E = K
AND NON-EPISTEMIC PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT: Quite plausibly, epistemic justification and rationality is tied to possession of evidence. According to Williamson, one's evidence is what one knows. This is not compatible with non-epistemic perception, however, since non-epistemic perception does not require belief in what one perceives and, thus, does not require knowledge of the evidence – and, standardly, knowledge does require belief. If one non-epistemically perceives a piece of evidence, this can be sufficient for possessing it as evidence. Williamson's arguments for the necessity of belief will be discussed and rebutted. Interestingly, the view that non-epistemic perception is sufficient for possession of evidence can allow for conceptual or non-conceptual content of perception and it provides the framework for a neo-foundationalist account of epistemic justification.

KEYWORDS: epistemology, knowledge, perception, evidence

1. Introduction

What is possession of evidence? What is the evidence of a subject? – An answer to this question is urgently needed if we want to address several important questions. If epistemic justification or rationality (and excuses) depend on whether and how one bases one's beliefs on one's evidence, or how one responds to one's evidence, we need to know what evidence one has. And epistemic virtues might be defined in terms of how well or appropriate one deals with one's evidence. Ultimately, then, an account of what constitutes possession of evidence would be desirable in order to answer these questions in a systematic and theoretically adequate way.

Suppose, following Timothy Williamson, that one's evidence consists in what one knows, in short: E = K. Now focus on the case of perceptual evidence and perceptual knowledge. Then the question arises how *non-epistemic perception* fits to the equation E = K. Suppose that there is something like (conscious) perception with (conscious) representational content, fully evaluable with respect to veridicality, but without entailing (corresponding) belief. Call this kind of

perception 'non-epistemic perception,' following Fred Dretske.[1] Many have argued that such non-epistemic perception exists (including Dretske, Evans, Tye, Crane, and Peacocke, most importantly). To take up one of the many examples (one from Christopher Peacocke), suppose you are looking at a new abstract sculpture in an art museum.[2] Then you see the object to have a quite specific shape and size. You may not be in a position to capture the shape in a conceptual way by means of concepts of specific shapes (since you lack the necessary concepts for this specific shape), nor will you be able to recognize the same specific shape later on again. So plausibly, your visual state has a quite specific representational content and veridicality condition but is not (and is not accompanied by) a belief with this specific representational content and veridicality condition. This is a typical case of non-epistemic perception, and many other cases, including auditory experiences, are of the same sort.[3] But non-epistemic perception does not sit well with the equation E = K, to say the least. If there is any non-epistemic perception, it is the perfect candidate for playing an evidential role, too, albeit without itself bringing the evidence into one's belief system and, *a fortiori*, without bringing the evidence into the scope of one's knowledge. (Let us assume that knowledge entails corresponding belief, which is accepted by Williamson.)[4] One's evidence can considerably extend beyond what one knows. This is so simply because one's perception can bring one into possession of evidence without entailing corresponding belief. In other words, to non-epistemically perceive a (coarse-grained or fine-grained) fact is already good enough for possessing it as evidence. (Note that one can hold this view without having to accept false evidence, since one can hold that the evidential role of perceptual experience is restricted to the case of *genuine, veridical* perception. And here I will restrict myself to genuine, veridical perception.)

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[1] Fred Dretske, *Seeing and Knowing* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 30.

[2] Christopher Peacocke, "Does Perception Have a Non-conceptual Content?" *Journal of Philosophy* 98, 5 (2001): 239-264.

[3] In other cases, the content of the perception plausibly is conceptual (and so the subject possesses and exercizes suitable conceptual capacities), but there is no corresponding belief with the same content because the subject follows a sufficiently strong defeater. The classical Müller-Lyer illusion (in which the subject knows of the illusion) is probably an example of this sort.

[4] Williamson argues for the entailment in Timothy Williamson, *Knowledge And Its Limits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch. 1.5, and holds that belief is a kind of 'botched knowledge,' a failed attempt at knowledge (in Williamson, *Knowledge And Its Limits*, 47) and, thus, knowledge is successful belief.

This, then, is the problem for the Williamson's view that E = K. The orthodox view that knowledge requires belief is accepted by Williamson (and I will accept it here, too). So either he has to reject the existence of non-epistemic perception or, if he accepts its existence, he has to deny its evidential role. To deny the existence of non-epistemic perception is a heavy and quite unpalatable option that goes against much of recent philosophy of mind. Here I will not add anything new to this debate, but I take it that there are already quite convincing arguments in support of the existence of non-epistemic perception. (Please note that even a McDowellian accepts that one can see that p without believing that p, i.e., that there is non-epistemic perception in the intended sense. So we can add McDowell to the list of those who have argued for non-epistemic perception.[5] Of course, there is also the large group of philosophers who accept that non-epistemic perception is non-conceptual, *pace* McDowell.) If this is granted, the only remaining option for the Williamsonian view is to deny that non-epistemic perception could play the role of possession of evidence, i.e., to deny its evidential role.

Initially, however, this looks like an unattractive option as well. For why should we deny that non-epistemic perception can provide us with evidence? If perception is our fundamental source of empirical knowledge,[6] and non-epistemic perception is the most basic form of perception – perhaps, as Tyler Burge suggests, the point where mind begins[7] – how could it be so if not by giving us reasons – evidence – for empirical beliefs? *Prima facie,* it seems very plausible to accept that non-epistemic perception can play an evidential role, indeed, a very important evidential role. In addition, by allowing that non-epistemic perception can put one into possession of evidence, a potential regress problem can be circumvented. As Clayton Littlejohn has argued convincingly, if one accepts a 'doxastic requirement' for possession of evidence, one is forced into a vicious infinite regress.[8] Non-

[5] Pritchard also rejects the entailment from perception to belief in Duncan Pritchard, *Epistemological Disjunctivism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 26. See, for example, John McDowell, *Having the World in View* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2009), 131; see also John McDowell, *Perception as a Capacity for Knowledge* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2011), *passim*.

[6] See, for example, Cassam on the priority of perception as a source of knowledge in Quassim Cassam, "Ways of Knowing," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 107, Part 3 (2007): 339-358.

[7] Tyler Burge, "Perception: Where Mind Begins," *Philosophy* 89, 3 (2014): 385-403.

[8] Clayton Littlejohn, "Evidence and Its Limits", in *Normativity. Epistemic and Practical*, eds. Conor McHugh, Jonathan Way, and Daniel Whiting (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018),

epistemic perception provides an elegant and simple solution that dissolves the regress immediately.

But Williamson has given arguments to the effect that possession of evidence requires belief. These arguments are not good enough to justify this claim, however. This is what I would like to argue for in the following. Accepting the idea that non-epistemic perception plays an evidential role is inconsistent with the equation E = K, and since non-epistemic perception exists *and* has an evidential role, the equation needs to be given up.

Two things should be stated explicitly from the very beginning, in order to avoid possible misunderstandings. Firstly, the evidential role of non-epistemic perception is meant to be a quite specific one. It is not the fact that the subject has a certain perception which is supposed to be the evidence. Rather, it is the *content* of the perception which is supposed to be the relevant piece of evidence. This paper will exclusively be concerned with this way of providing evidence, i.e., *the content way*. Whether the fact that someone undergoes a certain perception can be, or can provide, evidence does not matter for the present argument, and it will be entirely left open. In other words, the perceptual evidence provided by perception is always something that is perceived – an object of perception –, and not the fact that the subject has the perception.[9]

Secondly, the question of non-epistemic perception also touches upon Williamson's thesis that knowledge is the most general factive mental state and, in particular, the thesis that perception is a way of knowing.[10] It is quite clear that if *non*-epistemic perception exists, it is not a way of knowing (in Williamson's sense).[11] At most, *epistemic* perception is a way of knowing. So obviously, Williamson needs to restrict his thesis about knowledge being the most general factive mental state to *epistemic* perception if non-epistemic perception exists (assuming that knowledge requires belief). Now, there may be good *independent* arguments for thinking that knowledge is the most general factive mental state. In an overall judgment about E = K one could take these into account as indirect

123-24.

[9] Williamson mentions the distinction between these two ways, without objecting against it. See Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 197-200.

[10] Cf. Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, ch. 1.

[11] Williamson's conception of ways of knowing is to be sharply distinguished from Cassam's. Roughly speaking, a way of knowing according to Williamson is a determinate or specific version of the determinable knowing. According to Cassam, a way of knowing is something that explains how one knows. Cassam, "Ways of Knowing."

reasons for holding on to the equation E = K. For reasons of space, I cannot go into a discussion of these arguments. But at least, as I will argue, the acceptance of non-epistemic perception with an evidential role provides a *pro tanto* reason for rejecting the thesis that knowledge is the most general factive mental state.[12]

As already mentioned, the existence of non-epistemic perception has been argued for in the literature quite convincingly, I believe, and so will be taken as sufficiently supported. In any case, what will be addressed and discussed here is the *further* question whether non-epistemic perception plays an evidential role, granting that it exists.[13]

2. Non-epistemic Perception

Many have argued that there is non-epistemic perception (in human experience).[14] The essence of non-epistemic perception is, roughly speaking, perception without corresponding belief. The details are to some extent a matter of terminology and, perhaps, not easy to spell out precisely. But they will not matter for the argument of this paper. For the present purposes, we can characterize non-epistemic perception more precisely in the following way. Non-epistemic perception exists if there are genuine, veridical perceptions that satisfy the following conditions: (1) They have a (phenomenally conscious) representational content (2) with full, complete veridicality conditions. Thus, they are fully evaluable with respect to veridicality.[15] (3) They do not entail the corresponding belief (with the corresponding conceptual content), i.e., they are non-doxastic.[16]

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[12] A natural alternative suggests itself: *awareness* is the most general factive mental state, and non-conceptual perceptual awareness is one kind of awareness whereas knowledge is another, conceptual form of awareness.

[13] The position to be developed in this paper is distinct from the alternative view that non-epistemic perception has an epistemic role by putting one in a position to know but without making one possess evidence. Cf., for example, Pritchard, *Epistemological Disjunctivism*, Littlejohn, "Evidence and Its Limits." The putting-one-in-a-position-to-know account is different and deserves a closer investigation which, for reasons of space, I cannot provide here.

[14] The classic is, of course, Dretske, *Seeing and Knowing*. Of the many more philosophers who are proponents of non-epistemic perceptions let me just mention Gareth Evans, *The Varieties of Reference* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), Michael Tye, *Ten Problems of Consciousness* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), Tim Crane, "The Nonconceptual Content of Experience", in *The Contents of Experience*, ed. Tim Crane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 136-157, and Christopher Peacocke, *A Study of Concepts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[15] One can reserve the notion of truth for conceptual contents, if one likes. As the generic notion

It is quite important to note the following. The characterization just given leaves it open whether the relevant contents are *conceptual* or *non-conceptual*.[17] All that is needed is the non-entailment of corresponding beliefs. Non-epistemic perception is not a way of believing. *A fortiori*, if knowledge entails corresponding belief, it is not a way of knowing. But we can leave it open whether the content of non-epistemic perception is conceptual or not. (And we will consider both versions of non-epistemic perception in due course.)

We can distinguish between genuine (veridical) perception on the one hand and other, worse cases (illusion, hallucination) on the other hand. All three cases can be phenomenal or non-phenomenal. So in principle, there could be six kinds of cases. (Whether there really is any non-phenomenal illusion and non-phenomenal hallucination can be left open for the present purposes.) The term 'perceptual experience', then, will refer to the phenomenal cases independently of which of the three sub-groups the experience belongs to (genuine perception, illusion, or hallucination). Genuine perception can be phenomenal or non-phenomenal. Here, I will be concerned mostly with genuine perception and its evidential role, not with the evidential role of the other, worse cases (illusion, hallucination).[18]

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to cover both non-epistemic perception and states with conceptual content one can then use the notion of veridicality. This is the (only) reason why I have put the characterization in terms of 'veridicality.'

[16] The term 'non-epistemic' is therefore not entirely happy. (Dretske introduces it in Dretske, *Seeing and Knowing*, 30.) 'Non-doxastic' would do a better job. But since the term has been around and is to some extent established, I will keep it here. It does of course not decide what is at stake, namely, whether non-epistemic perception can play an evidential role.

[17] Correspondingly, it is easy or not so easy to state the contents. If the content is conceptual, it's easy. If it is non-conceptual, we have to say something like this. Suppose the content of a genuine non-epistemic perception is the state of affairs that the particular a has the property F. The 'corresponding belief,' then, would be any belief with a conceptual content that determines this state of affairs as its truth condition. But alternative conceptions are possible, such as in terms of possible worlds, for example.

[18] Factivity is a quite natural, 'organic' feature of perception. So any complaint to the effect that a "rather unnatural hybrid" (of perceptual experience and truth) has been formed would be misplaced. – Williamson raises, and is correct in raising, a similar complaint against a modification of Goldman's proposal according to which *true* propositions that the subject is non-inferentially propositionally justified in believing are the subject's evidence. See Timothy Williamson, "Replies to Critics," in *Williamson on Knowledge*, eds. Patrick Greenough and Duncan Pritchard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 279-384.

Perceptual experiences are, as any experiences, *phenomenal* (phenomenally conscious). They have a phenomenology, a 'what it is like' to undergo them. Non-epistemic perception could be phenomenally conscious or not. Typically – for humans, at least – there is a lot of phenomenally conscious perception. The characterization of non-epistemic perception given above implies that it is phenomenally conscious (when the qualification 'phenomenally conscious' mentioned in brackets is endorsed). But one could retract from this implication, and define a kind of non-epistemic perception that need not be phenomenally conscious. We can see later whether non-phenomenal non-epistemic perception could serve our (epistemic) purposes equally well as phenomenal non-epistemic perception. For the moment, I will proceed on the assumption that non-epistemic perception is phenomenal (phenomenally conscious).

I will call the objects of non-epistemic perception 'facts.' This is meant to be quite liberal, in a broad sense. One could also speak of 'fact-like worldly items,' thus including both obtaining states of affairs or 'coarse-grained facts' and true propositions or 'fine-grained facts.' Typically, the relevant facts are facts about a concrete, middle-sized object's shape, color, texture, motion, other spatial properties, and the like.[19] They have the form of an instantiation of a property by a particular object, representable as 'a is F,' where 'a' stand for such a concrete particular and 'F' stand for one of these properties. These properties can be called 'perceptual properties,' and the corresponding facts can be called 'perceptual facts.' Thus, we can say that the relevant facts are connexes, or complexes, of concrete particulars and perceptual properties. Alternatively, we could call the objects of non-epistemic perceptions 'true propositions.' For the present purposes, it does not matter whether we choose the fact talk or the true propositions talk. Everything would depend on what conception of propositions and facts one prefers (a Russellian or a Fregean or …). And for the present purposes we do not have to decide which conception of facts and propositions is the right one. We can freely move back and forth between these two ways of talking. – Nothing really new or exciting at this point. (We will come back to the question of whether a Russellian or Fregean or… conception of propositions is more appropriate in section 6.)

[19] How far the perceptual properties and facts extend can be left open for present purposes. They may be rather restricted and fixed, or rather 'rich' and expandable. For a discussion of these alternatives see, for example, Susanna Siegel, *The Contents of Visual Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), who argues for the 'rich content view.'

3. Possession of Evidence

The phenomenon of non-epistemic perception brings up an interesting epistemological option. For one could hold that non-epistemically perceiving a fact makes it the case that this fact belongs to one's body of evidence. In other words, non-epistemic perception is (one kind of) possession of evidence. Intuitively, this is a very plausible view. Of course, knowing a fact may also be a way of possessing it as evidence. But in order to have the fact that p in one's body of evidence, it simply suffices to perceive it.[20] That is a way of being in possession of evidence, a truly perceptual way. One really has perceptual evidence if one enjoys non-epistemic perception.[21] (Remember our assumption that perception is always supposed to provide evidence by way of its content.)

An important observation about non-epistemic perception has already been mentioned in the introductory section: *Non-epistemic perception as possession of evidence is incompatible with Williamson's equation E = K.* The reason is simple and straightforward. If we can non-epistemically perceive a fact without having any belief to the effect that this fact exists, we can possess it as evidence without knowing it. Because non-epistemic perception does not entail (corresponding) belief, but knowledge does entail (corresponding) belief, non-epistemic perception does not entail knowledge of what one perceives. Therefore, it allows for possession of evidence without knowing the evidence. And the equation E = K is clearly meant to exclude this possibility.

Therefore, it is crucial to examine arguments to the effect that possession of evidence *requires belief*.[22] I will take a look at the arguments that Williamson has

[20] What's in common? – Perhaps, something like *awareness*, conceived of as a state of being properly related to a fact-like wordly item. (Awareness might be taken to be prime, in Williamson's sense.)

[21] In addition, non-epistemic perception is a way of *non-accidentally*, or *non-luckily*, being in possession of evidence. Non-lucky possession of evidence might be needed in order to get justification. In this respect, therefore, non-epistemic perception fares equally well as knowledge, arguably. But none of the following considerations will hinge on this. – In general, the view that non-epistemic perception allows for possession of evidence fits well with a view of justification as consisting in a relation to a (objective) reason.

[22] What is relevant is not merely some disposition to form the belief in question, but the actually having of it. (Dispositions to form beliefs are not sufficient for knowledge, knowledge requires actually having a belief.) And since the content of the non-epistemic perception clearly is present to the subject's mind (at least in case it is phenomenal perception), it can plausibly only be an occurrent belief.

put forward in support of the equation E = K and investigate if they provide any reason for thinking otherwise. This is the topic of the next section. (Let me add as a side remark that I find it intuitively very plausible that non-epistemic perception suffices for possession of evidence. Indeed, what else could be a better way of possessing a fact as evidence than genuine perceptual awareness of it?[23]) I will provide intuitively plausible cases of possession of evidence by non-epistemic perception within the discussion of Williamson's considerations. The rejection of Williamson's arguments and the cases go hand in hand.

4. Williamson's Arguments in Favor of Doxasticism about Possession of Evidence

Many of the arguments that Williamson has put forward in favor of the equation E=K can be accepted in the present context. Some of them concern the propositionality of evidence and the sufficiency of knowledge for possession of evidence. These arguments present no problem or objection against the proposed view. Only those arguments that concern the necessity of belief and knowledge are relevant. So what are the reasons for thinking that possession of evidence requires knowledge? I can discern two such reasons in Williamson's discussion which I will present and assess in what follows. The first reason concerns *factivity*, the second *the use of evidence as evidence*. As it will turn out soon, only the second argument concerning the use of evidence will touch upon the crucial issue directly: whether it is possible to possess evidence in the form of non-epistemic perception and, thus, without corresponding belief. I will try to show that Williamson's arguments are not successful, and I will provide cases that intuitively are cases of possession of evidence without belief.

Williamson's first reason concerns the issue of *factivity*, or the truth requirement. Possessing a proposition as evidence should be such that the proposition has to be true. Otherwise one could be in possession of a piece of

[23] There are so many authors in the literature who propose or suggest that perception provides evidence that I will refrain from providing a list of references. The idea is just too obvious. Interestingly, remember the title of one of Mark Johnston's papers: "Better than Mere Knowledge? …" (Mark Johnston, "Better than Mere Knowledge? The Function of Sensory Awareness", in *Perceptual Experience,* eds. Tamar Szabo Gendler and John Hawthorne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 260-290. However, one need not go as far as to take perceptual awareness to be *better* than knowledge; they might simply be equally good. Genuine (phenomenal) non-epistemic perception is perceptual awareness; knowledge is doxastic awareness. One could let count both forms of awareness as possession of evidence.

evidence such that a truth would be excluded by one's evidence. And that seems wrong. Or as Williamson puts it:

> That propositional evidence is knowledge entails that propositional evidence is true. That is intuitively plausible; if one's evidence included falsehoods, it would rule out some truths, by being inconsistent with them. One's evidence may make some truths improbable, but it should not exclude any outright. Although we may treat false propositions as evidence, it does not follow that they are evidence. No true proposition is inconsistent with my evidence, although I may think that it is. If e is evidence for h, then e is true.[24]

So a proposition has to be true in order to be evidence. – But this argument can clearly be accepted by the proponent of non-epistemic perception, since non-epistemic perception is factive, too. This is true on both accounts of non-epistemic perception, the conceptual as well as the non-conceptual version. Non-epistemic perception has to be veridical in order to provide evidence. Remember that we have taken the term 'perception' as referring to genuine perception, and not to perceptual experience. So there is no danger of introducing false evidence.[25]

The additional reason for thinking that evidence has to be true (mentioned by Williamson in passing) – namely, that it makes good sense of adjusting one's beliefs to the evidence, since it means adjusting them to the truth – is preserved, too.[26]

A second reason concerns the entailment of belief and the *use of evidence as evidence*. This requires a more extensive discussion. To begin with, here is what Williamson says:

> The case of perception may seem to suggest that propositional evidence is not always believed. In conformity with the previous section, a piece of perceptual evidence is, for example, a proposition e that things are *that* way. According to E

[24] Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 202.

[25] One might wonder whether *non-veridical* perceptual *experience* could provide evidence as well (by its content, not its existence). Perhaps there is a possible view according to which even perceptual illusions can provide evidence. But this would be a view quite different from the one that I am proposing here. And I am far from convinced that it would be a plausible view, since it is not easy to see why a merely represented but not obtaining state of affairs could be evidence. A version of this view is proposed by Alvin Goldman. See Alvin Goldman, "Williamson on Knowledge and Evidence," in *Williamson on Knowledge*, eds. Greenough and Pritchard, 73-91. Williamson has responded in Williamson, "Replies to Critics," in *Williamson on Knowledge*, eds. Greenough and Pritchard, 308-311, quite convincingly, in my view.

[26] See Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 202.

> = K, my evidence includes e because I know that things are that way. But, a critic may suggest, that does not go back far enough; my evidence includes e because it is perceptually apparent to me that things are that way, whether or not I believe that they are that way. Even if I do believe e, my evidence included e before I came to believe it; according to the critic, I came to believe it because it was perceptually apparent. If 'It is perceptually apparent that A' entails 'A', then the critic's view allows that evidential propositions are always true; what it denies is that they are always believed, and therefore that they are always known.[27]

First of all, it is not entirely clear what Williamson means by 'perceptual appearance,' especially if perceptual appearances are supposed to entail the truth. Is the perceptual appearance that A (if taken as entailing the truth of A) the same as perceiving that A? It might seem so. And in the opening sentence Williamson himself speaks of 'the case of perception.' But we can be careful and allow for the possibility that even truth-entailing perceptual appearance need not be genuine perception, since we can say that veridical hallucination might be a kind of – veridical – perceptual appearance without perception.[28] No matter what exactly is addressed in Williamson's argument, however, I will take it to be concerned with genuine (non-epistemic) perception, since the present proposal is simply that genuine (non-epistemic) perception provides evidence. And we would like to find out whether anything that Williamson says speaks against this proposal.

Williamson is careful to distinguish two alternatives. Undergoing a perceptual appearance the subject might be prevented from belief by 'conceptual incapacity' or not by 'conceptual incapacity' (and, presumably, by some other reason or factor).

> If my evidence includes a proposition e, then I grasp e, by section 9.5. Thus, if I fail to believe e, my problem is not conceptual incapacity.[29]

For the alternative of 'conceptual incapacity,' thus, Williamson refers back to his earlier section 9.5 where he discusses the use of evidence as evidence.

Now, the idea of 'conceptual incapacity' corresponds nicely to the view that the relevant content of perceptual experience is non-conceptual and, therefore, can be beyond the subject's conceptual capacities. For, if the perceptual appearance had a conceptual content, the subject would of course have to possess and exercise the

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[27] Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 202.

[28] For veridical hallucination and its relation to perception, see David Lewis, "Veridical Hallucination and Prosthetic Vision," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 58 (1980): 239-249.

[29] Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 202.

relevant concepts, and then one could hardly see how she could be conceptually incapable of forming the corresponding belief. All that the subject is not doing is assenting to the content, and that is not a conceptual incapacity. The other alternative is that the subject does not suffer from conceptual incapacity. This is clearly so if the perceptual appearance has conceptual content. So in the following, I will proceed on the assumption that the two alternatives 'conceptual incapacity/no conceptual incapacity' correspond to the two alternatives 'non-conceptual/conceptual content of non-epistemic perception.' In any case, these two alternatives have to be considered in order to decide whether the idea that non-epistemic perception provides evidence has to face any serious problem.

Williamson's objection against the first option ('conceptual incapacity') is that *it violates the condition of grasp*: any evidence possessed must be grasped by the subject. The reason for making grasp a necessary condition consists in the role of evidence as that which is *used as evidence*:

> Since S can use S's evidence as evidence, only propositions which S grasps are S's evidence.[30]

Clearly, Williamson identifies the relevant kind of grasp with belief and, thus, with conceptual grasp (at least, on the standard assumption that beliefs are conceptual representations). But why should we think that a subject can use her evidence as evidence only if she believes and conceptually grasps it?

One might have worries about whether possession of evidence really requires being able to use one's evidence as evidence. But let us grant this. It does sound plausible anyway. And, as we will see, it can be accepted by the proposed view. So let us ask whether using one's evidence as evidence requires belief. This is then the final question on which the issue of doxasticism about possession of evidence hinges.

It seems that there are cases in which one uses one's evidence in a way that does not require believing the evidence. Most importantly, one can navigate in rooms and on sideways, for example, on the basis of perception. Plausibly, one's non-epistemic perception (of there being a table-shaped object in front of oneself, for example) often provides the evidence for which movement to make next (to circumvent the object, for example). The only belief that is formed is the *instrumental belief* that circumventing the object is a suitable means to get to the other side. One need not form the further belief that there is a table-shaped object

[30] Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 200.

in front of one; non-epistemically seeing that there is a table-shaped object in front of one is good enough. Cases of this kind are especially compelling if the shape of the object is unfamiliar and conceptual classification of the entire object (in contrast to its contour elements) is hard. Non-epistemically seeing its shape is still easily possible and is good enough for justifying the instrumental belief. The cases can thus be very elegantly and plausible dealt with on the proposed account, and thus favor it. (In addition, if the content of the non-epistemic perception is *non-conceptual*, no conceptual classification of the object is required. Yet one can still arrive at the justified instrumental belief that circumventing the object is the suitable means for realizing one's prior intention. What one perceives is good enough evidence for the instrumental belief and it need not be the object of a belief.) In a sense, then, non-epistemic perception of evidence can guide action in a way that makes believing the evidence unnecessary.[31]

For another kind of case, consider an expert for football who might just see when it is the right moment for a player to pass the ball on to some other player. The expert's (non-epistemic) perception immediately provides the evidence for the judgment that *now* is the right moment for passing the ball. The expert need not infer this judgment from beliefs about the particular constellation of players on the field. She can base her judgment directly on her non-epistemic perception of it.

Considering such cases, an important worry arises. It seems that Williamson's reasoning – for his claim that using evidence requires conceptual grasp of the evidence – relies on an implicit restriction. What Williamson seems to have in mind is the use of evidence *in certain kinds of reasoning or inference*, such as, for example, inference to the best explanation, explicitly probabilistic reasonings, or the ruling out of hypotheses.[32] Understood in this way, we are restricting ourselves to reasoning (or inference), and very plausibly (just by its nature or quasi-definition) reasoning requires beliefs as premises.[33] So using one's

[31] Furthermore, non-epistemic perception might also constitute possession of *practical reasons*. What one sees non-epistemically could also be a practical reason for acting in a certain, e.g., when one sees someone stumbling and immediately forms the intention to grab and hold the person in order to prevent her from falling. The person's movement (non-epistemically perceived) are good practical reasons for one to do this. Believing that the person is stumbling is not necessary.

[32] These three kinds of reasoning are carved out by Williamson as the main 'theoretical functions' of evidence (see Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits,* 194).

[33] For example, Williamson writes that "in choosing between hypotheses in those ways [i.e., by inference to the best explanation, probabilistic confirmation, or ruling out] we can use only

evidence in a certain kind of reasoning requires believing the evidence, but only almost trivially so, since reasoning (or inference) is, by its nature (or quasi-definition), a transition from beliefs to a conclusion (some other belief). So we get the following two possibilities. Either the use condition is restricted to use in reasoning, and then it does require belief, but simply because of the nature (or quasi-definition) of reasoning; or the use condition is not so restricted, and then it seems possible and plausible that one can use one's evidence as evidence even if it is not the object of any of one's beliefs. On either possibility there is no threat to the proponent of non-conceptual content in non-epistemic perception, since she can claim that the evidence that one possesses 'merely' perceptually can be used as evidence in forming judgments and beliefs (and in acting). Indeed, at this point she could say that a major use of evidence possessed in the form of non-epistemic perception lies exactly in making judgments and forming beliefs *directly* on the basis of perception.[34] Direct perceptual belief formation is a paradigm case of using perceptual evidence, and it does not require conceptual grasp of the facts that one perceives.[35] (Therefore, we do not have to look at special or even esoteric cases, such as an expert for football mentioned above. Very ordinary cases of perceptual beliefs can be considered here as well.)

Let us investigate if we could defend Williamson's view by appeal to background knowledge.[36] Consider the case where an ordinary subject, Kim, is confronted with a typical tiger and clearly sees the tiger. Kim comes to judge (and know) that there is a tiger in front of her. What is her evidence? One could think that she bases her judgment on her background knowledge that tigers have black-

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propositions which we grasp. In those respects, any evidence other than propositions which we grasp would be impotent." (see Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 197) And he writes, in his response to Goldman: "Without any sort of access constraint at all, evidence cannot play its distinctive role." (Williamson, "Replies to Critics," 311) – But there is use and use: use in the form of reasoning, and use which does not involve reasoning but is different and more direct.

[34] Reasoning – be it explicit/conscious or implicit/unconscious – always starts from (background) beliefs. According to the proposed view, direct perceptual knowledge does not involve reasoning, but takes non-epistemic perception (presenting perceptual evidence) as its input.

[35] It does not even require a demonstrative-indexical conceptual grasp of the facts that one perceives. We can accept that, as Williamson argues, we can conceptually grasp shapes that we perceive non-conceptually, for example, in a demonstrative-indexical way, at least normally. Even if so, we typically use our perceptual evidence immediately, without forming a demonstrative belief in the first place, and we need not form any such belief.

[36] Thanks to an anonymous referee for drawing my attention to this possibility.

and-yellow stripes and a cat-shape. (In order to simplify the description, let us suppose that this is the only relevant background knowledge. A more realistic, more complicated propositional content would not change the situation in principle.) But surely, this will not suffice. In addition, Kim needs some further evidence, something like the evidence that *this* is a black-and-yellow striped and cat-shaped object (where the "this" refers to the perceived object in a demonstrative way). Call this the 'situational evidence' (since it concerns a fact that belongs to the particular situation the subject is in and not any general, context-independent facts). Then, plausibly, Kim might believe and know the situational evidence. And the situational evidence *together with her background knowledge* could lead her to judge that there is a tiger in front of her.

Now, of course, Kim *might* arrive at her judgment in this way. She *might* make this judgment based on her belief about the situational evidence and her background knowledge. This is clearly possible. But it is by no means plausible to think that she *has to* arrive at the judgment in this inferential way. There is an alternative, more direct way in which the situational evidence could be used. Kim could simply (non-epistemically) perceive the situational evidence and judge directly on the basis of her perception. The application of her concept of a tiger can be triggered directly by her non-epistemic perception of the situational evidence, without any background belief about black-and-yellow stripes mediating and entering in an inferential chain. The situational evidence is possessed by perception, and it is used immediately in perceptional recognition in which the concept of a tiger is applied. (Incidentally, then, background knowledge of general facts like 'all tigers are black-and-yellow striped and cat-shaped' is not needed. When it comes to the most basic level of immediate perceptual recognition, no background knowledge of general criteria is required. We simply perceptually recognize objects as being of certain kinds. What replaces the (background) knowledge is the skill or ability to accurately apply the concept on the basis of situational evidence presented in perception.) Similarly, in the case of the football players, the expert's judgment that *now* is the right moment for passing the ball is directly based on his non-epistemic perception of the two players' positions, speeds, and directions (the situational evidence). The expert need not believe or know that the players have these positions, speeds, and directions.

Another possibility for Williamson might be to drop appeal to background knowledge and to insist on immediate knowledge of the situational evidence. The subject always has to believe and immediately know that this is a so-and-so object

(that this is a black-and-yellow and cat-shaped object, for example). But there is no advantage to positing such situational knowledge over and above non-epistemic perception. Non-epistemic perception of the situational evidence can do the same evidential job. And it is already there anyway. (To deny that we often or typically non-epistemically perceive the situational evidence would be very implausible. Surely we ordinarily perceive the colors, shapes, positions etc. of objects in our environment. Williamson should not deny this.) So the proposed view is more parsimonious and more plausible. And Williamson has not provided any reason for preferring his doxastic view.

In the end, it seems that Williamson's reasoning is quite question begging against the proponent of non-epistemic perception with non-conceptual content. By rationally forming beliefs on the basis of perceiving facts we can use the evidence provided by perception *directly*. To say that evidence can only be used if it is the object of belief amounts to an outright rejection of this important possibility of evidence digestion. Indeed, this possibility might be the highway to (empirical, *prima facie*) foundational justification.

So far, we have only considered the first of the two alternatives 'conceptual incapacity/no conceptual incapacity' (corresponding to the two alternatives 'non-conceptual/conceptual content of non-epistemic perception'). Let us now take a look at the second alternative.

Suppose that the non-epistemic perception of the subject has the *conceptual* content that p (and no non-conceptual content, or any such non-conceptual content is taken to be irrelevant). And suppose that the subject is in a position to know that p. She only would have to endorse the proposition that p on the basis of her perception, as it were, in order to arrive at the knowledge that p. Then Williamson describes this case as a case of *potential* possession of evidence. And he comments that this would "not differ radically" from the opposing view.[37] What according to the proposed view is 'possession of evidence,' is 'potential possession of evidence' according to Williamson.[38]

[37] Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 202.

[38] The same move is made by Williamson in response to an objection by Kvanvig in John Kvanvig, "Assertion, Knowledge, and Lotteries", in *Williamson on Knowledge*, 140-160. See Williamson, "Replies to Critics," 347.

There is, however, a significant difference between the two views.[39] Williamson describes it by bringing up a case, and he argues for the superiority of his view:

> [S]uppose that I am in a position to know any one of the propositions p1, …, pn without being in a position to know all of them; there is a limit to how many things I can attend to at once. Suppose that in fact I know p1 and do not know p2, …, pn. According to E = K, my evidence includes only p1; according to the critic, it includes p1, …, pn. Let q be a proposition which is highly probable given p1, …, pn together, but highly improbable given any proper subset of them; the rest of my evidence is irrelevant to q. According to E = K, q is highly improbable on my evidence. According to the critic, q is highly probable on my evidence. E = K gives the more plausible verdict, because the high probability of q depends on an evidence set to which as a whole I have no access.[40]

Let us first mention two worries in order to set them aside. One worry here might be that it is not entirely clear what it means to have access to an evidence set "*as a whole*." But let us put this worry to one side, and rest content with an intuitive understanding. A second worry to be left aside concerns the coherence, or incoherence, of the scenario that Williamson presents. One may wonder whether it is really conceivable that a subject is in a position to know any proper subset of n propositions without being in a position to know all of them. Williamson's mentioning of *limits of attention* might seem especially problematic here. Belief, in the sense relevant here, need not be manifest or conscious, I take it, and so it is not governed by attentional limits which may (plausibly) restrict one's manifest or conscious beliefs (thoughts or judgments, if you like).[41] But let us put this worry to

[39] Goldman, "Williamson on Knowledge and Evidence," complains that we should keep a distinction between actual and potential possession of evidence and, thus, that there remains a significant difference between the two views under consideration. A person who is merely in potential possession of evidence is not justified to believe what the evidence supports, whereas a person who is in actual possession of it is so justified. So the two views will yield different verdicts on the status of (propositional) justification. Therefore, there is a significant difference and not just a verbal or terminological variation. But as I understand Williamson, he is not denying that there is a significant difference between the two views. He just points out that there is no "*radical*" difference. And he goes on and describes the difference, and he argues for the superiority of his view. This further argument is addressed in what follows.

[40] Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 203.

[41] This has been argued convincingly by Quassim Cassam, for example. See Quassim Cassam, "Judging, Believing and Thinking," *Philosophical Issues* 20, 1 (2010): 80-95.

one side, too.[42] Then, there is still a problem with Williamson's argument here. For the reason which he gives for the superiority of his view is not a good one.

One might be surprised to see Williamson bringing up an *access* requirement at this point (in the last sentence of the quote).[43] What does possession of evidence have to do with access to evidence? We have already seen that evidence can be used even if not believed (when considering the case of non-conceptual content). In which sense then do we have to have 'access' to our evidence set in order for it to 'really count'? If there is a serious access requirement, this should be spelled out quite explicitly, and it should be clarified if it goes beyond the use-as-evidence requirement discussed above.[44]

Now, the very same problem as the one mentioned above, concerning evidence and reasoning, seems to recur. Given the case as described we may grant that *my reasoning* is informed only by p1, and so the only evidence *within the scope of my reasoning* is p1. So on the basis of *reasoning* I can only come to rationally conclude that non-q (since q is made highly improbable by p1). As the case is constructed, there is no reasoning available to me which could lead me to rationally infer that q. But does this mean that I am not in possession of evidence which supports q? The access that Williamson appeals to seems to be an *access to reasoning* which, simply by its nature, requires belief. Williamson seems to (implicitly) argue that access requires availability to (certain forms of) reasoning, and since plausibly reasoning starts with beliefs, beliefs with the evidence as their contents is required. But availability to reasoning is not the only form of accessibility of evidence. Its availability to direct (noninferential) concept application in perceptual recognition can also be properly classified as accessibility.

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[42] What's lurking in the background here is the rather delicate question whether possession of evidence is essentially tied to consciousness. Can all knowledge count as possession of evidence, even pieces of knowledge that are deeply buried and cannot be relatively easily brought to consciousness? Replacing knowledge by *awareness* is what these cases suggests, and what sounds like an attractive option on independent grounds. But of course, this is a further point that requires much more investigation.

[43] Such a surprise has been expressed by Goldman. See Goldman, "Williamson on Knowledge and Evidence," 89-90.

[44] It is to be noted that Williamson's access requirement is not a higher-order requirement and concerns access to the evidence itself, not to the proposition that a certain proposition belongs to one's evidence (i.e., a higher-order proposition). This has been pointed out by Williamson in his reply to Goldman, "Williamson on Knowledge and Evidence." See Williamson, "Replies to Critics," 311.

There is no reason to put up a requirement to the effect that all the evidence one possesses must be used in reasoning. Again, we can think of one's 'access' to, or use of, one's evidence as being *direct* and *unmediated* by belief. Exploiting the evidence that one possesses in the form of (non-epistemic) perception does not require that one transform it into objects of belief. If one *directly* forms the belief that q on the basis of non-epistemically perceiving p1, …, pn, this constitutes a direct, non-reasoning route to the belief that q. Such a route is good enough in order to make one's evidence 'accessible.' Indeed, and again, it seems that non-reasoning routes of belief formation are quite far-spread and important, and nothing exotic or exceptional.

In order to illustrate the immediate use of, or access to, one's evidence provided by perception, we can consider certain quite ordinary cases. An immediate use of, or access to, one's evidence is also possible in cases exhibiting a similar structure to Williamson's case, i.e., of multiple facts which are not (simultaneously) believed. For example, a well-trained chess player may be able to justifiedly believe that the king is checkmated just by looking and (non-epistemically) perceiving the relevant positions of the various figures on the chess board. She may not be able to form all of the corresponding beliefs about the relevant positions (perhaps, simply because of lack of time). But these facts about the relevant positions are perceived, nevertheless, and the person uses what she perceives as evidence when forming the belief that the king is checkmated. Intuitively, she might thereby come to justifiedly believe that the king is checkmated. In such a case we could speak of justified belief acquired *directly* on the basis of perceptual evidence, and not by means of some reasoning which takes certain beliefs as inputs.[45] Rather, the input is the non-epistemic perception, and it is directly used in belief formation.[46] Furthermore, such immediate ways of using

[45] Again, the alternative that the subject relies on *background knowledge* of certain general facts is not promising since situational evidence is needed in addition. What background knowledge is supposed to accomplish is rather attained through skillful application of concepts in response to evidence given in perception.

[46] Of course, a certain amount of conceptual skill will be needed for the step from (non-epistemic) perception to justified belief. But this is not what is controversial in the present context. Williamson accepts such an element of conceptual skill or competence. See Timothy Williamson, *The Philosophy of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 168; Timothy Williamson, "How Deep Is the Distinction between A Posteriori and A Priori Knowledge?" in *The A Priori in Philosophy*, eds. Albert Casullo and Joshua C. Thurow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 291-312.

perceptual evidence are nothing esoteric or uncommon. Quite the contrary, it seems that there are many situations in which we can use what we perceive as evidence for belief formation, and what we perceive is a whole constellation or configuration of (perceptual) facts which we need not grasp individually in the form of beliefs. Again, direct belief formation on the basis of perception seems to be the rule rather than the exception. By a quick glance we can take in many facts at once, and there is no need for forming the corresponding beliefs (and to apply some form of reasoning) in order to be justified to believe a certain proposition about the situation 'as a whole.'

To give a second and, perhaps, more ordinary example exhibiting a similar structure, suppose that Alina sees a zebra in clear view. She undergoes genuine perception of the Zebra. Her genuine perception specifies a color pattern and a shape (property instantiations, if you like). Let's call them the 'Zebra color pattern' and the 'Zebra shape pattern.' These two can be conceived of as two complex states of affairs involving the same object (or instantiations of sensible profiles, as Johnston would put it) that are pieces of evidence for the proposition that there is a Zebra. Typically, Alina can simultaneously digest both pieces of evidence, the Zebra color pattern and the Zebra shape pattern. (At least, this is clearly so if her perception is phenomenally conscious. If it is not phenomenally conscious, it is perhaps not so clear.) We may stipulate that each piece of evidence does not make it very likely that q (that there is a Zebra), but both pieces of evidence together make it very likely.[47] Intuitively, when Alina forms the *non-inferential* perceptual belief that there is a Zebra in the normal, ordinary, or typical way (normal, ordinary, or typical for human beings which have some familiarity with Zebras and their looks and which have sufficient perceptual recognitional abilities associated with the concept of a Zebra), she comes to know that there is a Zebra. Or at least, that q will be highly likely on Alina's evidence. But according to Williamson's view, it would not be highly likely on Alina's evidence unless she digested the two pieces of evidence individually by forming the two corresponding

[47] If we split up the Zebra color pattern and the Zebra shape pattern into more detailed states of affairs, which is surely possible given that perception often has a very detailed content, we will get a high number of pieces of evidence and the case might approach Williamson's schematic example very much, structurally, to the point of becoming a real life example. Of course, the example differs from Williamson in that each piece of evidence does not make it improbable that q; rather it makes it a bit probable but not much. This difference, however, should not matter, since all we need is a case in which one can use evidence without the evidence being the object of belief.

beliefs (and acquiring the two corresponding pieces of knowledge) – which she might not be able to do – and then reasoned her way to the knowledge that there is a Zebra. This is a counterintuitive result, I submit. Intuitively, the proposition that q is highly likely on the evidence that Alina possesses. Non-inferential perceptual knowledge is possible on the basis of *simultaneous* genuine perception of *several* pieces of evidence without conceptually digesting each particular bit of evidence separately and simultaneously.

We can therefore accept Williamson's demand of 'access,' at least in a certain and interesting sense. (In this sense it does not go beyond the use-as-evidence requirement.) Put simply, the *direct* use of multiple pieces of simultaneous evidence provided by non-epistemic perception in non-inferential belief formation is an access, and *is all the access we need*. Unless Williamson provides reason for a further, stronger access requirement, his considerations do not tell against the alternative view.[48]

I conclude that Williamson has not presented any convincing argument for the necessity of belief that excludes the idea of non-epistemic perception as providing evidence – no matter whether its content is conceptual or non-conceptual. In addition, we have seen along the way that there are convincing examples of non-doxastic possession of evidence in non-epistemic perception.

Generally speaking, Williamson's view can be seen as a classical, *doxastic* version of the responding-to-evidence view of justification: epistemic justification is essentially related to *responding properly to one's evidence*, and this requires a *doxastic* grasp of the evidence. The alternative, *non-doxastic*, and more liberal view that I am proposing is that justification is indeed essentially related to *responding to evidence* but allows for responding to evidence via *non*-doxastic states of awareness. (To deny the justification-evidence relation would be more radical and is not preferable, I believe.) Note that I am not proposing to go as far as to accept a mere evidence *tracking* conception, discussed by Karen Jones, for

[48] In contrast to this reply to Williamson's argument, Goldman's reply consists in rejecting the access requirement. In effect, Goldman straightforwardly denies that a subject must have access to his or her evidence 'as a whole:' "It could still be one's evidence even if one does not have access to all of it." (Goldman, "Williamson on Knowledge and Evidence," 90) In contrast, I want to accept a kind of access (use) requirement and to show, at the same time, that non-epistemic perception can satisfy it. – A further difference, already mentioned above, between the proposed view and Goldman's proposal is that Goldman does not accept the veridicality, or factivity, of evidence. See Goldman, "Williamson on Knowledge and Evidence," 88-89. According to Goldman, even non-veridical perceptual experiences can provide evidence.

example.[49] However, I am open to the possibility of (non-doxastic, non-conceptual) responding to evidence via emotional awareness.

5. Brueckner's Worry

It is instructive to compare the present problem with a worry about Williamson's epistemology that Anthony Brueckner has voiced recently.[50] As I understand it, Brueckner's worry concerns the *acquisition question*: How do we acquire perceptual knowledge and/or justification? And how do we acquire evidence? Brueckner's basic intuition seems to be that *perception* must provide the answer to these questions, at least as long as empirical justification, empirical knowledge, and empirical evidence are at stake. But Williamson cannot say that, Brueckner claims. All that Williamson can say is that we get into possession of perceptual evidence (and acquire perceptual justification) by acquiring knowledge. This is so simply because, according to Williamson, E = K, and thus getting into possession of evidence is nothing else but acquiring knowledge. The acquisition question, therefore, gets a more or less trivial, uninformative answer: we acquire (basic empirical) evidence by acquiring (basic empirical) knowledge. But then, the answer to the question of how we acquire knowledge cannot be that we acquire knowledge by acquiring (suitable) evidence or justification. For we cannot have it both ways at the same time. Either we can acquire evidence without already having to know it, and then we can give an informative account of how we acquire knowledge (namely, by first acquiring evidence and then using it in the right way). Or the equation E = K holds, and then we cannot give any informative account of the acquisition of perceptual knowledge, since perception is doing both at the same time: it brings us into possession of evidence and it lets us acquire perceptual knowledge. – This is what Williamson has to say about the acquisition question, according to Brueckner.

I will not try to assess the merits of Brueckner's argument here.[51] I have only mentioned it here in order to point out that it is significantly different from the

[49] Karen Jones, "Emotion, Weakness of Will, and the Normative Conception of Agency," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* (2003): 181-200.

[50] Anthony Brueckner, "E = K and Perceptual Knowledge," in *Williamson on Knowledge*, 5-11. Williamson has responded to Brueckner in Williamson, "Replies to Critics," 282-284.

[51] Basically, Brueckner's worry is about knowledge-first, it seems to me. Brueckner intuitively rejects knowledge-first epistemology because of its not allowing us to explain perceptual knowledge in a certain way.

challenge that I have tried to present. *The challenge of non-epistemic perception is not concerned with the acquisition question*. Perhaps, Williamson has a problem with answering the acquisition question. But if so, it is a different problem. The challenge I wanted to present does not have to do with the process of acquiring perceptual evidence, justification or knowledge, or with explaining how we acquire perceptual evidence, justification, or knowledge, at least not directly. It is concerned with the question of *what constitutes possession of evidence* and, more particularly, with whether possession of evidence requires belief.

Having said that, the following interesting point can be added. If the alternative view that I have proposed is correct, it might open up a way of answering the acquisition question in an interesting, informative way, too. Roughly speaking, the answer would be the following one. By non-epistemically perceiving the fact that p one acquires the (true) proposition p as evidence (without knowing it). Since, plausibly and arguably, evidence is constitutively connected to justification, this amounts to acquiring perceptual (propositional) *prima facie* justification for the belief that p. Forming the belief that p by properly basing it on one's non-epistemic perception then can lead to the acquisition of the (*prima facie*) justified belief that p (doxastic justification). And if the evidence is strong enough, this might amount to knowledge. One knows since one believes for a sufficiently strong piece of perceptual evidence. Or so the proposal goes.[52]

The details have to be filled in, to be sure. But there does seem to be a way of answering the acquisition question in an interesting, informative way if the alternative view proposed here is correct. This might be a further advantage of the proposed view. But even if so, it is not the advantage that I have been trying to advertise.

6. A Problem about Facts as Evidence?

Let us conclude by a second look at the issue of what conception of facts and propositions we can or should rely on.

One might wonder whether the following consideration does not amount to a serious objection, in defense of Williamson's view. We have said that *facts* are the entities which are (non-epistemically) perceived. But evidence, it seems, is always *propositional* – as Williamson has argued. And by 'propositional' we here mean not just anything which is a connex, or complex, of a concrete object and a

[52] Just to be frank about it: the proposed view is also not in line with knowledge-first.

perceptual property, but really something *conceptual* – something sufficiently similar to Fregean thoughts, incorporating modes of presentation in one way or another. Russellian propositions, consisting of connexes of concrete objects and perceptual properties and lacking any modes of presentation, are not good enough. Furthermore, evidence must be propositional (in this sense), since it is what one can use in one's *doxastic deliberation*. If the proposition that p belongs to one's evidence, one can use it in deciding questions about whether so-and-so is the case or not.[53] But this role cannot be played by Russellian propositions that are the objects of (non-epistemic) perception. So we need true, conceptual propositions.

In essence, the objection amounts to a plea for conceptuality. The representational contents of perceptions have to be conceptual in order to qualify as genuine possession of evidence.

Fortunately, we do not have to decide the issue of conceptuality here. It is important to note that we can grant to the objector that non-epistemic perception has conceptual content and no non-conceptual content. Even if this is the case, non-epistemic perception is still a threat to Williamson's equation E = K. All that we need is the fact that non-epistemic perception is non-doxastic: one can perceive that p without believing that p. Whether the representational content of non-epistemic perception is (entirely) conceptual or not does not matter. As soon as we acknowledge that one can non-epistemically perceive a fact (the fact that p, say), the question arises whether such a perception cannot be sufficient for possessing the true proposition that p as a piece of evidence. And if so, it is clear that E = K is refuted, since knowledge entails corresponding belief.

How about the role of doxastic deliberation? – Here, again, we have to recognize that the use of the evidence in one's possession can take different forms. If in doxastic deliberation one is engaged in a form of *reasoning*, it might very well be that nothing less than conceptual content and belief is required. But if evidence can be used directly and without the mediation of belief, then non-epistemic perception is good enough. (Whether such a use of evidence counts as deciding a question in doxastic deliberation or not seems to be a merely terminological issue. Even if it does not, this would not be an objection.)

But let us take a quick look at the other version of the view, i.e., the version according to which non-epistemic perception has *non*-conceptual content. Would this undermine the idea that we can non-epistemically perceive and, thus, possess

[53] For doxastic deliberation, see Nishi Shah and J. David Velleman, "Doxastic Deliberation," *The Philosophical Review* 114, 4 (2005): 497-534, for example.

evidence? – I submit that the answer is No. To justify this answer would require a longer argument than I can offer here. Suffice it to indicate the argument by saying the following. Doxastic justification is essentially tied to rationality since one needs to rationally respond to the evidence that perception provides if one is to arrive at a justified belief. But this does not mean or imply that only conceptual content enters into the scope of rationality. To react in a certain way (by forming a certain belief) to a *non*-conceptual content, as represented by one's non-epistemic perception, can also be an important kind of rational belief formation (and it can amount to acquiring a justified belief).[54] Perceptual experience can play a rational role even if it has non-conceptual content.[55] One can be in possession of a reason without grasping it conceptually. In this sense the realm of reasons extends beyond the realm of concepts. – Ultimately, I believe, this is the right view to take. But for the purposes of the present argument against the equation E = K it is not needed. At heart, what is needed for this argument is just the fact that non-epistemic perception is non-doxastic.

7. Conclusion

This paper is concerned with integrating non-epistemic perception into our picture of how we are related to evidence. According to a doxastic view (of which Williamson is a representative), we always need to grasp the evidence in the form of beliefs. Therefore, non-epistemic perception cannot count as possession of evidence. But many (quite ordinary) cases are plausibly interpreted as cases in which the subject does have perceptual evidence and uses it without grasping it in the form of beliefs. Perceptual recognition of objects (such as tigers, zebras, or constellations of objects or persons) as being of certain kinds is an important form of using evidence given to one in the form of non-epistemic perception. Therefore, the doxastic view of evidence possession should be given up and replaced by a more liberal, non-doxastic view.[56]

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[54] Williamson has spelled out his view of rationality, justification, and their relation to epistemic norms in Williamson (forthcoming).

[55] One interesting way of understanding this rational role has been spelled out quite ingeniously by Fred Dretske in Fred Dretske, "Perception without Awareness," in *Perceptual Experience*, 147-80.

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