

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Two dogmas of empirical justification

Jack C. Lyons

University of Glasgow

Correspondence

Jack C. Lyons, University of Glasgow.

Email: Jack.Lyons@glasgow.ac.uk

Abstract

Nearly everyone agrees that perception gives us justification and knowledge, and a great number of epistemologists endorse a particular two-part view about how this happens. That view is that perceptual beliefs get their justification from perceptual experiences, and that they do so by being based on them. Despite the wide acceptance of these two views, I think that neither has very much going for it; on the contrary, there's good reason not to believe either one of them.

It is uncontroversial that perception gives us knowledge and justification. It is widely believed, though rarely or never argued in any detail, that this comes about in a particular way: namely, that some beliefs are justified in virtue of being *based on perceptual experiences*. It is useful to separate this received orthodoxy into two distinct but connected theses: (a) that “empirical beliefs” get their justification from perceptual experiences, and (b) that they do so by being *based* on these experiences, in something like the way inferential beliefs are based on premise beliefs. The first dogma is, if you like, concerned with propositional justification and the second with doxastic justification. In different jargon, the first concerns the role of experiences as *reasons*, the second as *causes*. Any view that conjoins these two claims I'll call “experientialism.”

Despite the absence of arguments for these views—or perhaps partly because of it—they are very widely assumed in epistemology. The best-known dissenters are Sellars (1956) and Davidson (1986), who argue against the first dogma, the latter famously concluding that experiences are mere causes and not reasons. There's no shortage of critiques of these arguments, but such critiques do not constitute positive evidence that experiences really do serve as reasons. The second dogma—roughly, that experiences are at least causes—is broadly assumed, by both friends and foes of the first dogma. To my knowledge, no one has ever really bothered to argue for it. Most epistemologists seem to think both dogmas are pretty obviously true and not in need of serious,

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited and is not used for commercial purposes.

© 2020 The Authors. *Philosophical Issues* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC

positive argument. I think that neither dogma is at all obvious, and in fact, there is much reason to doubt both of them.

I've argued against experientialism before,¹ but I don't think I've won many converts. I'm going to try here one last time. Some of the argumentation will be reminiscent of earlier work, but the overall strategy is importantly different. My current arguments against the first dogma, (a), will be much more direct, streamlined, and atheoretical than my previous efforts, which were embedded in an attempt to understand the nature of perceptual experience. I want to see if setting aside this explanatory ambition makes the anti-dogmatic argument more stark and more convincing. In addition, the current argument bears no traces of Davidson or Sellars, similarity to which might have led readers to think they'd already seen—and refuted—my earlier arguments. Unlike my previous attempts, the argument this time will be entirely a priori. The second dogma, (b), is something I've discussed before, but only very briefly. The arguments developed here against (b) are entirely new, as far as I know.

I start in section 1 by trying to get clear on some central terms and concepts. In section 2, I discuss the first dogma, suggesting that experiences are inadequate for the propositional justification of empirical beliefs. In section 3, I turn to the second dogma, arguing that three lines of empirical inquiry cast doubt on the claim that empirical beliefs are dependent on experiences in the way relevant to basing and doxastic justification. In sections 4 and 5 I consider two possible responses to the arguments of section 3. I briefly conclude in section 6.

I think both dogmas are probably false, but that's not quite what I'm arguing here. The point of calling them dogmas (rather than, say, *lies*) is simply that we don't have any good reason to believe them. My current ambitions will be fully satisfied if I can lead readers to agnosticism about the dogmas.

1 | CLARIFYING THE DOGMAS

It will be helpful to clarify some issues up front, since terminology varies.

Talk about experiences is, as I understand it, talk about certain kinds of conscious mental states or events. The ones we're currently interested in are perceptual states or events, but there might be other kinds of experience as well (intellectual, mnemonic, emotional, etc.). I will assume that experiences are nonfactive—that, e.g., you can have an experience as of red even though there's nothing red in your environment—although some theorists hold that only the veridical ones grant (full) justification.² Importantly, experiences are always to be understood as nondoxastic: no experience is also a belief.

The assumption that experiences justify beliefs is held by a range of theorists who otherwise disagree deeply about important matters of epistemology. Some (including so-called “modest foundationalists”) hold that experiences directly justify beliefs about things and properties in the external world.³ A much older view (“classical foundationalism”) insists that they only directly justify beliefs about one's own mental states, and that beliefs about the external world are indirectly, inferentially, justified by these.⁴ Modest foundationalism has largely supplanted classical foundationalism as the dominant epistemology, the latter being widely deemed hyper-intellectualist, requiring too much cognitive sophistication on the part of the perceiver (an issue I return to below). It is natural to describe the justificandum beliefs for the modest foundationalist as “perceptual beliefs” and for the classical foundationalist as “introspective beliefs,” since the former beliefs are about the world and the latter about one's own mental states; I'll refer to both inclusively as “empirical beliefs.” This will allow the discussion to stay neutral between the two views.

It's not only foundationalists who hold that experiences justify beliefs; "nondoxastic coherentists" hold that justification arises from coherence but—contrary to traditional coherentism a la BonJour (1985) and Lehrer (1990)—the coherence relation is defined partly over experiences and not just beliefs.⁵

The first dogma is concerned with propositional justification: what experiences you're having determines what propositions it's appropriate for you to believe. The second dogma is about doxastic justification. Central to this is the idea of *basing*: the view isn't simply that experiences justify empirical beliefs, but that they do so in a particular way: they serve as the agent's *grounds*, or *evidence*, or *reasons* for the empirical belief. (These italicized terms are fraught, of course, and sometimes used in different ways.) Basing is (at least for those beliefs that depend on reasons or evidence) what makes the difference between propositional and doxastic justification.⁶ This makes empirical justification quasi-inferential; believing *p* on the basis of an experience is at least something like believing *p* on the basis of an inference from another belief, in that the experience is to the belief—as the slogan goes—both reason and cause.

The precise nature of the basing relation is a difficult issue, partly because of wildly divergent intuitions concerning Lehrer's (1971) case of the superstitious lawyer, which purportedly shows that no causal or counterfactual relation is needed for basing. I won't try to defend it here, but in what follows I will assume that whatever basing is, it does (pace Lehrer) require that the belief bear some psychological *dependence* relation to the basis, and I'll understand the second dogma accordingly.⁷

Finally, I have stated the dogmas as generics, rather than as generalizations with explicit quantifiers, partly because I want to be very inclusive about who counts as endorsing experientialism. However, I take the experientialist to be committed to *at least* the claim that in *common*, or *normal*, or *paradigmatic* cases of empirical belief, the belief is based on and justified by an experience. This will be especially important in section 3, where my argument is empirical. An empirical argument couldn't show that it's logically impossible for empirical beliefs to be based on experiences. But it's not intended to; it's intended to show that some (many) empirical beliefs aren't and, more importantly, that there's no good reason to think that *any* empirical beliefs *are* based on experiences.

2 | AGAINST THE FIRST DOGMA

According to the first dogma, having a perceptual experience as of *x*'s being *F* justifies, as we might call it, an *F*-ness-related empirical belief: a belief either that *x* is *F* (if it's a perceptual belief) or that the subject is having an experience as of *x*'s being *F* (if it's an introspective belief). I mean for *F* to range over the kinds of properties common sense holds to be standardly attributed in perceptual judgment: *red*, *round*, *nearby*, *furry*, perhaps *horse*, *car*, etc. as well, although there will be debates about exactly which properties are included. The first dogma is compatible with the claim that other enabling factors besides experience (e.g., reliability, or higher-order beliefs about reliability) are also needed for the justification of empirical beliefs.

This view founders on cases of novel or otherwise unfamiliar experience. Consider Frank Jackson's (1982) famous case of Mary, who sees red for the first time. (What matters for us now is not Mary's scientific knowledge but just the fact that she's having color experiences for the first time.) Intuitively, Mary would have no idea that it's *red* she's seeing (absent contextual cues), which means that she isn't justified in believing either that she's seeing something red or that she's having an experience as of something's being red. That is, Mary isn't propositionally justified in redness-related empirical beliefs, and should she happen to somehow pick a redness-related empirical

belief and base it on her experience of red, she wouldn't be doxastically justified. Mary's experience of red might justify the belief that she's having an experience, and maybe certain beliefs about that experience, but it won't justify her in any *redness*-related beliefs.⁸ Hence, on the face of it, the first dogma is false.

One might insist that Mary really is justified in her redness-related beliefs. If it were that easy, Jackson's original argument shouldn't have gotten so much attention: she'd have already known what it was like to see red. Anyhow, in the current version, Mary needn't be a superscientist, which makes it all the more obvious that she's not justified in any redness-related beliefs.

Would it help if we added in some reliability? It shouldn't, at least not for those who are moved by clairvoyance-type objections to externalism. Mary might in fact be getting it right consistently, having (for no good reason) connected that particular experience with the concept of red; but from her perspective, it's just an accident. If you're attracted to internalism, the reliability won't help. If you're not attracted to internalism, it's hard to see why the experience would be necessary.

What if instead of reliability, we require *believed* reliability? It's hard to know what to say about this. On the one hand, if I'm justified in believing that most of my beliefs about D are true, and that b is a belief about D, then I have inductive evidence for b, and so b should be justified. On the other hand, it's tempting to think that if b is the result of just guessing, then b is unjustified, even if I'm justified in thinking otherwise.

Whatever it is that Mary undergoes for the first time when she finally sees color: that's what I assume epistemologists mean by their talk about perceptual experience (similarly for other contents and other sense modalities). But that thing is not up to the task of justifying empirical beliefs.

I anticipate two initially credible lines of response. The first concedes that experiences don't justify F-ness-related beliefs as characterized above *directly*, but argues that they can do so indirectly for us, because we have knowledge that Mary lacks. The second concedes that Mary's experiences don't justify F-ness-related beliefs, but argues that ours can, because our experiences are importantly different from Mary's. I'll consider these in order.

One might propose that Mary's experience justifies her in believing that x is G; but only later will she figure out that G things are red and then become justified in believing that x was red. Details will vary, depending on whether or not perceptual beliefs are thought to derive their justification from introspective beliefs, à la classical foundationalism. 'G' here would pick out a special kind of concept—a noncomparative, or demonstrative, or phenomenal, or perceptual, or de re concept, for example. G might be co-extensive with *red*, thus enabling Mary to think *of* red that x instantiates it; but the thought that x is G is distinct from the thought that x is red (as evidenced by the admitted fact that Mary is justified in the former but not the latter).

One could accept this as an *ontogenetic* theory about the origin of concepts like *red*, while denying any epistemological consequences, just as one might hold that we can have a priori knowledge involving empirically acquired concepts. But the view under consideration is one that takes the naive Mary as an *epistemological* model for us: we're just like her, but without the naivete. On this view, the experience doesn't directly justify a redness-related empirical belief, but a G-ness-related belief; and it's up to the subject to connect G-ness with redness, outside of experience. We might now find such a view far too intellectualist, especially in its classical foundationalist forms: these require the agent to do significant reasoning just to get to the belief that she's appeared to redly, which is where a less demanding classical foundationalism—already generally deemed hyper-intellectualist—started out. I'll briefly return to classical foundationalism in section 3.

More plausible is a modest foundationalist implementation of this basic idea, where G is a feature of external objects, not of experiences (McGrath, 2017, 2018). As far as I can tell, the view

has few adherents, partly perhaps because it is still highly intellectualist, partly perhaps because it locates the difference between us and Mary in the cognitive, post-experiential realm.

A more popular response, I expect, is the second one. This holds that there is an experiential, not just an intellectual, difference between us and Mary: her experience is importantly unlike our normal, typical, paradigmatic experiences, so even if hers isn't able to justify any empirical beliefs, ours might still be. When I look at something red I have not only what Mary has, but *also* something further: some firm sense of redness *qua redness*. This additional element has been characterized in various ways: as a disposition or inclination to believe *x* is red (Conee, 2013); as a distinct kind of propositional attitude—a “seeming”—that *x* is red (Tucker, 2010); a belief that *x* looks red (Glüer, 2009); or simply the belief that *x* is red (Quilty-Dunn, 2015), etc. I'm going to be decidedly neutral about what this extra component is, except to note two important factors: that (i) whatever it is, it has a transparent and intrinsic connection to the concept of red—you couldn't be in this state and have no idea whether the relevantly connected belief is that *x* is red or that *x* is blue; and (ii) Mary doesn't have it.

We need terms for the kind of state that Mary is in and for the further kind of state that we are normally in. To maintain neutrality, I'll simply call them “A-states” and “B-states,” respectively.⁹ I mean for these to be exclusive: a B-state is the conscious, nondoxastic state we're normally in, in perception, *with the part that Mary is in* (the A-state) *subtracted out*. I mean that residual sense of redness *qua redness*, over and above what Mary experiences.

I assume that A-states and B-states can vary independently. It is surely conceptually possible to be in an A-state without being in the normally accompanying B-state. This is what the Mary example supposes. It seems to be empirically possible as well; the first time an adult experiences intoxication or orgasm, for example, the context often indicates what kind of experience it is and how to conceptualize it, but there's nothing in the experience itself that does so. More contentiously, this may be what's happening in cases of associative agnosia (Bayne, 2009; Lyons, 2009), where subjects are able to accurately draw what they're seeing but have no idea what kind of thing they just drew. It is also conceptually possible to have B-states without A-states. As for empirical possibility, this may be what is happening in certain types of blindsight (Macpherson, 2015), and perhaps in proprioception, where we “just know” where our limbs are without looking, though there doesn't seem to be any further somatic experience beyond that “just knowing”¹⁰ (we'll see some other potential cases in section 3 below). Change blindness (Simons & Levin, 1997) is plausibly a case of *differences* in A-state without differences in B-state.¹¹

Given this independence, there's no obvious reason why one couldn't have A-states and B-states together, which fail to “match.” That is, our red' A-states are normally accompanied by red* B-states, but it seems possible to have red' A-states accompanied by green* B-states, and vice versa, with many more possible variations.¹² I'll return to this below.

Could B-states, rather than A-states, serve as the experiences that justify empirical beliefs in accordance with the first dogma? This is a strange proposal. First of all, it's odd to think of isolated B-states as *experiences* in any obvious sense. Intuitively, Mary could have the very same visual experience when she sees red that we do, even though she's not—by definition—in the same B-state. There's a difference, but it's not a difference in *visual experience*.¹³ Second, it's doubtful that many experientialists will be attracted to this view anyhow. A superblindsighter (Block, 1995) might have the B-state that *x* is red without having any A-state at all. Maybe a zombie could as well, depending on how we understand B-states. I think that few experientialists will want to grant justification to such agents, let alone the same justification that we have.¹⁴ Such a view doesn't seem to be motivated either by common sense or by the kinds of intuitions that motivate a more generic experientialism.

If A-states by themselves don't justify empirical beliefs, and neither do B-states by themselves, what about combined A+B-states? This strikes me as a cheap move. Dialectically, it works momentarily: since the combined state is the state we're normally in, and we're normally *prima facie* justified in our perceptual beliefs, the counterexamples (Mary, zombies) go away. But the view is now completely *ad hoc* and has nothing going for it by way of principle or motivation, unless the experientialist can show that (and how) A and B can do together what they were unable to do separately.

I see two possibilities here.

The first is to treat experience like a two-premise argument where neither premise by itself is much or any evidence for the conclusion. 'It's raining' doesn't justify me in thinking the roads will be icy; neither does 'it's below 0'. Together, however, they do. Similarly, neither premise of *modus ponens* is alone any reason to believe the conclusion. The *modus ponens* example doesn't help. *Modus ponens* is a poor analogy for perceptual justification. First off, the "inference" from experience to empirical belief isn't valid, even with both "premises." Second, it's not clear that the conclusion is even much more likely to be true when the agent is in the combined state than when she's in either component alone. Maybe then perception is more like the icy roads case? But the icy roads argument is really an enthymematic, three-premise argument; it only provides justification when the agent has an additional, justified belief that when the other premises are true, the conclusion is probably true. Applied to the perceptual case, this would require ordinary agents to have justified beliefs about conjunctions of A-states and B-states. This is undeniably too intellectualist, especially given the fact that even most *epistemologists* have failed to distinguish A-states from B-states and thus weren't even disposed to have the required beliefs.

The second possibility is that one of the two states serves not like an additional premise, but as an enabling condition for the other state. The question now arises whether, in order to have justificatory force, the two elements of the combined state must "match," in the sense that if the A-state is red' then the B-state is also red*, rather than green*, etc. To this question, I think the experientialist has no good answers. Either the A-state and the B-state do have to match or they don't. It's not plausible that they do. Remember that when Mary is in a red' A-state, she has no idea whether she's seeing something red, or green, or blue, etc. Suppose she happens, coincidentally and for no good reason, to also be in a red* B-state; is she now justified in believing something is red? Is she any *more* justified than she would have been if she'd been in a blue' A-state, or a red' A-state and a blue* B-state? She doesn't seem to be any more justified in the case where the components happen to match than in the case where they happen not to match. Well then, suppose they don't have to match. Then which one determines justification? If I'm in a green' A-state and a red* B-state should I believe there's something red or something green before me? Whichever one we choose, we make the exact nature of the other state irrelevant. Suppose, for example, I say that a red* B-state justifies the belief that there's something red nearby, but only if there's an accompanying—not necessarily matching—A-state. Then the A-state could be red' or green' or sweet' or ticklish—it wouldn't matter at all. This is problematic. Where you might have thought that *which A-state she's in* mattered to what the agent is justified in believing, this view has it that *any old* A-state serves merely as assurance that the accompanying B-state—*whatever it may be*—is to be trusted.¹⁵ This is problematic on its face, but it also again makes empirical justification much more inferential than we wanted it to be, in part because it's hard to see how this could be remotely successful unless the agent is justified in believing that the presence of the one indicates reliability of the other. Then we're back to where the additional premise solution led us.

In a way, the A+B-state conjunction was almost exactly what the experientialist needed, since experientialism seemed much more plausible before the A-state/B-state distinction was drawn. I say “almost,” however, because what’s really needed is not a conjunction, but a conflation: the experientialist needs there *to not be* a distinction between A-states and B-states; she needs for Mary’s phenomenology to have *intrinsic* conceptual content, or for the conceptual representational state to have *intrinsic* sensory phenomenology. Once a distinction between A-states and B-states is granted, however, the closest the experientialist can get is a combined, or conjunctive, state. I think we’ve seen that this is an inadequate substitute.

If perceptual experiences are simply states of the sort that we share with Mary, then it’s fairly clear what experiences are, but it’s equally clear that these aren’t nearly sufficient for the justification of empirical (e.g., redness-related) beliefs. If experiences are supposed to be something more than this, then it’s rather mysterious what exactly they’re supposed to be (hence my deliberate neutrality and “B-state” terminology) and disappointing that so few experientialists bother to try to tell us. I have argued that whatever we take this extra something to be, it is unlikely to be any more capable of conferring justification than the state Mary is in. Thus, it should not be part of any received orthodoxy that perceptual experiences justify empirical beliefs.

Along the way, I’ve mentioned and set aside two very different approaches that might save experientialism: McGrath’s (2017) view that experiences directly justify G-ness-related, rather than redness-related beliefs, and Tucker’s (2010) view that blindsight patients’ B-states justify their beliefs. These, and surely other, views are very much worth taking seriously, but they are, and ought to be, *controversial*. Neither should be assumed without argument at the start of inquiry. If one of these is required to save the first dogma, then it is very far from the obvious truism it is so often presented as being.

3 | AGAINST THE SECOND DOGMA

The second dogma insists that empirical beliefs get their justification from experiences by being *based* on those experiences. Again, I’ll read the generic as claiming that justified empirical beliefs are *commonly* or *normally* or *paradigmatically* based on perceptual experiences. If this principle is to have anti-skeptical implications, it must be the case that empirical beliefs normally, or at least often enough, stand in this relation to experiences. In fact, I think that most epistemologists, including everyone cited in notes 2–5 above (except myself), presume that common, normal, or paradigmatic empirical beliefs are thus based on experiences. Here I want to argue that there’s no reason to think they *ever*—let alone normally—are.

Again, I’m only interested in a particular, although I think very widely endorsed, conception of the basing relation. According to this conception, for a belief to be based on *b*, it is not enough (nor is it necessary) that the agent could or would cite *b* as a reason. The belief must stand in some kind of dependency relation—minimally, some causal, counterfactual, or explanatory relation—to *b*; *b* must be in some important sense *why* (or part of why) the belief is held. Importantly, not just *any* old causal/counterfactual/explanatory relation is sufficient for basing, as we will see shortly. I won’t try to analyze this dependence relation further, partly because I want to stay neutral on the details. I do want to be very explicit, however, that I’m working with a dependence conception of basing, not a citable reason conception.¹⁶

Even construed so schematically, the second dogma commits to a contingent, non-normative thesis about why people hold the empirical beliefs they do. This “experiential basing hypothesis” holds that empirical beliefs stand in whichever causal, counterfactual, or explanatory relation to

experiences is required for basing. This is an empirical hypothesis, but one that has gone largely unquestioned. Even though of central importance to many epistemologies, no one, to my knowledge, has ever tried to defend it.

In demanding evidence for this view, I'm not simply trying to preemptively ban folk psychology from figuring in philosophical theorizing. I don't deny, for example, that our beliefs often cause our actions, nor would I object to this "belief-action assumption" serving as a cornerstone of practical philosophy. Rather, I think that the experiential basing hypothesis is importantly different; it's dubious even by folk psychological standards.

We do observe an extremely pervasive and fairly systematic correlation between our experiences and our empirical beliefs. It seems, further, quite reasonable to infer some kind of counterfactual relation between the two: if I didn't have the visual experience I'm having right now (or a roughly similar one), I wouldn't believe that it's raining. I will grant all this. But it's not enough for basing. The correlations and counterfactuals just granted are compatible with, for example, experiences and beliefs being mere joint effects of a common cause. Were that the case, however, the beliefs wouldn't have been based on the experiences after all; there's no *dependence* of the belief on the experience; the experience predicts, but doesn't *explain*, the belief. This wouldn't be the kind of counterfactual relation involved in basing.

This is more than just a bare possibility. There are three lines of empirical research that give us positive reason to suspect or believe that the counterfactual relation between experiences and beliefs is not the right sort for basing. Fortunately, I think, it's possible to make this argument without having settled the exact nature of the required counterfactual relation.

The first line of research concerns the fact of unconscious perception in general. Despite controversy surrounding the precise scope, it is now very widely accepted, on the basis of a broad and disparate range of studies, that a good deal of perception is unconscious: that subjects are processing perceptual information, perhaps in very sophisticated ways, without being aware of or having an experience (as) of the relevant stimulus (for overviews see Kouider and Dehaene (2007); Berger (2014); for a debate about unconscious perception see Phillips and Block (2016)).

The general phenomenon of unconscious perception shows that conscious experience is not necessary for the *informational task* of perception. What I mean is that conscious experience isn't needed in order to distinguish the word *doctor* from *proctor*, or from *dictator*. Consciousness isn't needed to determine whether that thing over there is a face or a house, etc. The clearest cases of unconscious perception are not clear cases of perceptual *belief*, however, so experience might still be needed for turning that perceptual information into a conscious belief. But even if this is true (it's not obvious that it is), experience is contributing only to the "belief-ness" of the perceptual information, or to the consciousness of that belief, not to the *content* of that belief. This would make experiential basing very different from more familiar and obvious forms of basing. In inference, the conclusion depends (causally, counterfactually, explanatorily) on the premises for its *content*. If we borrow the image of believing that *p* as constituted by the placing of a *p*-representation in a "belief box" (Schiffer, 1981), then what inference does is not just to determine which box the representation gets put in, but also, crucially, which representation gets put in the box. This isn't just a quirk of *inferential* basing, one that might be absent or optional in other species of basing; it's central to the idea that the basing relation is at once both causal (or otherwise explanatory) and *rational*. Suppose we discovered that empirical beliefs do causally require experiences, but only for their "belief-ness:" without an experience there's no belief, but (to echo some possibilities from section 2 above) any old experience would produce the same belief, because belief content is settled completely independently of experience. I would not consider that the kind of causal dependency constitutive of basing.

It remains intuitively compelling that there are counterfactual connections between the contents of our experiences and the contents of our beliefs. I'll grant that these counterfactual connections hold. But the existence of unconscious perception indicates that these counterfactual relations hold for some reason other than that the content of the belief depends on the content of the experience. One fact that's emerged from the last few decades of consciousness research is that we lack a compelling account of what consciousness in general—and hence perceptual experience in particular—is *for*, what good it does for the conscious entity. The second dogma seems intuitively plausible insofar as the following seems an intuitive answer to this question: experience, at least standardly and at least in part, enables the selection of empirical beliefs (i.e., allows us to settle on *which* empirical beliefs to have). This is an empirical claim, however, one that we've seen no reason to believe and some significant reason to deny.

A second line of research concerns the time course of perception. There are good reasons, both theoretical and straightforwardly empirical, to think that perceptual judgment happens *faster* than perceptual experience. If so, then the former can't depend in the relevant sense on the latter.

The three scientific theories of consciousness with the most currency right now are some kind of higher order representation (HOR) theory (Lau & Rosenthal, 2011), neuronal global workspace theory (Dehaene & Naccache, 2001; Baars et al., 2013), or recurrent processing theory (Lamme, 2006; Lamme & Rolfsema, 2000).¹⁷ On each of these views, consciousness—perceptual experience—requires some *further* processing beyond that involved in mere (unconscious) perception. For HOR, it's a kind of metarepresentation of the perceptual state; for global workspace, it's broadcasting or otherwise making available the perceptual state; for recurrent processing, it's a second stage of processing, after the perceptual state results from the feedforward sweep. Whichever of these ways we go, (a) the timing is wrong for the second dogma: the categorical information ('that's red'; 'that's a cat') comes *before* the experience, not after, and (b) the dependency relation is inverted: the experience causally, counterfactually, and explanatorily depends on the categorical information, not the other way around.

Direct physiological studies concur that the perceptual information or perceptual judgment comes first, and the experience comes later. Various behavioral (Kirschner & Thorpe, 2006) and electrophysiological (Thorpe et al., 1996; VanRullen & Thorpe, 2001) data show that categorical information can be acquired quite quickly: between 120 ms and 150 ms to determine whether the scene contains, say, an animal or a vehicle.¹⁸ It's unclear exactly when consciousness happens, but on any of the reasonable competing views, it's later than this. One possibility is that the marker of consciousness is the visual awareness negativity (VAN) (Koivisto & Revonsuo, 2010), which occurs at 200–240 ms. Another contender is the P3b (aka late positivity (LP)) marker, which happens at 300–500 ms (Dehaene & Changeux, 2011)). More recently, studies using MEG instead of EEG or ERP, have suggested that consciousness may arise as early as 180–230 ms (Mai et al., 2019). Again, whichever of these we adopt, it's too late for the conscious experience to serve as the basis for the perceptual judgment. Whatever kind of dependency is involved in basing, it requires the basis not to *postdate* the thing based on it.

These appear to be actual *beliefs*, not just perceptual *information*, that precede experience. In Kirschner and Thorpe's (2006) study, for example, subjects are able to saccade to the photograph that contains an animal 120 ms after stimulus presentation, when instructed to do so. This is a voluntary, deliberate, person-level action, one that presumably reflects the person's beliefs about which photo contains the animal.

It's gratifying that the timing data fit so well with the credible theories of what conscious experience *is*. Together, these two considerations suggest very strongly that perceptual judgment is not

causally, or counterfactually, or explanatorily dependent on perceptual experience; if anything, the reverse is true.

The third line of research concerns perception of abstract categories. Classic psychological work on concepts (Rosch 1975; Rosch et al., 1976) distinguishes between basic level categories, like *dog*, *chair*, and *car*, from both subordinate level categories like *terrier*, *lounger*, *sedan*, and superordinate categories like *animal*, *furniture*, and *vehicle*. The basic level categories are the ones subjects normally spontaneously employ when asked to verbally categorize stimuli and were initially proposed to be the default entry points for perceptual identification (Rosch et al., 1976, see also Fodor (1983), Lyons (2009)). A good deal of evidence now indicates that people (and animals) often form superordinate category judgments before forming basic level judgments. In studies of rapid visual categorization, subjects are able to very quickly determine things like whether or not there's an animal in the presented photo (Thorpe et al., 1996; Poncet & Fabre-Thorpe, 2014), or whether or not there's a vehicle (VanRullen & Thorpe, 2001). Surprisingly, subjects acquire superordinate information before acquiring basic level information. They will judge that there's an animal in the picture before judging whether it's a bird, a monkey, or a snake. They'll believe it's an outdoor scene, even if they don't yet have a belief about whether it's a beach scene or a mountain scene, etc. Perhaps the most striking instance of this general phenomenon: medical experts can often tell (they believe and are both confident and reliable) that a slide is abnormal, even before they've looked at the slide long enough to guess at better than chance where on the slide the abnormality is located (Evans et al., 2013).

This "superordinate-level advantage" is counterintuitive: one would have thought—as Rosch did—that basic level judgments normally came first and that superordinate category judgments were inferentially based on these. But this, apparently, is wrong.¹⁹ This matters because the experiential basing hypothesis is much more plausible on the Roschian view.

The subject knows it's a vehicle before she knows whether it's a car, motorcycle, or sailboat. The experientialist needs a plausible causal story running from *some* experience to the formation of the category judgment, but the only attractive option has just been removed; it can no longer plausibly be argued that the judgment is based on a car-experience or a motorcycle-experience, for example, or we'd see a basic-level, rather than a superordinate-level advantage. There's no credible account in terms of experience of low-level features, like texture or color (Poncet & Fabre-Thorpe, 2014; VanRullen and Thorpe, 2001). This leaves only something like vehicle-experiences. Maybe it's possible (though I think difficult) to believe that we can visually experience a car *as a vehicle*, but what's needed here is quite different, since *car* isn't in the picture yet, and there isn't any particular that's seen as a vehicle. Instead, the experientialist must maintain that visual experience represents a generic vehiclehood as floating free but nevertheless instantiated somewhere or other in the visual array. It's not clear that this proposal is even intelligible, let alone credible.

Thus, it seems that the kind of state needed to causally or explanatorily ground the category judgment is simply too generic and abstract to count as an experience. The pathologist has *a sense* that the slide is abnormal, even though no region of the slide looks abnormal to her. This "sense" therefore seems to be something quite different from a visual experience. Whatever the pathologist has, it seems a zombie or blindsighter could also have. Indeed, Rensink (2004) calls this general phenomenon "mindsight," or "sensing without seeing," for it involves a putative awareness in the absence of a visual experience.²⁰

There's a more regimented argument, if we allow the (admittedly contentious) premise that all (visual) experience is particular: to visually experience something as red, you must seem to see some particular as red, and you must see it to be some particular shade of red. That red must have a shape (perhaps fuzzy at the edges, and perhaps coextensive with the shape of the whole

visual field) and it must be located somewhere (perhaps with fairly low precision) in your visual field. Similarly, if you have a visual experience of a dog, you must experience the dog as having either floppy ears or pointy ears, etc. (if the ears are visible) and as facing in some particular direction (again, if enough of the animal is visible). If visual experience must be particular in *any* of these ways, it follows straightforwardly that experiences won't line up with the superordinate category judgments. The perception of vehicles doesn't involve a state with a content like 'That F!' (Burge, 2010), but something more like '($\exists x$) Fx' (Hill, 2019) or even 'F-ness abounds.' Such a state seems not to qualify as an experiential state.

Notice that the argument here is entirely nonnormative. My current point is not that the experience wouldn't justify the superordinate belief; it's that there isn't a plausible causal/explanatory pathway from anything that reasonably counts as an experience to the superordinate belief, given that it isn't mediated by sub-superordinate beliefs or experiences.

I've been arguing that three lines of empirical evidence cast doubt on the experiential basing hypothesis. Lurking just below the surface here are two very different views about the respective functions of perception and of perceptual experience. Both agree that the primary function of perception is epistemic: it enables us to know what's where in the environment, such information having obvious utility. On the first view, however, this function is subserved by experience; experiences enable us, in the normal course of events, to obtain this important information. On the second view, experience has little to do with this function; it's either a spandrel, or it enables the fine-grained control of world-directed action, or it plays a *supplementary* epistemic role, perhaps in metacognition and/or in resolving ambiguities or uncertainties in cases where the normal epistemic function hits a snag; conscious experience may be nice in various respects, but it's in no way crucial for perception's main event. Both views are, of course, somewhat speculative. The first view seems to be generally assumed by epistemologists, but there's no reason to prefer it to the second view. On the contrary, the empirical research just discussed fits much better with the second view, at least for the cases I've been considering.

This raises an important issue, relating to the scope of the second dogma. Parts of my argument for sidelining experience involve unconscious perception and the superordinate-level advantage. Have I therefore only addressed a specific, and perhaps relatively rare, set of empirical beliefs, thus leaving the second dogma intact for the remaining, typical bulk of our empirical beliefs?

First of all, the worries about the time course of perception were quite general and in no way limited to unconscious or superordinate perception. Second, I have argued that at least some empirical beliefs are not plausibly based on experiences. This means the second dogma is implausible if read as a universal generalization claiming that all empirical beliefs are based on experiences. The experientialist is of course welcome to defend a narrower generalization, e.g., that *many* empirical beliefs are based on experiences. But now the burden is on the experientialist to show that many beliefs are thus based, if the thesis is to be more than a mere article of faith. So far, we haven't seen reason to think that *any* empirical beliefs are based on experiences.

I mentioned above that classical foundationalism is implausibly hyper-intellectualist. This is a common objection, one that's usually either left as simply intuitive, or argued for by appeal to animals and small children; sometimes the objection assumes that beliefs about experiences would have to be formed explicitly, in a way that fits poorly with our ordinary phenomenology. The material of this section provides a new and very different, empirical, argument against classical foundationalism. The argument is quite simple: if perceptual beliefs (beliefs about external objects, properties, and events) aren't dependent on experiences in a way that's required for basing, then they're not dependent on *beliefs about experiences* either, for the simple reason that we

don't have even the most tacit beliefs about our experiences before we've had a chance to form the experiences themselves.

4 | EXPERIENCES AS SUSTAINING CAUSES?

In the previous section, I offered three arguments against the experiential basing hypothesis: one from unconscious perception, one from the time course of perceptual experience, and one from the superordinate-level advantage. Each of these arguments suggests that empirical beliefs don't depend on experiences in the way required by the second dogma. At most, however, this only shows that empirical beliefs aren't causally (or counterfactually or explanatorily) dependent on experiences *for their origins*; they might still be thus dependent *for their continued existence*. Perceptual processing, after all, doesn't normally just stop after 150 milliseconds. If I had an empirical belief that *p* and *didn't* have a corresponding experience, I would surely and rightly think something was amiss and would retract and suspend my belief that *p*. Experiences might in this way causally *sustain* empirical beliefs, even if they don't causally *initiate* them (similarly for counterfactual and explanatory dependence). This would do justice to intuition and the science, and maybe in a way that saves the experiential basing hypothesis.

Unfortunately, the dependence proposed isn't really between the empirical belief and the experience; it's between the empirical belief and the agent's *noticing that she didn't have* the experience. On this proposal, had the agent lacked the experience but not noticed this fact, the empirical belief would remain. So the belief doesn't hinge on the presence or absence of an experience after all.

Secondly, even if there is a (causal, counterfactual, explanatory) dependence here, it's the wrong kind of dependence to account for prima facie justification, which is what experiences are supposed to do. If you tell me it's not raining anymore, I'll stop believing it's raining. This doesn't mean that my belief that it's raining was or is based on your not telling me that it's not raining. There's a counterfactual dependence and an epistemic dependence here, but the counterfactual and epistemic dependencies involved in defeat are very different from the ones involved in basing. Once the distinction between basing-dependence and defeat-dependence is offered, it's clear that the currently proposed role for experience is relevant to defeat and ultima facie justification, not basing and prima facie justification. But that's not the (only) role experiences were supposed to play. The anti-experientialist can happily admit that not having experiences—in creatures sophisticated to notice this and who are justified in thinking that empirical beliefs formed in the absence of experiences are unreliable—can provide defeaters (Lyons, 2009).

The problem here isn't that experiences are merely sustaining; surely there can be genuine basing where the causal/explanatory factor is merely sustaining and not initiating, like when we discover new arguments for conclusions we already believed. The problem is that it's the wrong kind of sustaining: experiences on the current proposal are playing only a negative, rather than a positive role. If we allow all such factors to count as bases, we've trivialized the concept of basing.

In cases where we deliberately reflect on and attend to our experiences, on the other hand, experiences do play a sustaining role akin to new arguments for old conclusions. But this kind of reflection is widely conceded to be relatively rare and not at all the standard or typical case of perceptual belief. Even the classical foundationalist never intended for the view to apply only to such a small minority of cases.

All of this, of course, is compatible with the possibility that there's *another*, direct and positive sustaining from experiences to empirical beliefs, in addition to the negative and indirect ones

granted. Sure, but ‘possibly p’ isn’t an argument for p (where p is contingent), and this mere possibility is no reason to believe the second dogma.

5 | A REGRESS ARGUMENT FOR THE DOGMAS?

Might there be an obvious epistemological argument for the dogmas?²¹ If we deny that empirical beliefs are based on experience, aren’t we left with the claim that empirical beliefs aren’t based on anything, and does this not commit us to an unacceptable skepticism? Isn’t experientialism necessary to solve the regress problem?

This line of thinking supposes that experientialism is the only game in town. But this is clearly false. There are various doxastic (non-experientialist) versions of foundationalism, coherentism (BonJour, 1985; Lehrer, 1990), and infinitism (Klein, 2005) as well as various externalist theories, like reliabilism (Goldman, 1986; Lyons, 2009), proper functionalism (Burge, 2003; Graham, 2012), and knowledge-first epistemology (Williamson, 2000). All these views avoid skepticism. All offer a solution to the regress problem, even if one that the experientialist wouldn’t like. All of these views are live options, although of course we each have our own preferences. Treating experientialism as the only game in town would be quite obviously question-begging.

And anyway, one of the two dogmas is a straightforwardly empirical thesis; it commits to a contingent claim about human psychology. There is something extremely suspicious about drawing contingent, psychological conclusions from what are apparently a priori, epistemological premises. This is not to say, of course, that such a move is unheard of, although it ought to be.

6 | CONCLUSION

A great many epistemologists hold two related views: (a) that perceptual experiences justify empirical beliefs, and (b) that they do so by serving as the agent’s bases for these beliefs. Together these constitute a kind of experientialist orthodoxy. Not only are these generally embraced without argument, as mere articles of faith, but there are serious reasons to doubt, even to deny, them. Experientialism should not be a default view in epistemology.²²

ENDNOTES

¹ Especially Lyons (2009, 2016a).

² E.g., McDowell (1982), Millar (2019), Schellenberg (2018).

³ E.g., Pollock (1974), Audi (1993), Alston (1988), Pryor (2000), Feldman (2003), Chudnoff (2018), McGrath (2018), and many others. I understand modest foundationalism to be that kind of foundationalism that holds that some basic beliefs are about external objects (/events, properties, etc.); as such it could include nonexperientialist forms of reliabilism (Lyons, 2009) as well as these experientialist views.

⁴ E.g., Descartes (1641/1996), Locke (1690/1979), Russell (1912/1997), Chisholm (1977), McGrew (1995), Fumerton (2001), BonJour (2003), and many others.

⁵ E.g., Conee (1988), Kvanvig and Riggs (1992), Gupta (2006).

⁶ The parenthetical is needed if we’re not to presuppose evidentialism: that all justification is determined by reasons, or evidence. For two non-evidentialist ways to understand the propositional/doxastic distinction, see Lyons (2016b), Graham and Lyons (forthcoming).

⁷ See Carter and Bondy (2019) for the latest on the basing relation.

⁸ It is worth emphasizing that my concern here is only with the justificatory power of experiences vis-a-vis *empirical beliefs*: perceptual beliefs about the layout of distal features in the environment, or the corresponding

- introspective beliefs—hence the interest in Mary’s redness-related belief. In other work (Lyons, 2016a) I’ve argued that even beliefs like “I’m having a vivid experience” aren’t justified by the experience *in the way most epistemologists think*, but I’m not trying to rehash that here.
- ⁹ In other works (Lyons, 2005, 2009, 2015, 2016a, 2018) I have tried to say something informative about A-states and B-states. I think it’s important to do so, but I worry that the theoretical baggage distracts from the central argumentation here, hence the current, forced neutrality.
- ¹⁰ Or if there is, it doesn’t seem to be sufficiently discriminable from other somatic experiences that there might be an introspectively distinguishable proprioceptive A-state for every introspectively distinguishable proprioceptive B-state. Huemer (2001) discusses proprioception in a similar way, although he’s not eager to distinguish A-states and B-states.
- ¹¹ This A-state/B-state distinction requires that experiences are “factorizable,” as Matt McGrath (personal communication) helpfully describes it. This strikes me as unobjectionable, at least on the assumption (which I’m granting to my opponent for the sake of argument) that B-states are genuinely experiential. If red things look different to us than they do to Mary, this must involve an *addition to*, not an *alteration of*, Mary’s experience (except, of course, insofar as addition in general trivially entails alteration). It’s not, after all, as if red things look to Mary more purplish, or more saturated, or somehow less in possession of a color property, or something.
- ¹² The primes and asterisks are included as reminders that the states themselves aren’t red or blue etc. in the way that distal objects might be. And of course, B-states aren’t red’ in the way that A-states might be. I trust it’s clear enough what’s meant by saying that a B-state is red*. This phrasing is useful for the sakes of both brevity and neutrality about the nature of B-states.
- ¹³ There are clashing intuitions here. Siegel’s (2006, 2011) phenomenal contrast argument concludes, essentially, that differences of B-state can constitute differences in visual experience. I can’t tell whether her argument is intended (a) to buttress an intuitively obvious claim (that ‘pine’ and ‘red’ can literally be part of the content of visual experience) or (b) to reveal a surprising and counterintuitive claim (that ‘pine’ and ‘red’ can literally be part of the content of visual experience). I think the phenomenal contrast argument fails to take B-states sufficiently seriously (see Reiland (2014)), but I also read it as attempting (b). This would help explain why the argument has generated so much controversy.
- ¹⁴ Chris Tucker (2010) is a notable exception, regarding blindsight, and is explicit on this point. I myself am happy to ascribe justification in such cases, if the B-state is reliably produced (Lyons, 2009, 2015), but this is very much less a rescue of experientialism than a rejection of it in favor of reliabilist externalism. I think if you’re saying that zombies and blindsighters are justified (even just *prima facie*), you’re not avowing *experientialism*.
- ¹⁵ Obviously, the same considerations hold, swapping the As and Bs, if you think it’s the A-state, rather than the B-state, that determines which beliefs are justified.
- ¹⁶ These are the two broad conceptions of basing found in the literature. My sense is that the dependence view is much more popular; in addition, it seems more conducive to the possibility of nondoxastic bases, like experiences, since the relevant citing of reasons seems to just be the citing of beliefs.
- ¹⁷ There’s also Integrated Information Theory (Tononi, 2008) and panpsychism (see Bruntrup and Jaskolla (2016)), but the latter is hardly a scientific theory, and I won’t try to take either seriously here.
- ¹⁸ Some have argued that category information is acquired *much* faster than this. Mandelbaum (2018) seems to think it happens in about 13 ms. This would be even better for my argument, but I don’t find it at all convincing. Although he mentions the studies I’ve cited here, Mandelbaum’s main argument for the very short times is based on duration of stimulus presentation (especially Potter et al. (2014)). This tells us nothing about processing time for categorization unless we assume—contrary to the prevalent “carwash” model (Wolfe, 2003)—that processing of one stimulus stops as soon as a new stimulus appears. In contrast, the classic Thorpe studies found differences in ERP signals between trials where the subject correctly judged the category to be present vs. absent, at 150 ms after stimulus onset; the later studies with Kirschner found behavioral responses (saccades) as early as 120 ms. These studies therefore don’t require that problematic assumption.
- ¹⁹ I confess I got this wrong in Lyons (2009).
- ²⁰ It is, of course, possible to understand these “sensings” as among the B-states of section 2. If so, we should deny that B-states—or at least *these* B-states—are experiences. I’m inclined to do so anyhow (Lyons, 2005).
- ²¹ Surely there are sets of controversial epistemological theses that jointly entail one or both dogmas; one could use these to argue for those dogmas (Smithies, 2019). What I’m asking about here is whether the dogmas

follow straightforwardly from epistemological platitudes, such that they might reasonably serve as unquestioned starting points in theory development.

- ²² Earlier versions of this paper were presented (via Zoom) at the University of Glasgow and University of St Andrews; thanks to audiences there, especially Derek Brown, Jessica Brown, Sandy Goldberg, Fiona Macpherson, and Gillian Russell. Thanks to Peter Graham, Matt McGrath, and Jake Quilty-Dunn for helpful comments on written drafts.

REFERENCES

- Alston, W. P. (1988). An internalist externalism. *Synthese*, 74(3), 265–283. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00869630>
- Audi, R. (1993). *The structure of justification*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baars, B. J., Franklin, S., & Ramsøy, T. Z. (2013). Global workspace dynamics: cortical “binding and propagation” enables conscious contents. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4, 200. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00200>
- Bayne, T. (2009). Perception and the reach of phenomenal content. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 59(236), 385–404. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9213.2009.631.x>
- Berger, J. (2014). Mental states, conscious and nonconscious. *Philosophy Compass*, 9(6), 392–401. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12140>
- Block, N. (1995). On a confusion about a function of consciousness. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 18, 227–287. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0140525x00038188>
- BonJour, L. (1985). *The structure of empirical knowledge*. Harvard University Press.
- BonJour, L. (2003). A version of internalist foundationalism. In L. BonJour & E. Sosa (Eds.), *Epistemic justification: Internalism vs. externalism, foundations vs. virtues* (pp. 3–96), Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Bruntrup, G., Ludwig, J., eds. (2016). *Panpsychism: Contemporary perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burge, T. (2003). Perceptual entitlement. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 67(3), 503–548. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2003.tb00307.x>
- Burge, T. (2010). *Origins of objectivity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carter, J. A., & Bondy, P. (Eds.). (2019). *Well-founded belief: New essays on the epistemic basing relation*. New York: Routledge.
- Chisholm, R. M. (1977). *Theory of knowledge* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Chudnoff, E. (2018). Epistemic elitism and other minds. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 96(2), 276–298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12308>
- Conee, E. (1988). The basic nature of epistemic justification. *The Monist*, 71, 389–404. <https://doi.org/10.5840/monist198871327>
- Conee, E. (2013). Seeming evidence. In C. Tucker (Ed.), *Seemings and justification: New essays on dogmatism and phenomenal conservatism* (pp. 52–70). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Davidson, D. (1986). A coherence theory of truth and knowledge. In E. Lepore (Ed.), *Truth and interpretation: Perspectives on the philosophy of Donald Davidson* (pp. 307–319). New York: Blackwell.
- Dehaene, S., & Changeux, J. P. (2011). Experimental and theoretical approaches to conscious processing. *Neuron*, 70(2), 200–227. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuron.2011.03.018>
- Dehaene, S., & Naccache, L. (2001). Towards a cognitive neuroscience of consciousness: basic evidence and a workspace framework. *Cognition*, 79(1-2), 1–37. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0010-0277\(00\)00123-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0010-0277(00)00123-2)
- Descartes, R. (1996). *Meditations on first philosophy: With selections from the objections and replies*. (J. Cottingham, Ed., Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Original work published 1641.
- Evans, K. K., Georgian-Smith, D., Tambouret, R., Birdwell, R. L., & Wolfe, J. M. (2013). The gist of the abnormal: Above-chance medical decision making in the blink of an eye. *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, 20, 1170–1175. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-013-0459-3>
- Feldman, R. (2003). *Epistemology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Fodor, J. A. (1983). *The modularity of mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT press.
- Fumerton, R. (2001). Classical foundationalism. In M. De Paul (Ed.), *Resurrecting old-fashioned foundationalism*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Glüer, K. (2009). In defense of a doxastic account of experience. *Mind & Language*, 24(3), 297–327. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0017.2009.01364.x>
- Goldman, A. I. (1986). *Epistemology and cognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Graham, P. J. (2012). Epistemic entitlement. *Noûs*, 46(3), 449–482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0068.2010.00815.x>
- Graham, P. J., & Lyons, J. (forthcoming). The structure of defeat: Pollock's evidentialism, Lackey's framework, and prospects for reliabilism. In M. Simion & J. Brown (Eds.), *Reasons, justification, and defeat*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gupta, A. (2006). *Empiricism and experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hill, C. S. (2019). *Perceptual existentialism sustained*. *Erkenntnis*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-019-00160-z>
- Huemer, M. (2001). *Skepticism and the veil of perception*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jackson, F. (1982). Epiphenomenal qualia. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 32(127), 127–136. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2960077>
- Kirchner, H., & Thorpe, S. J. (2006). Ultra-rapid object detection with saccadic eye movements: Visual processing speed revisited. *Vision Research*, 46(11), 1762–1776. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.visres.2005.10.002>
- Klein, P. D. (2005). Infitinitism is the solution to the epistemic regress problem. In M. Steup & E. Sosa (Eds.), *Contemporary debates in epistemology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Koivisto, M., & Revonsuo, A. (2010). Event-related brain potential correlates of visual awareness. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 34(6), 922–934. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2009.12.002>
- Kouider, S., & Dehaene, S. (2007). Levels of processing during non-conscious perception: a critical review of visual masking. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 362(1481), 857–875. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2007.2093>
- Kvanvig, J. L., & Riggs, W. D. (1992). Can a coherence theory appeal to appearance states? *Philosophical Studies*, 67(3), 197–217. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00354536>
- Lamme, V. A. (2006). Towards a true neural stance on consciousness. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 10(11), 494–501. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2006.09.001>
- Lamme, V. A., & Rolfsema, P. R. (2000). The distinct modes of vision offered by feedforward and recurrent processing. *Trends in Neurosciences*, 23(11), 571–579. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0166-2236\(00\)01657-x](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0166-2236(00)01657-x)
- Lau, H., & Rosenthal, D. (2011). Empirical support for higher-order theories of conscious awareness. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 15(8), 365–373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2011.05.009>
- Lehrer, K. (1971). How reasons give us knowledge, or the case of the gypsy lawyer. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 68, 311–313. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2025273>
- Lehrer, K. (1990). *Theory of knowledge*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Locke, J. (1979). *An essay concerning human understanding* (P.H. Nidditch, Ed.). Oxford: Clarendon. Original work published 1690.
- Lyons, J. (2005). Perceptual belief and nonexperiential looks. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 19, 237–256. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1520-8583.2005.00061.x>
- Lyons, J. (2009). *Perception and basic beliefs: Zombies, modules, and the problem of the external world*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lyons, J. (2015). Critical notice of Chris Tucker, ed., *Seemings and justification: New essays on dogmatism and phenomenal conservatism*. *Analysis*, 75, 153–164.
- Lyons, J. (2016a). Experiential evidence? *Philosophical Studies*, 173(4), 1053–1079. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-015-0540-z>
- Lyons, J. (2016b). Goldman on evidence and reliability. In H. Kornblith & B. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Goldman and his critics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Lyons, J. (2018). Perception and intuition of evaluative properties. In A. Bergquist & R. Cowan (Eds.), *Evaluative perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Macpherson, F. (2015). The structure of experience, the nature of the visual, and type 2 blindsight. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 32, 104–128.
- Mai, A. T., Grootswagers, T., & Carlson, T. A. (2019). In search of consciousness: Examining the temporal dynamics of conscious visual perception using MEG time-series data. *Neuropsychologia*, 129, 310–317. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2019.04.015>
- Mandelbaum, E. (2018). Seeing and conceptualizing: Modularity and the shallow contents of perception. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 97, 267–283. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12368>
- McDowell, J. (1982). Criteria, defeasibility and knowledge. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 68, 455–479.
- McGrath, M. (2017). Knowing what things look like. *Philosophical Review*, 126, 1–41. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00318108-3683602>

- McGrath, M. (2018). Looks and perceptual justification. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 96, 110–133. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12289>
- McGrew, T. J. (1995). *The foundations of knowledge*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Millar, A. (2019). *Knowing by perceiving*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Phillips, I., & Block, N. (2016). Debate on unconscious perception. In B. Nanay (Ed.), *Current controversies in philosophy of perception* (pp. 165–192). New York: Routledge.
- Pollock, J. (1974). *Knowledge and justification*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Poncet, M., & Fabre-Thorpe, M. (2014). Stimulus duration and diversity do not reverse the advantage for superordinate-level representations: the animal is seen before the bird. *European Journal of Neuroscience*, 39(9), 1508–1516. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejn.12513>
- Potter, M., Wyble, B., Haggmann, C., & McCourt, E. (2014). Detecting meaning in RSVP at 13 ms per picture. *Attention, Perception, & Psychophysics*, 76(2), 270–279. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13414-013-0605-z>
- Pryor, J. (2000). The skeptic and the dogmatist. *Noûs*, 34(4), 517–549. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0029-4624.00277>
- Quilty-Dunn, J. (2015). Believing in perceiving: Known illusions and the classical dual-component theory. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 96(4), 550–575. <https://doi.org/10.1111/papq.12115>
- Reiland, I. (2014). On experiencing high-level properties. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 51(3), 177–187. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.01501005.x>
- Rensink, R. A. (2004). Visual sensing without seeing. *Psychological Science*, 15(1), 27–32.
- Rosch, E. (1975). Cognitive representations of semantic categories. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 104(3), 192. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-3445.104.3.192>
- Rosch, E., Mervis, C. B., Gray, W. D., Johnson, D. M., & Boyes-Braem, P. (1976). Basic objects in natural categories. *Cognitive Psychology*, 8(3), 382–439. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285\(76\)90013-x](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285(76)90013-x)
- Russell, B. (1997). *The problems of philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Original work published 1912.
- Schellenberg, S. (2018). *The unity of perception: Content, consciousness, evidence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schiffer, S. R. (1981). Truth and the theory of content. In H. Parret (Ed.), *Meaning and Understanding*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Sellars, W. (1956). Empiricism and the philosophy of mind. *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 1, 253–329.
- Siegel, S. (2006). Which properties are represented in perception? *Perceptual experience*, 1, 481–503. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199289769.003.0015>
- Siegel, S. (2011). *The contents of visual experience*. Oxford University Press.
- Simons, D. J., & Levin, D. T. (1997). Change blindness. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 1(7), 261–267. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s1364-6613\(97\)01080-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s1364-6613(97)01080-2)
- Smithies, D. (2019). *The epistemic significance of consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Thorpe, S. J., Fize, D., & Marlot, C. (1996). Speed of processing in the human visual system. *Nature*, 381, 520–522.
- Tononi, G. (2008). Consciousness as integrated information: a provisional manifesto. *The Biological Bulletin*, 215(3), 216–242. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25470707>
- Tucker, C. (2010). Why open-minded people should endorse dogmatism. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 24, 529–545. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1520-8583.2010.00202.x>
- VanRullen, R., & Thorpe, S. J. (2001). Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Ultra-rapid visual categorisation of natural and artificial objects. *Perception*, 30(6), 655–668. <https://doi.org/10.1068/p3029>
- Williamson, T. (2000). *Knowledge and its limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wolfe, J. M. (2003). Moving towards solutions to some enduring controversies in visual search. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 7(2), 70–76. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s1364-6613\(02\)00024-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/s1364-6613(02)00024-4)

How to cite this article: Lyons JC. Two dogmas of empirical justification. *Philosophical Issues*. 2020;30:221–237. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phis.12182>