Contextualism

Finally, an alternative to the foundationalist-coherentist controversy has recently been set forth by several philosophers, including Thomas Sauer, Keith DeRose, David Lewis, and David Annis. Anns, whose reading concludes this part of the book, gives the most lucid description of his theory, called contextualism, and argues that justification is relative to social practices with differing norms. He distinguishes an issue context from an objector context. The issue context of a belief is the specific concern someone has about it; the objector context refers to theoup that raises objections to the believer out the belief in question. A belief is contextually basic for a person relative to an appropri-ate objector group at a specific time if that group holds the belief without opposing reasons. In different contexts, different beliefs take on proper basicality, but there is general epistemic criterion for justifying beliefs independent of those arising from social ctices and social approval.

Still in its infancy, contextualism has already been criticized as being unduly relativistic. We ll encounter another version of contextualism in David Lewis’s “Elusive Knowledge” in VI of this work. Related epistemic theories ear in Part XI ("Challenges and Alternatives to Contemporary Epistemology").

V.1 Contemporary Classical Foundationalism

RODERICK CHISHOLM

A biographical sketch of Roderick Chisholm (1916–1999) appears with Reading 1.2. In this selection Chisholm takes it as given that we do have some knowledge and proceeds to argue for a version of foundationalism. He first inquires as to what grounds our beliefs. He argues that beliefs may be justified in three different ways. (1) They may be justified in virtue of the relation they bear to what is directly evident (our immediate experience); (2) they may be justified by certain relations they bear to each other; and (3) they may be justified by their own nature and thus independently of the relations they bear to other propositions.

The Directly Evident

One says "I know" when one is ready to give compelling grounds. "I know" relates to a possibility of demonstrating the truth. Whether someone knows something can come to light, assuming that he is convinced of it. But if what he believes is of such a kind that the grounds that he can give are no surer than his assertion, then he cannot say that he knows what he believes.

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

The nature of the good can be learned from experience only if the content of experience be first classified into good and bad, or grades of better and worse. Such classification or grading already involves the legislative application of the same principle which is sought. In logic, principles can be elicited by generalization from examples only if cases of valid reasoning have first been segregated by some criterion. It is this criterion which the generalization is required to disclose. In esthetics, the laws of the beautiful may be derived from experience only if the criteria of beauty have first been correctly applied.

C. I. LEWIS

1. Socratic Questions

In investigating the theory of evidence from a philosophical—or Socratic—point of view, we make three general presuppositions.

We presuppose, first, that there is something that we know and we adopt the working hypothesis that what we know is pretty much that which, on reflection, we think we know. This may seem the wrong place to start. But where else could we start? . . .

We presuppose, second, that the things we know are justified for us in the following sense: we can know what it is, on any occasion, that constitutes our grounds, or reason, or evidence for thinking that we know. If I think that I know that there is snow now on the top of the mountain, then, as the quotation from Wittgenstein suggests, I am in a position to say what ground or reason I have for thinking that there is snow now on the top of the mountain. (Of course, from the fact that there is ground for thinking that there is now snow there, from the fact, say, that you have been there and seen it, it doesn’t follow that I now have any ground or reason for the belief.)

And we presuppose, third, that if we do thus have grounds or reasons for the things we think we know, then there are valid general principles of evidence—principles stating the general conditions under which we may be said to have grounds or reasons for what we believe. And, as the quotation from Lewis above suggests, our concern, in investigating the theory of evidence, is to find out what these general principles are.
sonable man who is thinking about a city he takes to be Albuquerque, or who believes that Albuquerque is in New Mexico, and suppose him to reflect on the philosophical question, “What is my justification for thinking that I know that I am thinking about a city I take to be Albuquerque, or that I believe that Albuquerque is in New Mexico?” (This strange question would hardly arise, of course, on any practical occasion, for the man is not asking, “What is my justification for thinking that Albuquerque is in New Mexico?” The question is a Socratic question and therefore a philosophical one.) The man could reply in this way: “My justification for thinking I know that I am thinking about a city I take to be Albuquerque, or that I believe that Albuquerque is in New Mexico, is simply the fact that I am thinking about a city I take to be Albuquerque, or that I do believe that it is in New Mexico.” And this reply fits our formula for the directly evident:

What justifies me in thinking I know that a is F is simply the fact that a is F.

Our man has stated his justification for a proposition merely by reiterating that proposition. This type of justification is not appropriate to the questions that were previously discussed. Thus, in answer to “What justification do you have for counting it as evident that there can be no life on the moon?” it would be inappropriate—and presumptuous—simply to reiterate, “There can be no life on the moon.” But we can state our justification for certain propositions about our beliefs, and certain propositions about our thoughts, merely by reiterating those propositions. They may be said, therefore, to pertain to what is directly evident.

Borrowing a technical term from Meinong, let us say that if there is something that is directly evident to a man, then there is some state of affairs that “presents itself to him.” Thus, my believing that Socrates is mortal is a state of affairs that is “self-presenting” to me. If I do believe that Socrates is mortal, then, ipso facto, it is evident to me that I believe that Socrates is mortal; the state of affairs is “apprehended through itself.”

Other states that may be similarly self-presenting are those described by “thinking that one remembers that . . .” or “seeming to remember that . . .” (as distinguished from “remembering that . . .”), and “taking” or thinking that one perceives” (as distinguished from “perceiving”). Desiring, hoping, wondering, wishing, loving, hating may also be self-presenting. These states are what Leibniz intended by the term “thoughts” in the passage quoted above.

5. The Nature of Self-Presentation

Let us now try to characterize self-presentation more exactly. If seeming to have a headache is a state of affairs that is self-presenting for S at the present moment, then S does now seem to have a headache and, moreover, it is evident to him that he seems to have a headache. And so we may formulate the definition this way:

D2.1 b is self-presenting for S at t = Df b occurs at t; and necessarily, if b occurs at t, then b is evident for S at t.

An alternative formulation would be this:

b is self-presenting for S at t = Df b is true at t; and necessarily, if b is true at t, then b is evident for S at t.

For the moment, we will assume that they are interchangeable, sometimes saying that states of affairs are what is self-presenting and at other times saying that propositions are what is self-presenting.

We should note that what follows logically from what is self-presenting need not itself be self-presenting. It will be instructive to consider three different examples of this fact.

1. The proposition expressed by “I seem to have a headache” logically implies that expressed by “2 and 2 are 4.” But even if the former is self-presenting, the latter is not. For the latter is not necessarily such that if it is true then it is evident for me; it could be true even if I didn’t exist.

2. The proposition expressed by “I seem to have a headache” logically implies that expressed by “Either I seem to have a headache or all cows are black.” But the latter proposition is not necessary such that if it is true then it is evident to me; it could be true even if I didn’t exist.

3. The proposition expressed by “I seem to have a headache” logically implies that expressed by “I exist.” But the latter proposition is not necessarily such that, if it is true then it is evident for me; it could be true if I were asleep and such that nothing is evident to me.

The negations of self-presenting propositions will not be self-presenting, for they may all be when no one exists and hence when nothing is evident. What of the proposition expressed t am thinking but I do not seem to see a dog this necessarily such that, if it is true, then it is evident? No. For it could be true, even though I didn’t have the concept of a dog and therefore didn’t understand the proposition “I am thin but I do not seem to see a dog.” But if the proposition is one that could be true when I do understand it, then it is one that could be without being evident to me. For, . . . a proposition cannot be evident to a person unless it is that he is able to grasp or to understand. (A exactly . . . if believing one proposition is reasonable than believing another for any g person S, then S’s is able to grasp or understand first proposition.)

One may object: “But isn’t it directly evident to me now both that I am thinking and that I do not see a dog?” The answer is yes. But the concept of the directly evident is not the same as that of self-presenting.

6. A Definition of the Directly Evident

The concept of the directly evident is consider broader than that of the self-presenting. A self-presenting state of affairs for S is one which is necessarily true, that if it occurs, then it is evident to S. Hence we could say that the Cartesian statement “I am thinking” expresses what is self-presenting S—provided he is thinking. For it would be impossible for S to be thinking unless it were evident to him that he was thinking. But what of the statement “There is someone who is thinking?” If we add to the tradition of Descartes and Leibniz, we want to say that, if “I am thinking” expresses v is directly evident for S, then so, too, does “The someone who is thinking.” But the latter is not self-presenting by our definition above. For it is not necessary that, if there is someone who is thinking, that fact is then evident to S. (If someone is thinking while S is asleep, the fact that someone is thinking need not be evident to S.) But, we may assume it is not possible for anyone to accept the proposition he would express by “I am thinking” unless he also accepts the proposition that someone is thinking. And so let us say:
ring, hoping, wondering, wishing, loving, etc. may also be self-presenting. These states are Leibniz intended by the term "thoughts" in passage quoted above.

The Nature of Self-Presentation

is now try to characterize self-presentation exactly. If seeming to have a headache is an affair that is self-presentation for S at the moment, then S does now seem to have a headache and, moreover, it is evident to him that ms to have a headache. And so we may forge the definition this way:

\[ 2.1 \text{ is self-presenting for } S \text{ at } t = \text{Df } b \text{ occurs at } t; \text{ and necessarily, if } b \text{ occurs at } t, \text{ then } b = \text{ident for } S \text{ at } t. \]

self-formulation would be this:

\[ s \text{ self-presenting for } S \text{ at } t = \text{Df } b \text{ is true at } t; \text{ d necessarily, if } b \text{ is true at } t, \text{ then } b = \text{ident for } S \text{ at } t. \]

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The proposition expressed by "I seem to have a headache" logically implies that expressed 4 \( \text{and } 2 \text{ are } 4. \) But even if the former is self-presenting, the latter is not. For the latter is not logically such that if it is true then it is evident it could be true even if I didn’t exist. The proposition expressed by "I seem to have a headache" logically implies that expressed it I seem to have a headache or all cows. But the latter proposition is not necessary that if it is true then it is evident to me; it is true even if I didn’t exist. The proposition expressed by "I seem to have a headache" logically implies that expressed it. But the latter proposition is not necessary that, if it is true then it is evident for ald be true if I were asleep and such that is evident to me.

The negations of self-presenting propositions will not be self-presenting, for they may all be true when no one exists and hence when nothing is evident. What of the proposition expressed by "I am thinking but I do not seem to see a dog." Is this necessarily such that, if it is true, then it is evident? No. For it could be true, even though I didn’t have the concept of a dog and therefore didn’t understand the proposition "I am thinking but I do not seem to see a dog." But if the proposition is one that could be true when I didn’t understand it, then it is one that could be true without being evident to me. For, . . . a proposition cannot be evident to a person unless it is one that he is able to grasp or to understand. (More exactly, . . . if believing one proposition is more reasonable than believing another for any given person S, then S is able to grasp or understand the first proposition.)

One may object: "But isn't it directly evident to me now both that I am thinking and that I do not see a dog?" The answer is yes. But the concept of the directly evident is not the same as that of the self-presenting.

6. A Definition of the Directly Evident

The concept of the directly evident is considerably broader than that of the self-presenting. A self-presenting state of affairs for S is one which is necessarily such that, if it occurs, then it is evident to S. Hence we could say that the Cartesian statement "I am thinking" expresses what is self-presenting for S—provided he is thinking. For it would be impossible for S to be thinking unless it were evident to him that he was thinking. But what of the statement "There is someone who is thinking"? If we adhere to the tradition of Descartes and Leibniz, we will want to say that, if "I am thinking" expresses what is directly evident for S, then so, too, does "There is someone who is thinking." But the latter is not self-presenting by our definition above. For it is not necessary that, if there is someone who is thinking, then that fact is then evident to S. (If someone is thinking while S is asleep, the fact that someone is thinking need not be evident to S.) But, we may assume, it is not possible for anyone to accept the proposition he would express by "I am thinking" unless he also accepts the proposition that someone is thinking. And so let us say:

D2.2 b is directly evident for S = Df b is logically contingent; and there is an e such that (i) e is self-presenting for S and (ii) necessarily, whoever accepts e accepts b.

Those propositions which are themselves self-presenting, of course, will also be directly evident by this definition.

What of negative propositions? Isn't it directly evident to me that I do not now seem to see a dog? If such propositions were never directly evident, it would be difficult to see what would ever justify any contingent judgments of nonexistence. Yet we noted above that "I do not now seem to see a dog" cannot be said to be self-presenting— for it may be true without being evident. From what self-presenting proposition, then, may one deduce the proposition expressed by "I do not now seem to see a dog?" The answer would seem to be this: "I am considering the proposition that I seem to see a dog, and I do not seem to see a dog." (This example illustrates the fact that negative apprehension is more complex than positive apprehension.) . . .

The Indirectly Evident

1. The Justification of the Indirectly Evident

Those "truths of fact" that are known but are not directly evident may be said to be indirectly evident. Hence, whatever we know about "external objects," about other people, and about the past, may be said to be indirectly evident. In considering now our justification for what is thus only indirectly evident, we should remind ourselves of what was said . . . about the nature of the theory of evidence.

We said that the philosopher, in investigating the theory of evidence, makes three presuppositions. The first is that there is something that we know, and the philosopher takes it as a working hypothesis that what we know is pretty much that which, on reflection, we think we know. The second presupposition is that the things we know are so justified for us that we can know, on any occasion, what it is that constitutes our ground, reason, or evidence for what it is that we know. And the third presupposition is that, if we do thus have grounds or reasons for the things we think we
know, then there are general principles of evidence which can be said to be satisfied by the things we think we know. Our hope is to formulate such principles.

What, then, of our justification for those propositions that are indirectly evident? We might say that they are justified in three different ways. (1) They may be justified by certain relations that they bear to what is directly evident. (2) They may be justified by certain relations that they bear to each other. And (3) they may be justified by their own nature, so to speak, and quite independently of the relations that they bear to anything else.

The term “foundationalism” is sometimes used for any view that emphasizes the first of these three ways. And the term “coherence theory” or “coherentism” is sometimes used for any view which emphasizes the second. But there is no use for these terms that is generally agreed upon and it may be well to avoid them. And the truth of the matter, as we will see, would seem to be that what is indirectly evident may be justified in any one of these three ways.

But aren’t we overlooking the most obvious type of epistemic justification? Thus one might object: “The best justification we could have for a given proposition would be the fact that it comes from a reliable source. What could be more reasonable than accepting the deliverances of such a source—whether the source be an authority, or a computer, or a sense organ, or some kind of psychological faculty, or science itself?” The answer is, of course, that it is reasonable to put one’s faith in a source which is such that one *know* it to be reliable or one has good *ground or reason or evidence* for thinking it to be reliable. In investigating the theory of knowledge, we are concerned with the nature of the ground or reason or evidence that one might thus have for believing a source or an authority to be a reliable one. (Perhaps this latter point is best understood by reflecting upon the following hypothetical objection and how one might reply to it: “The best justification you can possibly have for accepting any given proposition is the fact that it is a member of the class of true propositions. And what could be more reasonable, after all, than restricting one’s beliefs to propositions that are true?”)

Let us begin, then, by considering the extent to which the indirectly evident might be justified by reference to what is directly evident. To what extent can we say that: our knowledge of what is indirectly evident is “based upon” or “known through” the directly evident? Are there certain epistemic principles or rules of evidence which, in application to what is directly evident, will yield whatever is indirectly evident? . . .

### 2. Confirmation

We begin by considering the nature of confirmation.

The technical expression “*e* confirms *h*” is used to express a relation which is such that, if it holds between a proposition *e* and a proposition *h*, then it holds necessarily between *e* and *h*. Since it holds necessarily, it is sometimes described as a *logical* relation. But it is also an *epistemic* relation. For it tells us, in effect, that knowledge of *e* would give one some reason for accepting *h*. Thus the relation that *e* bears to *h* when *e* confirms *h*, is also sometimes expressed by saying “*h* has a certain positive probability in relation to *e*.”

But the relation is a puzzling one. For it may be that, although a given proposition *e* confirms another proposition *h*, the conjunction of *e* and *h* with certain other propositions will not confirm *h*. Indeed, it may be that the wider proposition will confirm the negation of *h*. And the wider propositions may be entirely consistent with the original proposition *e*. Consider, for example, the following propositions:

- (h) John is a Democrat.
- (e) Most of the people in this room are Democrats, and John is in this room.
- (f) Most of the people on the left side of this room are not Democrats, and John is on the left side of this room.
- (g) 45 of the 50 people who arrived on time are Democrats, and John arrived on time.
- (i) 99 of the 100 people who voted for the measure are not Democrats, and John voted for the measure.

We may say that:

- *e* confirms *h*
- *e-and-f* confirms not-*h*
- *e-and-f-and-g* confirms *h*
- *e-and-f-and-g-and-i* confirms not-*h*.

The sense of the expression “*e* tends to confirm *h*” might be put, somewhat loosely, by saying: “If *e* were the only thing you knew, or the only relevant evidence you had, then you would also have some reason for accepting *h*.” Thus one could say: “If *e* above were the only evidence you had, then you would have some reason for accepting *h*; but if, in addition to *e*, *f* were also a part of your evidence, and if *e* and *f* were the only evidence you had, then you would have some reason for accepting not-*h*; . . . and so on.”

The expression “*e* tends to confirm *h*” therefore, might be less misleading than “*e* confirms *h*,” and we will use it in what follows. Let us say:

D4.1 *e* tends to confirm *h* = Df Necessarily, for every *S*, if *e* is evident for *S* and if everything that is evident for *S* is entailed by *e*, then *h* has some presumption in its favor for *S*.

We have said that it is quite possible for it to be the case that, although (1) a certain proposition *e* tends to confirm a certain proposition *h*, nevertheless (2) there is a proposition *i* which is such that the conjunction, *e* and *i*, does not tend to confirm *h*. We might say in such a case that *i* would *defeat*, or *override*, the confirmation that *e* tends to provide.

This concept could be defined simply as follows:

D4.2 *i* defeats the confirmation that *e* tends to provide for *h* = Df (i) *e* tends to confirm *h*, and (ii) the conjunction, *e* and *i*, does not tend to confirm *h*.

Now we may turn to some of the basic principles of the theory of knowledge.

### 3. Perception and “Self-Presentation”

We may suppose, once again, that we are dealing with a rational person, *S*, who is conducting a critique of cogency of the kind we tried to describe at the beginning of [the section on the directly evident. *S* asks himself, with respect to various things that he knows or thinks he knows, what his justification is for thinking that he knows those things. And, it will be recalled, he asks himself these questions not to discredit or cast doubt upon his knowledge, but in order to elicit certain general principles about the nature of knowledge and of evidence.

In answer to the question, “What is my justification for thinking that I know such and such?” *S*
The sense of the expression "e confirms h" might be put, somewhat loosely, by saying: "If e were the only thing you knew, or the only relevant evidence you had, then you would also have all of the evidence for accepting h." Thus one could say: "If e were the only evidence you had, then you would have some reason for accepting h; but if, in addition to e, f were also a part of your evidence, and if e and f were the only evidence you had, then you would have some reason for accepting not-h; and so on."

The expression "e tends to confirm h," therefore, might be less misleading than "e confirms h," and we will use it in what follows. Let us say:

\[ D4.1 \quad e \text{ tends to confirm } h = Df \begin{cases} \text{Necessarily, for} \\ \text{every } S, \text{ if } e \text{ is evidence for } S \text{ and if everything} \\ \text{that is evident for } S \text{ is entailed by } e, \text{ then } h \text{ has} \\ \text{some presumption in its favor for } S. \end{cases} \]

We have said that it is quite possible for it to be the case that, although (1) a certain proposition e tends to confirm a certain proposition h, nevertheless (2) there is a proposition i which is such that the conjunction, e and i, does not tend to confirm h. We might say in such a case that i would defeat, or override, the confirmation that e tends to provide.

This concept could be defined simply as follows:

\[ D4.2 \quad i \text{ defeats the confirmation that } e \text{ tends} \\ \text{to provide for } h = Df \begin{cases} \text{either (i) } e \text{ tends to confirm } h, \\ \text{and (ii) the conjunction, } e \text{ and } i, \text{ does not} \\ \text{tend to confirm } h. \end{cases} \]

Now we may turn to some of the basic principles of the theory of knowledge.

3. Perception and "Self-Presentation"

We may suppose, once again, that we are dealing with a rational person, S, who is conducting a critique of cogency of the kind we tried to describe at the beginning of [the section on the directly evident. S] asks himself, with respect to various things that he knows or thinks he knows, what his justification is for thinking that he knows those things.

And, it will be recalled, he asks himself these questions not to discredit or cast doubt upon his knowledge, but in order to elicit certain general principles about the nature of knowledge and of evidence.

In answer to the question, "What is my justification for thinking that I know such and such?" S may say: "My justification for thinking that I know such and such is the fact that I do know such and such." Let us express this briefly by saying: S justifies his claim or belief that he knows such and such by appeal to the proposition that he knows such and such.

We will countenance the directly evident character of S's "self-presenting states." The first of our epistemic principles is in fact a schema enabling us to abbreviate indefinitely many epistemic principles:

(A) S's being F is such that, if it occurs, then it is self-presenting to S that he is F.

We will imagine that, to replace "F," we have a list of various predicates, each of such a sort as to yield a description of a self-presenting state of S. Thus instances of principle A would be: "S's being appeared to red is such that, if it occurs, then it is self-presenting to S that he is appeared to red;" "S's being such that he wonders whether all men are mortal is such that, if it occurs, then it is self-presenting to S that he wonders whether all men are mortal."

And now ... we may turn to perception. But we will single out two subcategories of perception and say, of the one, that it presents us with what is reasonable, and of the other, that it presents us with what is evident.

Our ordinary language makes difficulties for us at this point. For most perception-words—for example, "perceive," "see," and "hear"—present us with certain problems of interpretation. How are we to interpret the sentences in which such words are followed by "that" clauses? Consider, for example, "He perceives that a cat is on the roof," "He sees it sitting there," and "He hears it make a scratching noise." When we use our perception words in this way, do our sentences commit us to what is asserted in their subordinate propositional clauses? Does "He perceives that a cat is on the roof" imply that there is a cat on the roof? Does "He sees that it is sitting there" imply that it is sitting there? And does "He hears it make a scratching noise" imply that there is something which is making a scratching noise?

The fact of the matter, unfortunately, is that the sentences are ambiguous. They may be taken either way. We may take the sentences in such a way that they do have such implications. Or we may take them in such a way that they do not. In the latter case, we may say, without contradiction,
“Well, he perceives that a cat is there, but obviously he is hallucinating once again; he is always seeing some cat or other that isn’t really there.”

There would be no point in trying to decide whether one or the other of these two uses is incorrect. But if we are going to talk about perception, we should decide how we will use the terms and make sure that, once we have decided to use them in one way, we don’t also sometimes use them in the other.

Let us use our perception words, then, in the first way. “He perceives that there is a cat there” will imply, in our use, that there is a cat there. How, then, shall we describe the state of the man who is hallucinating—the man we considered above when we said, “He perceives that a cat is there, but obviously he is hallucinating once again”? The simplest procedure would be to say, “He thinks he perceives that a cat is there” or “He believes he perceives that a cat is there.”

An alternative to “He thinks (or believes) he perceives that a cat is there” would be, “He takes there to be a cat there.” Such an alternative has some advantages over “He thinks (or believes) that he perceives,” for the latter expression, in its ordinary use, may suggest a kind of higher order reflection about one’s perceptions. Grammatically however, “He thinks (or believes) that he perceives” is more convenient, for it may be used with a “that”-clause, and it may be adapted to more specific perceptions, as “He believes that he sees” and “He believes that he hears.” Hence we will use “believes that he perceives” in place of “takes.” But when we say, “He believes that a cat is there,” we will take it to mean simply that he has a spontaneous nonreflective experience, one that he would normally express by saying, “I perceive that . . .”

5. Memory

The word “memory” presents us with a terminological difficulty analogous to that presented by “perception.” Consider a case in which, as one might say, a man’s memory has “deceived him”: the man would have said, honestly and sincerely, that he remembered a certain event to have occurred; actually, the event did not occur at all. Such deceptions of memory are common; “we remember remembering things and later finding them to be false.” But if we say “what he remembered is false,” the ordinary interpretation of the word “remember” will render what we say contradictory; hence, if we wish to take “remember” in this ordinary way, we must express the fact in question by saying, “What he thought he remembered is false.” And of those cases where one’s memory is not thus deceptive, we may say that “what he thought he remembered is true.”

Let us introduce the expression “unveridical memory” and use it in the way we have just been using “veridical perception.” A person may be said to have an unveridical memory if he mistakenly thinks he remembers a certain thing. We may also say that he remembers that thing unveridically.

Since both memory and perception are capable of playing us false, we run a twofold risk when we appeal to the memory of a perception. Let us suppose that S defends his claim to know that “A cat was on the roof” by saying he thinks he remembers having perceived one there. The situation presents us with four possibilities. (1) The present memory and the past perception are both veridical: he did think he perceived a cat and what he saw was, in fact, a cat. (2) He correctly remembers having thought he saw a cat; but what he saw was not a cat. In this case, the fault lies with the past perception and not with the present memory. (3) He incorrectly remembers having thought he saw a cat; but what he really thought he saw, at the time, was a squirrel, and in fact it was a squirrel that he saw. In this case, the fault lies with the present memory and not with the past perception. (4) He incorrectly remembers having thought he saw a cat; but what he thought he saw, at the time, was a squirrel, and the perception was unveridical, for there was no squirrel there at all. In this case, the fault lies both with the present memory and the past perception. As we know, however, memory, by a kind of happy failure if not an act of dishonesty, may correct the past perception: The man thought he saw a squirrel but it was in fact a cat, and now he thinks he remembers that he thought he saw a cat. Ordinary language provides us with no clear way of distinguishing these different types of deception, and memory is likely to receive more blame than it deserves. But it would seem to be clear, in general, that we should assign a lower degree of evidence to the deliverances of memory.

Where we said, in effect, that one type of perceptual belief made something reasonable, and another type of perceptual belief made something evident, let us now replace “reasonable” and “evident,” respectively, by “acceptable” and “reasonable.” We may add, then, two principles pertaining to memory.

And so we will be saying, in effect, that if S seems to remember remembering something to be F, then the proposition that he does remember perceiving something to be F is one that is reasonable for S. Our first principle pertaining to memory will then be this:

(D) For any subject S, if S believes, without ground for doubt, that he remembers perceiving something to be F, then the proposition that he does remember perceiving something to be F is one that is acceptable for S.

We may assume that, if the proposition that S could express in English by saying “I remember remembering something to be F” is one that is acceptable for him, then so, too, is the proposition that he did perceive something to be F, as well as the proposition that something was F.

Perhaps there is reason to distinguish between “remembering perceiving” and “remembering having perceived.” Thus one might be able to say “I remember having perceived someone leaving the bank” even though one cannot say, “I remember perceiving someone leaving the bank”; in such a case, presumably, the details of the perception have been forgotten and one remembers only that one did perceive. If this distinction is a tenable one, then we should note that principle D applies to remembering perceiving and need not apply to remembering having perceived.

We will assume, in effect, that, if the property being G is a sensible characteristic, then seeming to remember perceiving something to be G tends to make reasonable the propositions that one does remember perceiving something to be G, that one perceived something to be G, and that something was G. Our second principle pertaining to memory will be a schema, wherein the letter “E” may be replaced by any predicate (e.g., “red” or “blue”) which connotes a sensible characteristic.

(E) For any subject S, if S believes, without ground for doubt, that he remembers perceiving something to be F, then it is beyond reasonable doubt for S that he does remember perceiving something to be F.
n to be false." But if we say "what he remem-
bered is false," the ordinary interpretation of the
phrase "remember" will render what we say contra-
ary; hence, if we wish to take "remember" in
ordinary way, we must express the fact in
tion by saying, "What he thought he remem-
dered is false." And of those cases where one's
memory is not thus deceptive, we may say that
it he thought he remembered is true.

Let us introduce the expression "unveridical
ory" and use it in the way we have just been
"unveridical perception." A person may be
have an unveridical memory" if he mistakenly
he remembers a certain thing. We may also
at he remembers that thing unveridical-
ince both memory and perception are eap-
ing us false, we run a twofold risk when
peal to the memory of a perception. Let us
se that S defends his claim to know that "A
as on the roof" by saying he thinks he
bers having perceived one there. The situa-
tes us with four possibilities. (1) The
s and the past perception are both
: he did think he perceived a cat and what
, in fact, a cat. (2) He correctly remem-
t thought he saw a cat; but what he saw
t a cat. In this case, the fault lies with
ception and not with the present memory.
incorrectly remembers having thought he
; but what he really thought he saw, at the
as a squirrel, and in fact it was a squirrel
w. In this case, the fault lies with the
emory and not with the past perception. (4)
rectly remembers having thought he saw
what he thought he saw, at the time, was
d, and the perception was unveridical, for
no squirrel there at all. In this case, the
both with the present memory and the
ception. As we know, however, memory,
 of happy failure if not an act of dishonesty
correct the past perception: The man
he saw a squirrel but it was in fact a cat,
he thinks he remembers that he thought
at. Ordinary language provides us with
ay of distinguishing these different types
ion, and memory is likely to receive more
it deserves. But it would seem to be
general, that we should assign a lower
evidence to the deliverances of memory.
we said, in effect, that one type of per-
relief made something reasonable, and
another type of perceptual belief made something

evident, let us now replace "reasonable" and "evident," respectively, by "acceptable" and "reasonable." We may add, then, two principles pertaining to memory.

And so we will be saying, in effect, that if S
seems to remember perceiving something to be F,
then the proposition that he does remember per-
vicing something to be F is one that is reasonable
for S. Our first principle pertaining to memory will
be this:

(D) For any subject S, if S believes, without
ground for doubt, that he remembers per-
vicing something to be F, then the proposition
that he does remember perceiving something to be F is one that is acceptable for S.

We may assume that, if the proposition that S
would express in English by saying "I remember perceiving something to be F" is one that is
acceptable for him, then so, too, is the proposition
that he did perceive something to be F, as well as
the proposition that something was F.

Perhaps there is reason to distinguish between
"remembering perceiving" and "remembering
having perceived." Thus one might be able to say
"I remember having perceived someone leaving the
bank" even though one cannot say, "I remember
perceiving someone leaving the bank"; in such
a case, presumably, the details of the perception
have been forgotten and one remembers only that
one did perceive. If this distinction is a tenable
one, then we should note that principle D applies
to remembering perceiving and need not apply to
remembering having perceived.

We will assume, in effect, that, if the property
being G is a sensible characteristic, then seeming
to remember perceiving something to be G tends
to make reasonable the propositions that one does
remember perceiving something to be G, that one
perceived something to be G, and that something
was G. Our second principle pertaining to memory
will be a schema, wherein the letter "F" may be
replaced by any predicate (e.g., "red" or "blue")
which connotes a sensible characteristic.

(E) For any subject S, if S believes, without
ground for doubt, that he remembers per-
vicing something to be F, then it is beyond rea-
sonable doubt for S that he does remember per-
vicing something to be F.

Variants of these two principles have been
suggested by other philosophers: Meinong held
that our memory judgments, as he called them,
possess "immediate presumptive evidence." Russell has said that every memory should "com-
mand a certain degree of credence." And Lewis
said that "whatever is remembered, whether as
explicit recollection or merely in the form of our
sense of the past, is prima facie credible because so
remembered."

There is still more that can be said in behalf of
memory.

If our memories of sensible perceptions are
reasonable, so, too, must be our memories of the
"self-presenting states" discussed in (the section
on The Directly Evident). Thus I may think that I
remembered that I believed, or desired, or hoped,
or loved, or that I undertook a certain thing, or
that I was appeared to in a certain way. Don't such
facts tend to make reasonable the propositions that
I thus seem to remember? Let us add, therefore,
another schematic principle. The expression "F"
which appears in this principle may be replaced by
any expression yielding a description of what we
have called a self-presenting state:

(F) For any subject S, if S believes, without
ground for doubt, that he remembers being
F, then it is beyond reasonable doubt for S
that he does remember that he was F.

We have said that our perception of things in
motion, or at rest, and our perception of events in
temporal succession are sources of what is evident.
In saying this, we have conceded the evident char-
acter of "fresh memory" or "proterasthma"—our
apprehension of the "immediate past." Whenever
we perceive a thing to be in motion, or to be at
rest, and whenever we perceive a succession of
events, as we do when we listen to a melody or to
a conversation, we perceive one event as being
temporally prior to another. When we do perceive
one event as being temporally prior, then we per-
ceive the former as being past. Whether this appre-
hension of the immediate past is to be called
"memory" may be a matter only of terminology.
But if we do call it "memory," then we may say
that what we thus remember, or think we remem-
ber, is something that is evident. . . .

. . . Our principles do not yet allow us to say,
of Mr. S, that it is evident to him that a cat is on
the roof.
We must return, then, to the concept of confirmation.

6. Confirmation and Concurrence

Appealing now to the concept of confirmation, and in particular to "e tends to confirm b," which was defined in section 2 above (D4.1), we will first note how to add to the class of propositions that have some positive epistemic status for our subject S.

Since whatever is evident is also reasonable and since whatever is reasonable is also acceptable, we may say that all of the propositions countenanced by the principles we have set forth are acceptable. We may now apply the concept of confirmation and say that if the conjunction of all of those propositions that are acceptable tends to confirm a given proposition, then that proposition has some presumption in its favor. Hence, we may add the following to our principles:

(G) If the conjunction of all those propositions e such that e is acceptable for S at r tends to confirm b, then b has some presumption in its favor for S at r.

The class of propositions that thus have some presumption in their favor for S may now include a vast number of inductive hypotheses and thus go considerably beyond the content of memory and perception. For example, they may include propositions about cats and roofs.

By applying Carneades' concept of concurrence to this expanded class of propositions, we are also able to expand the class of propositions that are to be countenanced as being beyond reasonable doubt for S at r.

When Carneades said that a set of propositions might be concurrent, he meant that each member of the set would support, and also be supported by, the other members of the set. We could say that any set of propositions that are mutually consistent and logically independent of each other is concurrent provided that each member of the set is confirmed by the conjunction of all the members of the set. More exactly:

D4.4 A is a set of concurrent propositions \( \rightarrow \) Df. A is a set of two or more propositions each of which is such that the conjunction of all the

reasonability with a house of cards. In this ev Meinong has two other figures for us: the arch bridge, and a stack of weapons in the field.)

And finally, from our concurrent set of propositions—now reasonable as well as acceptable—extract still another class of propositions; members of this new class will be countenance being evident.

(1) If S believes, without ground for do that he perceives something to be F, and if proposition that there is something that is a member of a set of concurrent propositions each of which is beyond reasonable doubt S, then it is evident for S that he perceives something to be F.

This principle is even more audacious than principle (H).

The set of concurrent propositions cited above includes the perceptual proposition “A is on the roof.” Hence, in virtue of principle I, and definition of knowledge . . . we may be able to at last, that S knows that there is a cat on the roof.

7. Conclusion

Here, then, we have the beginning of a theory of evidence. It is by no means complete. Any complete theory would include the canons of inductive logic. And it would include many additional epistemic principles. Thus, in our formulation of principles pertaining to perception and memory we used the expression, “without ground doubt”; we said in D4.3 that a person believes proposition “without ground for doubt” provided he believes nothing that tends to confirm negation of that proposition. Hence an adequate theory of evidence would set forth certain generic principles concerning what propositions we tend to confirm that one is being deceived one’s senses or memory. But any adequate theory of evidence, I believe, would contain principles very much like those that we have set forth.

We said, at the beginning of this section that propositions that are not directly justified need be justified in one or another of three different ways: (1) They may be justified in virtue of a relation they bear to what is directly evident, (2) They may be justified by certain relations they bear to each other. And (3) they may be justified

* [Carneades of Cyrene (c. 213–129 B.C.)]
reasonability with a house of cards. In this event, Meinong has two other figures for us: the arch of a bridge, and a stack of weapons in the field.)

And finally, from our concurrent set of propositions—now reasonable as well as acceptable—we extract still another class of propositions; the members of this new class will be countenanced as being evident.

(1) If S believes, without ground for doubt, that he perceives something to be \( F \), and if the proposition that there is something that is \( F \) is a member of a set of concurrent propositions each of which is beyond reasonable doubt for \( S \), then it is evident for \( S \) that he perceives something to be \( F \).

This principle is even more audacious than principle H.

The set of concurrent propositions cited just above includes the perceptual proposition "A cat is on the roof." Hence, in virtue of principle I, and the definition of knowledge...we may be able to say, at last, that \( S \) knows that there is a cat on the roof.

7. Conclusion

Here, then, we have the beginning of a theory of evidence. It is, by no means complete. Any complete theory would include the canons of inductive logic. And it would include many additional epistemic principles. Thus, in our formulation of the principles pertaining to perception and memory, we used the expression, "without ground for doubt"; we said in D.4.3 that a person believes a proposition "without ground for doubt" provided he believes nothing that tends to confirm the negation of that proposition. Hence an adequate theory of evidence would set forth certain general principles concerning what propositions would tend to confirm that one is being deceived by one's senses or memory. But any adequate theory of evidence, I believe, would contain principles very much like those that we have set forth.

We said, at the beginning of this [section], that propositions that are not directly justified may be justified in one or another of three different ways. (1) They may be justified in virtue of the relation they bear to what is directly evident. (2) They may be justified by certain relations they bear to each other. And (3) they may be justified by their own nature and thus quite independently of the relations they may bear to other propositions.

Looking back to the general principles we have formulated, we may now note the way in which all three phases of justification are here exemplified. (1) Every proposition we are justified in believing is justified, in part, because of some relation that it bears to the directly evident. (2) The reference to concurrence in our final two principles recognizes the importance of the mutual support that is provided, in part, by the logical relations that certain propositions bear to each other. And finally, (3) some propositions are such that, by their very nature, they tend to provide a justification for propositions about what one thinks one is perceiving and about what one thinks that one remembers.

Notes


3 Lewis, Mind and the World-Order, p. 19.

4 These remarks also apply to Leonard Nelson's statement, "If one asks whether one possesses objectively valid cognitions at all, one thereby presupposes that the objectivity of cognition is questionable at first...", Socratic Method and Critical Philosophy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), p. 190. One of the unfortunate consequences of the work of Descartes and, in the present century, the work of Bertrand Russell and Edmund Husserl, is the widely accepted supposition that questions about the justification for counting evident statements as evident must be challenges or expressions of doubt. See Bertrand Russell's Problems of Philosophy (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1912) and his many other writings on the theory of knowledge, and E. Husserl's Meditations Cartesiiennes (Paris: J. Vrin, 1931), also published as Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorlesungen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950). The objections to this approach to the concept of the evident were clearly put forth by A. Meinong; see his Gesammelte Abhandlungen, II (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1913), p. 191. The papers by Nelson and Meinong that are here referred to are reprinted in Empirical Knowledge: Readings from Contemporary Sources, Roderick M. Chisholm and Robert J. Swartz, eds. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1973).
matter stands; these are the questions you are not to ask." [Memorabilia, 1, 2, 36]


10 Among the views that have been labeled "foundationalism" are also the following: (1) the view that some propositions are directly evident; (2) any view that makes the three presuppositions set forth above; (3) any view that raises the questions set forth at the beginning of this section. Compare the critique of "foundationalism" in F. L. Will, Induction and Justification (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974). Distinction of several senses of "foundationalism" may be found in Mark Pastin, "C. I. Lewis's Radical Phenomenalism," Nous, IX (1975), 407–420; and William P. Alston, "Two Types of Foundationalism," Journal of Philosophy, LXIII (1976), pp. 165–185.


V.2 Contemporary Modest Foundationalism

ROBERT AUDI

Robert Audi is professor of philosophy at the University of Nebraska. In this essay Audi outlines the main theses of contemporary modest foundationalism, distinguishing it from classical foundationalism and arguing that it has "perhaps unexpected advantages" over other epistemic theories.

As I sit reading on a quiet summer evening times hear a distinctive patter outside my door. I immediately believe that it is rain then occur to me that if I do not bring chairs, the cushions will be soaked. But I believe immediately, even if the thought of water in an instant; I believe it on the basis of belief that it is raining. The first belief is being grounded directly in what I hear, is inferential, being grounded not in evidence, but in what I believe: my belief thing expresses a premise for my belief of belief cushions will be soaked.

There are many beliefs of the sort Perceptions is a constant source of belief from beliefs we have through perceptual experience. The latter, inferential then based on the former, percept: When I see a headlight beam cross my road immediately believe, perceptually, it is a bright light moving out there. I think that basis of that belief, come to believe, in that a car has turned into my driveway. Proposition in turn I might infer that m is about to turn, and from that I might further propounding. On the plausible a that knowledge implies belief, the same knowledge: much of it is perceptually, and much of it is inferential. There is a limit on how many inferences one make on a chain, and people differ in how they tend to draw. Could it be, however, that the apparent obviousness of these points really is non-inferential knowledge even in perceptual cases? Might every based on some other and no beliefs grounded in perception? If inference is forward indefinitely beyond perception, why may it not take us backward indefinitely? To see how this might occur, we consider more systematically how beliefs a justifies them, and when they are suffi ground to constitute knowledge.

I. The Sources of Belief and Knowledge

Imagine that when the rain began I trusted my ears. I might then have beli