the credentials of a perceptual judgement is to ask ‘Why do you believe that *p*?’, as per (a); and an adequate answer will simultaneously yield materials for a belief-based explanation of how you know that *p*, as per (b).

Advocates of the knowledge-first conception, then, need to say more. Just what they should say is not a straightforward matter, though. One option would be to reject (a); another to reject (b). The first option is encouraged by Lucy Campbell’s defence of the knowledge-first conception in chapter 8. Campbell questions the assumption that if you perceptually know that *p* you must have ‘a reason-based belief that *p*.’ (this volume: [9]) On her account, asking for your reason for believing that *p* would be akin to the request for evidence (on Austin’s view): given your direct perceptual knowledge, you *have no need* for a reason.⁸ Versions of the second option can be found in the chapters by Alan Millar and Guy Longworth (chapters 5 and 11). They accept the idea that direct perceptual knowledge (at least typically) involves believing something for a reason. What this response denies is that the operative reason explains how we know what we know. Quite the reverse: a perceiver’s reason to believe that *p* is to be *explained* by her direct perceptual knowledge that *p*. The rationality of perceptual

⁸ See also Stroud 2015 for that view.

belief is to be understood in the light of a prior account of direct perceptual knowledge.⁹ That idea is common ground between Millar and Longworth, but they offer interestingly different accounts of the reason for which you will believe that *p* when you can see that *p*. According to Millar, your reason is *that you can see that p* (a fact that is available to you as a reason for belief in virtue of your reflective awareness that you can see that *p*). According to Longworth, your reason is simply the fact *that p* (available to you as a reason for belief in virtue of your seeing and thus knowing that *p*).

Both Millar's and (arguably) Campbell's view give rise to questions about perceiver's self-awareness. On Millar's view, it is our reflective awareness of perceiving that *p* that gives us a reason for a perceptual belief that *p*. One reading of Campbell's view would be that our reflective awareness of seeing that *p* makes it reasonable for us to dismiss the request for reasons ('I don't need a reason, I can just see that *p*'). What is the nature of this sort of self-knowledge? How do we know about our current propositional perception? An illuminating way to approach these matters is to reflect on the relationship between perceptual authority and self-awareness. Is it in the nature of the authority of perception to be manifest from the first-person perspective? That is the question to which we now turn.

2. Perceptual authority and self-awareness

We can make the question vivid by considering a variation on Austin's example. Imagine that Austin did not tell the story from the first-person perspective. Imagine he introduced a character, Herbert Orcutt, who came across, first various bits of evidence of the presence of a pig, and then the pig itself. The moral of the story would then have been something like this:

⁹ Needless to say: in a 'good' case. The question of how, and in what sense, a perceptual belief may be justified or held for a reason, in various sorts of 'bad' cases, is a further, quite different matter, according to the knowledge-first conception.

‘the pig’s coming into view doesn’t provide Herbert with more evidence that it’s a pig, he can now just see that it is, the question is settled.’ What, if anything, would be lost by switching to this version? You might say (as we did say earlier) that the immediacy of perceptual knowledge is particularly salient from the first-person perspective. That may be so, but it does not mean that there is some essential nexus between self-awareness and the authority of perception. Suppose we add to our third-person version of the story the following detail: Herbert Orcutt was not in fact aware of seeing the animal to be a pig. He did see it was a pig, but didn’t realize it. Is this conceivable? If so, could the story still have been used to bring out the authority of perception and the dispensability of ‘evidence’? Or is it in the nature of perception’s distinctive authority to be manifest from the first-person perspective?

A philosopher who has emphatically defended an affirmative answer to this latter question is Michael Ayers. In his book on Locke, he argued that immediate perceptual knowledge is a prototype of what he called ‘primary knowledge’, defined as knowledge that is ‘perspicuous in that one who has it knows *how* he knows what he knows.’ (1991: 183) He developed that view in more detail in *Knowing and Seeing*.¹⁰ Perceptual knowledge, Ayers claims, is an example of ‘knowledge gained by being evidently, self-consciously, in direct cognitive contact with the object of the knowledge.’ (2019: 63) Ironically (given Ayers’ sometimes harsh criticism of McDowell’s epistemology), the other leading advocate of the ‘perspicuity thesis’ (as we will call it) is none other than McDowell. In *Perception as a Rational Capacity*, McDowell writes:

¹⁰ For discussion of *Seeing and Knowing*, see Roessler 2021 and the papers collected in Osorio-Kupferblum and Sickinger 2021 (with Ayers’s response). Ayers’ ‘perspicuity thesis’ is concerned with factive knowledge; Mike Martin has made an analogous point about perceptual demonstratives: ‘(i)t is a common sense thought that our sensory awareness of the world not only puts us in a position to single out objects in thought, but also makes evident to us how this comes about.’ (Martin 2015: 35)

A rational perceptual capacity is a capacity not only to know certain kinds of thing about the environment, but, on an occasion on which one knows something of the relevant kind through the exercise of the capacity in question, *to know that that is how one knows it*. The capacity—of course fallible—to know, on certain occasions, that one's experience is revealing to one that things are a certain way, which is a bit of self-knowledge, is just an aspect of the capacity—of course fallible—to know through experience, on those occasions, that things are that way. It is a single capacity consciously possessed and exercised. (McDowell 2011: 41)

The question of the 'perspicuity', or otherwise, of perceptual knowledge is to the fore in the chapters by Millar and Longworth (which present objections to versions of the 'perspicuity thesis'), by Roessler and Giananti (which defend versions of it) and by Campbell (which advances what might be called a middle position). Borrowing a formulation of Campbell's, we might say that the debate turns on different kinds of answers to the 'hanging together' question: how is it that perceiving that *p* and knowing that one perceives that *p* are phenomena that 'tend to hang together in human perception'? (this volume: [1]) For McDowell, the answer lies in the fact that the human capacity for perceptual knowledge is *inherently self-conscious*; its exercise yields intelligible knowledge — intelligible to the perceiver herself. Call this a Single Capacity view. Alternatively, we might say perceptual knowledge and self-knowledge typically hang together because human perceivers are typically in a position to *find out* what they perceive to be the case: in addition to seeing that *p*, they deploy a capacity for discovering whether they can see that *p*. Call this a Self-Discovery view.

It is useful to start with Campbell's middle position. Campbell adopts a version of a Knowledge-First conception of perceptual knowledge, combining this with the completely general view of factive knowledge developed in recent years by John Hyman. (See e.g. Hyman 1999) Factive knowledge that *p*, on that view, is 'the ability to rationally respond to the fact that *p*' — for example, to believe that *q* for the reason that *p*.¹¹ As Campbell sees it, one important attraction of that view is that it leaves a great deal of room for different accounts of how our possession of knowledge, in particular cases, is to be explained. There is no expectation that knowing that *p* must be explained by reference to some basis for believing that *p*. There is not even any expectation that it must be the result of utilizing some way of finding out whether *p*. Campbell thinks that (for example) in the case of various kinds of self-knowledge neither expectation is satisfied. The core notion of her account of self-knowledge — the capacity to *express* one's current mental state — is one that is familiar from 'expressivist' work on first-person authority. For Campbell, the capacity matters because it makes our possession of self-knowledge intelligible. Very roughly, to express one's headache by groaning communicatively is to be rationally responsive to the fact that one has a headache — which, by the lights of Campbells' general account of knowledge, means one knows that one has a headache. *Mutatis mutandis*, to express one's seeing that the peregrine is stooping by communicatively pointing at the peregrine, inviting one's interlocutor to share attention to it, is to be rationally responsive to the fact that one sees that the peregrine is stooping. Being in a mental state, in conjunction with the ability in certain ways to express one's being in the state, amounts to knowing that one is in the mental state.

For current purposes, the thing to note is that Campbell's account concedes a share of the truth to each of the two opposing answers to the 'hanging together' question. The Single

¹¹ For a slight, but interesting difference, between Campbell's and Hyman's view, see p. [1] n. 2.

Capacity view is right to resist appeal to any kind of self-discovery. (As Campbell puts it, the capacity to express my seeing that the peregrine is stooping, e.g. by pointing at the peregrine, ‘doesn’t require me to go in for any self-investigation’ (this volume: [15]).) On the other hand, the Self-Discovery view is right to insist that something more than the exercise of my first-order capacity for perceptual knowledge is needed to account for my self-knowledge. What is needed, according to Campbell, is the capacity for certain kinds of expressive acts.

There are, then, two interesting disagreements to consider. On the one hand, Campbell disagrees with Millar, who promotes a version of a Self-Discovery view. That I can see that a certain animal is a cat, Millar suggests, is a fact to which I may gain ‘access’ by exercising a certain kind of second-order perceptual capacity: viz. to tell of a perceived object whether it is seen by me to be a cat.¹² On the other hand, Campbell disagrees with Roessler and Giananti, who present versions of Single Capacity view. In chapter 10 Giananti develops an (in interesting ways, neo-Aristotelian) account of perception as a ‘rational capacity’, a capacity that pulls its weight in causal explanations but is also inherently self-conscious. Roessler’s account (in chapter 9) turns on the idea that human capacities for perceptual recognition are capacities to make perceptual *judgements*, where this means that a fully successful exercise of the capacities also needs to enable the perceiver to make her judgement intelligible (and defensible) to herself and others.

Without elaborating on these proposals, let alone trying to resolve their disagreements, it is worth dwelling on the central position occupied by the notion of judgement in this debate.

¹² While in previous work Millar labelled the operative capacities ‘second-order perceptual-recognitional capacities’, in his present contribution he distinguishes perceptual-recognitional knowledge from the sort of perceptual self-knowledge that he thinks is made available by perceivers’ second-order perceptual-epistemic capacities. (See this volume: [12].)

For Giananti and Roessler, the capacity to judge is internal to the capacity for perceptual knowledge. Given that assumption, it is not hard to bring out the appeal of a Single Capacity view. Recall our third-person version of Austin's story. If Herbert is not aware that he can see that *p*, why should he treat the question of whether *p* as 'settled'? Would it not be irresponsible for him to do so? Would it not be reasonable for him to continue his enquiry into whether *p*, perhaps by looking for relevant evidence? In brief, if the epistemic authority of human perception is its authority in answering questions pursued by self-conscious enquirers, it is hard to resist the idea that perceptual authority is, in Ayers's terms, 'perspicuous'. Now, to judge that *p* is a way of expressing one's belief that *p*. Thus, Campbell might agree that the capacity to judge helps to explain perceivers' self-knowledge; still, on her view, that capacity may be considered as separate from those implicated in perceptual knowledge itself. That is a view to which Millar is even more strongly committed. He rejects the 'perspicuity thesis' (more precisely, McDowell's version of it) on the grounds that it has an objectionable modal implication: the thesis 'entails that, *necessarily*, if one knew of the cat that it is a cat from the way it looks one would know that one saw that it was a cat'. (this volume: [19]) Millar's objection to the modal claim rests on a general scepticism regarding necessary connections among conceptual capacities. 'It is a contingent matter', he writes, 'which conceptual resources we have'. Specifically, he cautions against excluding the possibility of a 'conceptually impoverished subject' who is able visually to recognize cats but lacks the capacity for reflective awareness of seeing something to be a cat.¹³ This challenge highlights the neo-Kantian flavour of the Single Capacity view: first-person thought is regarded precisely as an exception to the separability of conceptual capacities. ('The "I see" must be able to accompany human propositional seeing.')

¹³ Many would argue that two- or three-year old children may be just such 'conceptually impoverished subjects.' For an alternative perspective, see Roessler's suggestion that young children may have a rudimentary mastery of inherently reflective perceptual capacities (this volume: [23-3]).

The disagreement, however, is not as stark as it may initially appear. Note, first, that it is debatable whether the Single Capacity view is committed to the unqualified modal claim Millar challenges. Both Longworth (who presents an extended line of objection to the unqualified claim, drawing on Williamson's work on luminosity) and Roessler suggest it is not. Attempts at exercising a capacity, they argue, can be more or less successful. What matters for the Single Capacity view is that a *fully successful* exercise of first-order perceptual-epistemic capacities delivers knowledge that is intelligible to the perceiver. The view may grant that a merely partially successful attempt may fall short of that. (One kind of examples might be along the following lines: if you catch a fleeting glimpse of a pig, at a distance, you might see just enough of it to see it's a pig, but not enough to make you sufficiently confident to regard your question as 'settled'.) On the other hand, Millar grants that the 'conceptually impoverished subject' — who lacks the capacity for reflective awareness of her propositional perception — 'would not be able to do many of the things that people who can recognize cats as cats are usually able to do'. He even qualifies the subject's perceptual-recognitional capacities as 'rudimentary'. (This volume: [19]) Perhaps Millar would agree that making a perceptual judgement is one of the many things the subject would not be fully able to do. The real disagreement is about whether this would amount to an impairment in the subject's capacity for *first-order* perceptual knowledge.

We have reviewed some debates about the relationship between perceptual authority and self-knowledge. We now consider how these debates bear on our understanding of the nature of the first-person perspective.

3. First-person self-knowledge

Recall the First-Person Self-Knowledge question: does Austin's judgement 'I can just see that the animal is a pig' express first-person self-knowledge? Suppose we answer this in affirmative. Suppose, in other words, that we reject the traditional (qualified) 'no' ('first-person access is limited to internal mental states such as a beliefs or the internal visual experiences on which a belief may be based'), and insist that first-person self-knowledge, as Thompson puts it, 'extends beyond the inner recesses of the mind, beyond the narrowly psychical'. Here is a pressing question we face. How is it possible to be aware, in the peculiarly immediate, 'non-observational' way we associate with the first-person perspective, of states of mind that incorporate facts about the world around us? Admittedly, the term 'immediate' can be a source of confusion here. We earlier discussed the 'immediacy' of perceptual knowledge. In that context, 'immediate' means something like 'non-inferential'. In the context of self-knowledge, 'immediacy' is widely taken to mean something more distinctive: roughly, not just 'non-inferential' but 'non-observational', taken perhaps in a broad sense captured by Campbell's phrase 'doesn't require me to go in for any self-investigation'. To repeat, then, how is it possible to have that distinctively immediate, non-observational sort of knowledge of a factive attitude?

To see the problem here, it is instructive to note that extant accounts of the peculiar immediacy of the first-person perspective would tend to preclude the possibility of immediate self-knowledge of factive mental states. That seems true of traditional invocations of some kind of internal perception (thought to reveal precisely the '*inner* recesses of the mind'). More to the point, it also seems to be true of a recently much more influential view, one that links immediacy with a certain sense of 'activity'. As Moran puts it succinctly (in the section entitled 'Outline' of *Authority and Estrangement*): 'The two faces of immediacy; epistemic and practical.' (2001: xxi) Immediacy's 'practical face' refers to the peculiarly immediate

manner in which we seem to be able to *determine* what we believe about something, by being responsive to what we take to be good reasons. In her discussion of what she calls the ‘Kantian approach to self-consciousness’ (in chapter 13), Hannah Ginsborg characterizes the idea as follows: ‘(t)he special authority of self-knowledge derives, not from my occupying an especially privileged viewpoint on my beliefs and other attitudes, but rather from my distinctive role as a rational agent with respect to my beliefs.’ (this volume: [2]) There is a sense, on the ‘Kantian approach’, in which the peculiar ‘epistemic immediacy’ of the first-person perspective is explained by the ‘practical immediacy’ that characterizes our ‘agentive’ or ‘deliberative’ relation to our attitudes. Failure to relate to one’s attitudes in that practically immediate way engenders forms of the ‘estrangement’ that figures in the title of Moran’s book. Correlatively, failure, in our philosophical understanding of the first-person perspective, to acknowledge the connection between the ‘two faces’ of immediacy would engender an ‘alienated’ account of self-knowledge. (Compare, for example, Matthew Boyle’s remark that ‘there is a kind of alienation implied in the idea that I should need to discover them [my current attitudes] by inference.’ (2015: 343))

Here, then, is the pressing question. Seeing that *p* does not look like an attitude we are able to form by being responsive to reasons. Nor does it make sense to hold someone accountable for their propositional perception, say by demanding ‘Why are you seeing that *p*?’ In general, it seems that factive attitudes are not, as such, open to reason-seeking questions.¹⁴ Then how should we understand the (putative) immediacy of perceivers’ awareness of their states of propositional perception?

¹⁴ Philosophers sometimes speak of ‘the justification of knowledge’. But what they tend to have in mind is the justification of beliefs, in virtue of which they ‘count as knowledge’.

What we should say about this question depends, partly, on our answer to the Perceptual Authority question. On a Belief-First account of perceptual authority, a perceivers' awareness of their perceptual knowledge is in some way based on their awareness of their perceptual beliefs — to which the 'Kantian approach' may be held to apply. McDowell's account, for example, invites this reading.¹⁵ But suppose we adopt a Minimalist or a Recognitional view of perceptual authority. What should we say about the immediacy of perceivers' self-knowledge? Should we retain the idea that first-person self-knowledge is non-observational? If so, what — if not 'practical immediacy' — explains the distinctive 'epistemic immediacy' of our knowledge? The chapters in this collection explore various perspectives on these questions. They may be sorted into three groups.

First, on Millar's account, Austin's first-person self-ascription is itself a perceptual judgement, exploiting a capacity for perceptual self-knowledge (the ability visually to tell of a seen pig that it is seen by one to be a pig). Perceivers' self-knowledge, on this view, is immediate merely in the sense in which perceptual knowledge is immediate: unsurprisingly so, since it *is* a case of perceptual knowledge. It is interesting to note, though, that Millar draws a distinction between this sort of perceptual first-person access and what he calls 'self-consciousness'. Someone who lacks the former (the 'conceptually impoverished subject' we considered earlier) need not be deprived of the latter. Millar's view may be compatible with the idea that what he calls 'self-consciousness' exhibits a stronger form of immediacy.

¹⁵ Compare the following passage: 'there is a sense in which perceptual experience can compel belief. But because capacities for rational self-determination are at work in one's being subject to this compulsion, it does not detract from one's being in rational control of one's life.' (2009: 139) McDowell's version of a Belief-First view is unusual in that it makes room for an affirmative answer to the First-Person Self-Knowledge question: my awareness of believing that the animal is a pig for a conclusive reason (*viz.* the one provided by a visual experience that makes it manifest that the animal is a pig) gives me everything I need to be able to reflect that I know the animal to be a pig.

Second, on Campbell's account, Austin's self-knowledge is non-observational. What replaces the idea of 'practical immediacy' in underwriting the possibility of non-observational self-knowledge is the notion of expression. It is our ability to express our mental states (in certain ways) that accounts for our possession of self-knowledge — specifically, self-knowledge of a sort that does not stand in need of any kind of 'self-investigation'. The application of this general model to the case of a factive attitude like seeing that the animal is a pig is relatively straightforward: factive attitudes are no less expressible than non-factive, 'narrowly psychical' mental states.

Third, Roessler and Giananti agree with Campbell about the non-observational character of Austin's self-knowledge. But their explanation of how such knowledge is possible retains a core element of the 'Kantian approach to self-consciousness', the connection between self-knowledge and judgement. On their account, perceivers' self-knowledge is immediate insofar as it brings to reflective awareness something of which a perceiver is implicitly or pre-reflectively aware in making a perceptual judgement. (They draw on recent work by Matthew Boyle, who in turn is influenced by Sartre: see Boyle 2019.) In judging 'that animal is a pig' Austin rightly treats his question about the presence of a pig as 'settled'. What allows him to do so is his pre-reflective awareness of the way his visual attention enables him (knowledgeably) to answer his question; a sort of awareness that is inseparable from a fully successful exercise of a perceptual-recognitional capacity. The notion of pre-reflective self-awareness plays a similar, and similarly prominent, role in Eylem Özaltun's discussion (in chapter 12) of non-observational knowledge. Özaltun's main concern is with the epistemology of intentional actions. Her question is: how is non-observational knowledge of bodily actions — of 'what happens' in the physical world — possible? As in connection with non-observational knowledge of factive mental states, there is, as Özaltun remarks, a strong

tendency to distinguish two kinds of knowledge — immediate knowledge of internal mental states, and observational knowledge of the physical world. Her proposal for how to resist that tendency exploits what she sees as an analogy with perceivers' self-knowledge. ('I see that p', she suggests, involves the same combination of immediacy and fallibility as self-ascriptions of intentional activities.) Specifically, she argues that both 'epistemic' activities (such as counting or observing) and bodily actions implicate a form of pre-reflective self-awareness.

If Roessler and Giananti modify the 'Kantian approach to self-consciousness' in order to make room for non-observational knowledge of factive mental states, Hannah Ginsborg, in chapter 13, proposes a revision intended to make the approach 'less demanding with respect to the required capacities'. Ginsborg endorses the general Kantian idea that 'self-consciousness — more specifically the distinctive form of self-consciousness reflected in the use of the first-person pronoun — is possible for us because we are active in our thinking and in our effects on the world'. But she aims to revise the traditional way of filling out the idea, which identifies 'activity' (in Kant's phrase, 'spontaneity') with 'the exercise of rationality' or with being 'responsive to reasons as such'. (This volume: [1-2]) Reflection on the case of perception — specifically, the perceptual capacities exhibited by young children —, Ginsborg argues, shows that getting right the connection between spontaneity and self-consciousness requires adopting a less exacting conception of spontaneity; roughly: one that invokes 'consciousness of normative constraint' but not 'responsiveness to reasons'.

We have organized our discussion of the First-Person Self-Knowledge question around the issue of the peculiar immediacy of the first-person perspective. We could have chosen other issues. The first-person perspective has traditionally been thought to command a special

authority. How do we have to rethink that authority if we credit perceivers with first-person self-knowledge of their propositional perception? Again, what is the relationship between first-person and third-(or second-)person knowledge in this area? Traditionally, the special immediacy and security of the first-person perspective has been thought to make it hard to understand the possibility of knowledge of ‘other minds’. Can reflection on perceivers’ self-knowledge help to understand and perhaps resolve the difficulty? We offer these questions as further examples of the sorts of potentially fertile issues that come into view when we treat perceptual knowledge and self-awareness as connected topics. By way of summary of the rationale for this volume, we quote a passage from Sidney Shoemaker in which he formulates a general desideratum for ‘a philosophical understanding of the mental’. We suggest that, as perceptual knowledge pervades our mental lives, it deserves to be treated as part of ‘the mental’, in the spirit of this passage:

it is essential to a philosophical understanding of the mental that we appreciate that there is a first person perspective on it, a distinctive way mental states present themselves to the subjects whose states they are, and that an essential part of the philosophical task is to give an account of mind which makes intelligible the perspective mental subjects have on their own mental lives.¹⁶

¹⁶ Shoemaker 1996: 157. We borrow the quote from Matthew Boyle’s interesting discussion of it (in his 2015: 345-6).

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