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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLES

SCIENTIFIC EPISTEMOLOGY VERSUS INDIGENOUS EPISTEMOLOGY: MEANINGS OF 'PLACE' AND 'KNOWLEDGE' IN THE EPISTEMIC CULTURES

Natalia GRINCHEVA

ABSTRACT: The article is based on a synthetic comparative analysis of two different epistemic traditions and explores indigenous and scientific epistemic cultures through close reading and exploration of two books. The first book, *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge,* written by Austrian sociologist Karin Knorr-Cetina (1999), serves as an excellent foundational material to represent scientific epistemic tradition. The second book by cultural and linguistic anthropologist Keith Basso (1996), *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache,* opens a wide perspective for exploration indigenous epistemic culture. Both of the books deal with questions of knowledge production and social-cultural mechanisms that surround these processes. The article seeks to explain how the differences between methodological approaches, in their distinct questions, and the variance in research subjects eventually leads the authors to completely dissimilar understandings of such shared notions as 'place' and 'knowledge.' Through the comparative exploration of both texts, the present analysis uncovers the meanings of these notions as articulated and presented in each of the books.

KEYWORDS: epistemic culture, knowledge production, scientific epistemology, indigenous epistemology

Introduction

Theorizing about creating paradigms of truth, establishing knowledge that becomes truth, or reconstituting ways of creating knowledge are all aspects of epistemology. It has been recognized that knowledge is constructed by communities, and "such communities are epistemologically prior to individuals who know."[1] Considering a diverse variety of epistemic traditions and world views embedded in social-cultural environments of different communities, in recent decades the notion of 'epistemic culture' has gained a considerable academic

[1] Lynn Hankinson Nelson, "Epistemological Communities," in *Feminist Epistemologies*, ed. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 121–160.

attention.[2] Epistemic culture can be described as a set of specific social-cultural norms, beliefs, traditions and restrictions, shaped by affinity, necessity, and historical coincidence, and defined by causal and principled ideas coupled with a common knowledge base and policy goals.[3] Epistemic cultures are nurtured and developed within particular epistemic environments which belong to broader historical cultural paradigmatic contexts of human civilizations.

The epistemic culture of Western civilization, based on the ideas of "knowledge society" has long established foundational principles of epistemic traditions, recognizing science or scientific enquiry as the most trustful source of knowledge. Scientific paradigm of epistemic culture predominantly relies on such concepts as objectivity of approach and acceptability of the results.[4] Objectivity refers to employment of specific ways of observation or experimentation which exclude the possibility of falsifying results; and acceptability is attested in terms of the degree to which observations and experimentations can be reproduced. Scientific method is traditionally based on two major reasoning processes: inductive reasoning or developing general hypotheses upon results gained through specific observations and experiments; and deductive reasoning, which, in contrast, is based on prior theoretical foundations leading to developing specific experiments for testing predicted results. Both of the reasoning processes build the foundations of the broad laws that become part of the understanding of the natural world within the scientific epistemic community.[5]

This view of scientific inquiry is one that is commonly and almost universally accepted in the Western academic world even today.[6] This scientific epistemic tradition or scientific epistemology has been dominating the field of research and knowledge production for many generations and has come to be fixed in the public consciousness.[7] However, in recent decades, the feminist, postcolonial, and postmodernist studies have challenged these epistemic canons and opened opportunities for exploring alternative worldviews, which required

[2] Karin Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[3] Peter Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* 46, 1 (1992): 1-35.

[4] Arthur David Ritchie, *Scientific Method: An Inquiry into the Character and Validity of Natural Laws* (London: Routledge, 1923).

[5] Ritchie, *Scientific Method,* 12.

[6] John Rudolph, "Epistemology for the Masses: The Origins of 'The Scientific Method' in American Schools," H*istory of Education Quarterly* 45, 3 (2005): 341-376.

[7] Rudolph, "Epistemology for the Masses," 342.

new methodologies outside of the dominant tradition.[8] Indigenous epistemology has emerged as a new epistemic culture out of a necessity to provide indigenous ethnic groups to assert the validity of their own "ways of knowing and being, in resistance to the intensifying hegemony of mainstream epistemology from the metropolitan powers."[9]

The indigenous epistemology is not only about ethnic identity or revitalizing traditional cultures, but more about exploring alternative ways of constructing knowledge. It refers to a cultural group's ways of thinking and reformulating knowledge using traditional discourses and means of communication, such as face-to-face personal interactions.[10] The indigenous knowledge is usually contrasted with scientific knowledge within numerous rural development discourses and practices, which account for the development agenda in the international arena in regard to improving the poor economic situations in so called "developing" countries, for example in Africa, Latin America or the Pacific Islands. Usually, these discourses do not go beyond a mere advocacy for incorporation of indigenous knowledge into development practices, which are already based on the Western knowledge systems, values, and social formations.

Likewise, within ethnographic or anthropological research frameworks on the study of indigenous cultures, when outsider researchers explore other peoples' cultures, usually they construct accounts of indigenous socio-cultural environments based on their own perceptions and world views. As anthropologists Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo insightfully point out "the foregoing activities, while they draw on indigenous cultural knowledge, are imagined, conceptualized, and carried out within the theoretical and methodological frameworks of Anglo-European forms of research, reasoning, and interpreting."[11] The concept of indigenous epistemology is different from these 'outsiders' theories and accounts for specific ways of theorizing knowledge and employing particular methodological approaches in exploring 'the truth' beyond the dominant academic tradition.

Though the indigenous epistemology is gaining a growing recognition as a contested epistemic paradigm, there is still a room for conceptualizing the differences between the scientific and indigenous epistemic cultures. This article

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[8] Michael Hart, "Indigenous Worldviews, Knowledge, and Research: The Development of an Indigenous Research Paradigm," *Journal of Indigenous Voices in Social Work* 1,1 (2010): 1-16.

[9] David Gegeo and Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo, "How We Know: Kwara'ae Rural Villagers Doing Indigenous Epistemology," *The Contemporary Pacific* 13, 1 (2001): 55.

[10] David Gegeo, "Indigenous Knowledge and Empowerment: Rural Development Examined from Within," *The Contemporary Pacific* 10, 2 (1998): 290.

[11] Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, "How We Know," 55.

aims to address these issues and provides a modest contribution to the theoretical framework of exploring epistemic cultures and traditions through comparison and contrast of the two knowledge production models. This work presents a synthetic comparative analysis of the indigenous and scientific epistemic cultures through close reading and exploration of two books, which both deal with questions of knowledge production and social-cultural mechanisms that surround these processes. The first book, *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge,* written by Austrian sociologist Karin Knorr-Cetina (1999), serves as an excellent foundational material to represent scientific epistemic tradition. The second book by cultural and linguistic anthropologist Keith Basso (1996), *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache,* opens a wide perspective for exploration indigenous epistemic culture, both through the eyes of the indigenous communities, as well as the Western anthropologist, the author of the book. Both of these research studies originate from completely different cultural and epistemic contexts and backgrounds in terms of goals set, arguments employed, and empirical data collected and analyzed. However, both of these studies aim to rethink the spatial questions of epistemic environments through the mapping of cultural structures around knowledge generating and transferring mechanisms.

This article compares and contrasts the aforementioned readings concerned with place and knowledge from multiple angles. It seeks to explain how the differences between methodological approaches, in their distinct questions, and the variance in research subjects eventually leads the authors to completely dissimilar understandings of such shared notions as 'place' and 'knowledge' which representatively account for distinct differences between the scientific and indigenous epistemologies. Through the comparative exploration of both texts, the present analysis uncovers the meanings of these notions as articulated and presented in each of the books. The article starts with the analysis of research subjects investigated by Knorr-Cetina and Basso and then moves to compare the methodologies employed for each of the research projects. Eventually, this work discusses how the authors understand knowledge, people, and place within the contexts of their research studies and questions the implications for science and society in each of their positions.

Research subjects: knowledge society versus wisdom culture

In her book, Knorr-Cetina contextualizes her research in a study of 'big' sciences in knowledge societies to argue that science is geographically and culturally dispersed enterprise. Her research aims to prove that contemporary science is a

whole "landscape-or market-of independent epistemic monopolies producing vastly different products."[12] Interestingly, Basso in his research on the indigenous community of the Western Apache culture also looks at the notion of 'place' and explores the significance of this concept in the knowledge paradigm of Apache tribe. He investigates the connections among place, knowledge, and morality as understood within the Apache culture and builds his research project on the deep immersion into and exploration of the historical tribal past as re-articulated for him in the present.

To analyze knowledge processes and decipher scientific epistemic tradition or "construction and fashioning of social arrangements within science" Knorr-Cetina looks closely at two science monopolies that are "at the forefront of academic respectability, intense, successful, and heavily financed."[13] These sciences are experimental high energy physics and molecular biology. Knorr-Cetina draws her analytical observations and comparisons through analysis of contemporary machineries of knowing by questioning how they work and what principles govern their procedures. She aims to understand if social order norms can be employed as patterns to describe and analyze the organizational structures around science agencies and how these patterns differ across the landscapes of science or so called epistemic 'sub-cultures.'[14] As a result of her comparison between physics and biology disciplines, she points out the 'epistemic disunity' of contemporary natural sciences by contrasting institutional forms and structures that define and shape knowledge systems and processes:[15]

> These were the differences between the liminal approach to truth in physics and 'blind' variation in molecular biology, or the difference between physics' way of locating data at the intersection between signs, simulations, and theory and molecular biology's experiential conception of measurement, or the difference between communitarian mechanisms in one case and individuation in the other.[16]

Looking also at social and cultural construction around knowledge systems of indigenous culture, Basso, on the other hand, grounds his anthropological research in an exploration of Apache epistemic tradition with its 'non western' conceptions of knowledge, space, and time. In contrast with Knorr-Cetina, who is concerned more with larger social structures as monolith systems, Basso advocates

[12] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 4.
[13] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 4.
[14] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 3.
[15] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 8.
[16] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 246.

for sensitivity to individual human experiences bounded to "human existence that is irrevocably situated in time and space."[17] Concerned with the questions of production and the sharing of 'knowledge of the self' in the Apache cultural system, Basso investigates the schemes of reproductions of knowledge within larger social and cultural fields including community, places, and tribal historic past.[18] Specifically, Basso is interested in understanding the role of place in the cultural domain of Apache communities located within the geographical and cultural landscapes of Cibecue.[19] Through a depiction of the peculiarities of the Apache culture, Basso illustrates how a geographic concept of place acquires cognitive, emotional, esthetic, and social dimensions:

> When places are *actively sensed*, the physical landscape becomes wedded to the *landscape of the mind*, to the roving *imagination*, and where the latter may lead is anybody's guess.[20]

Building on the Apache cultural understanding of place significance, Basso discovers that geographical locations and objects can generate their own meanings and communicate their own "aesthetic immediacies, their shifting moods and relevancies, their character and spirit."[21] However, the ability of the places to "speak" is heavily grounded in the social interactive capacities of embedded environment which comes to life through communication among individuals sharing the same physical and cultural space.

The differences of the research subjects explored by Basso and Knorr-Cetina contextualize their research projects in oppositional cultural and social environments of scientific and indigenous epistemologies. Examining the influential science agency and its epistemic 'subcultures', Knorr-Cetina investigates the scientific epistemic tradition from the position of a distinguished sociologist, who was educated within the Western knowledge production system and who belongs to it. On the contrary, Basso, as an 'alien' to the Apache culture and its epistemic environment, tries to reach an understanding of the indigenous epistemology by digging into the world of a small indigenous tribe striving to survive in a modern world under the pressure of globalization. These cultural and social differences in the chosen research environments, as well as researchers' dissimilar positions within these environments lead authors to choose completely

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[17] Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 106.

[18] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 34.

[19] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, XV-XVI.

[20] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*,107.

[21] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*,109.

different tools and methodological approaches in order to uncover and reveal the complex mechanisms of knowledge production within the scientific and indigenous epistemic cultures.

Methodologies: intellectual abstraction versus cultural immersion

As Australian psychologist, Dawn Darlaston-Jones, insightfully indicates: "the ability to identify the relationship between the epistemological foundation of research and the methods employed in conducting it is critical in order for research to be truly meaningful."[22] The focus on methods shapes not only theoretical frameworks of epistemic cultures but more importantly defines how epistemic traditions, which are under investigations, can be understood and interpreted. The rules of scientific research require systematic, skeptical, and ethical enquiry based on empirical data.[23] Within the positivist paradigm of scientific epistemology this means controlled, objective, and value free enquiry which can lead to justified generalizations and theorization.[24] However, as researchers Berger and Luckman from the postmodern social constructivism tradition advocate, opening wider frames of scientific enquiry can significantly diversify and broaden a range of methodologies, which allow a more accurate and deeper understanding of the unique characteristics of a domain and the individuals who comprise it.[25]

Both of the authors, Knorr-Cetina and Basso, in order to collect their data utilize quite similar methodologies of anthropological field studies, originating from the scientific epistemological tradition. However, they employ quite different approaches in the use of these methods which naturally immerse them deeper in their research environments and help to uncover the subtle structures and complex mechanisms running through epistemic environments. Knorr-Cetina contrasts two sciences of high energy physics with the molecular biology. She chooses these two scientific fields because it allows her to compare the differences in the communication systems between scientists within both fields in order to: evaluate the scales of time and space in their organizations and workflows; contrast semiological and linguistic differences in the fields; and to question the

[22] Dawn Darlaston-Jones, "Making connections: The relationship between epistemology and research methods," *The Australian Community Psychologist* 19, 1(2007): 19.

[23] Colin Robson, *Real World Research* (Malden: Blackwell, 2002).

[24] Darlaston-Jones, "Making connections," 21.

[25] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1966).

role of the empirical versus experimental sides of the sciences.[26] The author attempts to examine physics through the lens of biology and vice versa by employing a 'comparative optics' analysis that 'visibilizes' patterns extracted from one science that become amplified through the analysis of an equivalent phenomena in the other science.[27] Thus, Knorr-Cetina intentionally employs external analytical observation and personal abstraction on both a cultural and epistemic levels from the worlds of laboratorial explorations in physics and biology.

In contrast, Basso tries to fully immerse himself in the cultural, social, and geographic environment of the Apache communities. For Basso it is very important to ground his anthropological exploration by living on the edge of denying/forgetting his personal cultural background and epistemic tradition in order to grasp the full nuances of Apache collective cultural-epistemic construct that he attempts not to deconstruct, but to *describe* with detailed preciseness. Basso is concerned that local understandings of external realities cannot be fully achieved by any anthropologist because "Cultures run deep, as the saying goes, and all of us take our 'native's point of view' very much for granted."[28] The ethnographic research that he conducts thus seeks to extend the boundaries of understanding the 'other' without re-interpreting the realities of a different cultural setting from the point of view of his own cultural significance.[29]

From the methodological perspective, the role and place of the researcher in these field studies, that each of the authors conducted, also differ significantly. Knorr-Cetina and Basso engaged themselves in similar commitments of nonstop field work over multiple years which entailed a strong personal dedication. However, they situate themselves within research on quite different levels. Knorr-Cetina emphasizes the importance of her personal contribution to the research being implemented across the two different fields. Despite the fact that her field studies required collaboration with a great number of scientists from both of the laboratories and the help of two observers, she stresses that "The present study is the outcome of the comparison conducted by *myself*."[30] Knorr-Cetina emphasizes her strong individual intake in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data from the field. She nurtures her conceptual understanding of 'epistemic culture' through analysis of highly selective data gathered in her

[26] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 4.
[27] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 246.
[28] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places,* 72.
[29] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places,* 72.
[30] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 19.

selected fields with formal preciseness. She finds the evidence for her generalizations and specifications of social and cultural patterns across physics and biology by conducting structured interviews with scientists, collecting written records provided by laboratories, such as "meeting transparencies, internal notes, versions of talks and papers," as well as soliciting internal e-mail correspondence reflecting the development of scientific projects run by teams of scientists.[31]

Thus, she places herself 'above' the cultural domain of the laboratorial life that she researches and brings the wealth of her academic expertise into the careful design of her research. In every stage of the study's development, she exercises her strong power as an independent researcher and intellectual to direct the data collection and analysis processes according to specific scholarly instructions and schemes. In this way she seeks to legitimate the results of her fields' observations and to supply all the necessary evidence to validate the scientific "truth" that she is pursuing.

In contrast, Basso takes a completely different approach in his anthropological research. He almost shocks readers by deliberate diminishing his role in the project and by portraying himself as a mere transmittor or recording device that aims to preserve pure information in the form comprehendible within his own culture. In order to achieve a high sensitivity to cultural nuances and to embrace the complexity of the Apache epistemic construct, grounded in the notion of geographic and cultural locality, Basso transforms from an authoritative academic to a proper student. Throughout his research project, he develops the narration of his learning processes through sincere and honest depictions of his failures on the long way to the cultural truth he is trying to uncover. He positions himself in a complete reliant state dependent on his 'teachers' who not only open their world of knowledge and wisdom to him, but also dictate to him where, when, and how to conduct his anthropological observations and collect his data. For example in the first chapter, Charles, one of the Apache who accompanies Basso on a field trip, insists on taking a break from the study and explain that collected data has to be properly translated which is a highly time consuming process. The Apache teaches Basso that "it would not be wise for us (he means me) to do it in a hurry."[32]

Even the privilege of personally knowing people from the Apache community for several years does not allow the author to leverage his friendship to request data and interview people whenever he feels like doing it. The author is

[31] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 19.

[32] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 29.

extremely careful to *listen and wait for* when people are ready and eager to share their opinion and knowledge with him and he trains himself to be patient:

> *I have known Dudley for twelve years* and on other occasions have seen him withdraw from social encounters to keep counsel with himself. I also know that he is mightily interested in red ants and holds them in high esteem. *I would like to ask him a few more questions, but unless he invites me to do so* (and by now, I suspect, he may have had enough) *it would be rude to disturb him*.[33]

Knorr-Cetina and Basso, as anthropologists, take oppositional approaches in their research studies. In order to establish a strong personal contact with representatives from the Apache communities, Basso suppresses his academic authority and nurtures his innately human abilities to listen, to dialogue, and to wonder. As a result, this approach emphasizes his power as a human being to understand and to learn from the 'other.' In contrast, Knorr-Cetina employs her academic expertise to collect her data and to investigate human interactions in the laboratories. The environment of the science industry urges her to follow academic ethics and utilize formal procedures that establish her authority among other researchers. Eventually, the academic burden, structural formality, and preoccupation to visualize 'patterns' undermine her human powers and learning freedom to go beyond the comparison and evaluation into deep exploration. These different approaches in positioning themselves as researchers in different epistemic environments, scientific versus indigenous cultures, result in oppositional understanding of such notions as knowledge and place, which again rearticulate the role of a researcher within different epistemic traditions.

'Place' as a tool versus 'scientist' as a device

Though both of the authors try to explore the cultural mechanisms of knowledge production and sharing within the context of their research studies, they have quite different understanding of what knowledge is and of the actors who produce and transmit knowledge across time and space. Being grounded in scientific epistemic tradition, which sets a binary opposition between such concepts as knowledge versus belief, the research of Knorr-Cetina reemphasizes again a specific role and place of knowledge in the scientific epistemic paradigm. Within this paradigm, knowledge as an analytical construct, based on subsets of the whole, is a phenomenon acquired through scientific method or independent and rigorous testing, which is accepted and approved within the scientific community. The validity of this knowledge is ultimately based on empirical evidences, which

[33] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 120.

within the scientific epistemic culture have to be interpreted according to reductionist, objectivistic, and positivistic traditions.

Therefore, for Knorr-Cetina, knowledge is "a production context in its own right," that includes processes and knowledge-related structures.[34] She advocates for a definition of knowledge that stresses the importance of processes within environments building epistemic settings. Knorr-Cetina does connect the notion of knowledge with the social constructs involving "multiple instrumental, linguistic, theoretical organizational, and many other frameworks."[35] However, she understands knowledge producers as derivative from the very practices of knowledge creating, as mere devices in machineries of knowledge. Knorr-Cetina stresses that scientists are "specific epistemic subjects" who have been shaped in a similar ways as tools that they use in scientific inquiry.[36] "Scientists are … are part of a field's research strategy and a technical device in the production of knowledge."[37] Knorr-Cetina underlines the secondary role of scientists in laboratory science by revealing "communitarian superordering imposed upon these subjects." She supports her opinion by providing numerous examples from high energy physics that requires collaboration among and involvement of a great number of researchers in experimental processes and developing research projects.

In contrast, for Basso, knowledge is closely linked to the knowledge of the self that reconstructs "one's position in the larger scheme of things, including one's own community, and to securing a confident sense of who one is as a person."[38] Unlike Knorr-Cetina's focus on processes within epistemic structures, Basso draws on the Apache theory of 'wisdom' to link the understanding of knowledge, not with human activities 'per se,' but rather with places, as well as human memory and intangible heritage embedded in these places. Basso's project explicitly demonstrates the key points of indigenous epistemology which is "grounded in the self, the spirit, the unknown," where knowledge must be sought "through the stream of the inner space in unison with all instruments of knowing and conditions that make individuals receptive to knowing."[39]

Knowledge of places and their cultural significance is crucial for Basso because, according to Apache beliefs, they enable "mental conditions needed for wisdom, as well as the practical advantages that wisdom confers on persons who

[34] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 7.
[35] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 10.
[36] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 32.
[37] Knorr-Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures*, 29.
[38] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 34.
[39] Willie Ermine, "Aboriginal Epistemology," in *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds,* ed. Marie Ann Battiste and Jean Barman (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 108.

possess it."[40] Understanding knowledge as wisdom and understanding wisdom "first and foremost as an instrument of survival," Apache culture shifts the focus of the epistemic paradigm from knowledge universality to personification of knowledge. Consequently, in any Apache community, wisdom as a "virtue of unusual mental powers" is a truly human ability "to foresee disaster, fend off misfortune, and avoid explosive conflicts with other persons."[41] Knowledge or wisdom is generated inside the communities through individuals' experiences in relation to particular geographic localities which legitimize the past and serve as the main historical evidence for the truthfulness of the stories happened in these places.

Such an understanding of knowledge within the Apache cultural epistemic tradition is coherent with later findings of other researchers who tried to uncover the mysteries of indigenous epistemologies. Therefore, anthropologist from Peru, Mahia Maurial, defines indigenous knowledge as "the peoples' cognitive and wise legacy as a result of their interaction with nature in a common territory."[42] Canadian ethnographer, Marlene Brant Castellano, highlights major characteristics of indigenous knowledge as "personal, oral, experiential, holistic, and conveyed in narrative or metaphorical language."[43]

Furthermore, in contrast with Knorr-Cetina's under-statement of the role of scientists in the processes of knowledge production and further dissemination, Basso celebrates the power of ordinary individuals not only to generate wisdom through their life experiences but also to share knowledge in human interactions. He points out how important it is for the Apache community to keep oral narrations about concrete individuals from the past with their own stories and human characters, with details about their appearances, with their names and their roles in the tribe:

> The Apache landscape is full of named locations where time and space have fused and where, through the agency historical tales, their intersection is 'made visible for human contemplation.'[44]

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[40] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 130.

[41] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 131.

[42] Mahia Maurial, "Indigenous Knowledge and Schooling: A Continuum Between Conflict and Dialogue," in W*hat is Indigenous Knowledge: Voices from the Academy,* ed. Ladislaus Semali and Joe Kincheloe (New York: Falmer Press, 1999), 62.

[43] Marlene Brant Castellano, "Updating Aboriginal Traditions of Knowledge," in *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts*, ed. Budd L. Hall, George Jerry Sefa Dei, and Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 21-36.

[44] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 62.

These stories from the past come to life in the present reality only through person-to-person communication in the act of knowledge transfer from one generation to the other. It is almost "a form of narrative art, a type of historical theater" where the past unfolds in front of one's eyes with respect to his/her own age, character, and ability to understand and appreciate the story. The 'real-ness' of the stories being told is fostered through utilizing active present tense in describing the actions that took places generations ago. The use of quoted speech in the narrations also strengthens the first person experience and captivates "the hearts and minds" of listeners, thus making the wisdom of ancestors relevant and sounding in the presence.[45]

Through his research on endogenous epistemology, Basso highlights a strong focus on people and entities coming together to help and support one another in their relationship, which has become known as "a relational worldview."[46] The most important characteristic of this relational worldview is the stress on spirituality and a sense of communitism or, in other words, a sense of community tied together by familial-tribal relations and the families' commitment to it.[47] Furthermore, indigenous worldviews and their epistemologies are rooted in people's close relationship with their surrounding environments.[48] Interestingly, both researchers, Knorr-Cetina and Basso, illuminate the importance of location in the cultural-epistemic constructs and believe that physical localities "are never culturally vacant." Nevertheless, they look at physical places and conception of space from different perspectives.

Knorr-Cetina stresses the role of laboratories in knowledge production by deconstructing the machinery of science monopolies; she accentuates the power of epistemic environments to shape human interactions. She understands the laboratory space as a defining force that emerges along with the development of cultural and social surroundings that directs human activities. Oppositely, Basso introduces a completely different understanding of locality in the epistemic culture; he puts a special emphasis on the human power (not the power of the place itself) to animate the physical environments:

> Animated by the thoughts and feelings of persons who attend to them, *places express only what their animators enable them to say*; like the thirsty sponges …

[45] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 33.

[46] Thomas L. Crofoot Graham, "Using Reasons for Living to Connect to American Indian Healing Traditions," *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 1(2002): 55-75.

[47] Hart, "Indigenous Worldviews," 3.

[48] Hart, "Indigenous Worldviews," 2.

> they yield to consciousness only what consciousness has given them to absorb…[49]

Landscapes, as Basso stresses, become the devices for people to communicate among each other and to transfer knowledge and wisdom from one generation to the other. Geographical localities in the Apache culture are mere "*tools for imaginations*, *expressive means for accomplishing verbal deeds* … and eminently portable possessions to which individuals can maintain deep and abiding attachments…"[50] As a result, it's the power of people, rather than the spaces, to define learning and knowledge generating experiences; geographical landscapes serve as marks to refer to particular knowledge or wisdom resources in the universe of the Apache culture.

The knowledge-place paradigms, grounded in the scientific and indigenous epistemic cultures, introduced by Basso and Knorr-Cetina, are different and create quite oppositional understandings of person's place and role in their epistemic environments. Knorr-Cetina looks at the epistemic space of laboratories as a powerful force that puts scientists in the position of mere device in more complex structures of knowledge machineries. In opposition, Basso emphasizes the power of people to enable places to acquire human abilities to talk, to interact, and to share.

Conclusion

It is fascinating how both readings, analyzed in this article, present completely different perspectives on how to view knowledge systems and their major components from the positions of two different epistemic paradigms: scientific versus indigenous. The book by Knorr-Cetina describes the functioning mechanisms of gigantic machineries of knowledge that rule society, shape human perceptions of the world, and define the place of the person in this world. This research once again highlights the postmodern uncertain position and dependence of a human agency on numerous contexts that are portrayed as powerful forces in constructing the activities and identities of human beings. The study conducted by Basso, on the other hand, returns people to their roots, to physical geographies of places (not spaces), and to the natural world of social and cultural interactions. The wisdom of the culture that he researches opens bigger philosophical questions of what knowledge is and why the human universe is so deeply connected to the physical reality of our world. His book is a call to scientists and people to look

[49] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 108.

[50] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 75.

back inside ourselves to find unlimited resources of knowledge and our power within. It celebrates the human being as a focal point where imaginary and physical realities converge to reflect a mystery and the surrounding beauty of the world.

Indeed, the scientific knowledge generated through centuries has secured a foundational position in the Western civilization and specifically in the epistemic tradition. However, because it is ultimately based on empirical evidence, it cannot provide answers to questions that do not have an empirical basis. "It cannot deal with questions of faith or morals, or controversial subject topics such as eugenics, stem cell research, abortion, and so forth. It cannot be used to make human value judgments."[51] In contrast, the traditional or indigenous knowledge celebrates the pluralism in 'truth,' because it is dependent upon individual experiences and relationships with living and non-living beings and entities.[52] Being holistic and cyclic in nature, the indigenous knowledge as a human-environmental wisdom stresses deep connections between people and their spiritual reality and opens up opportunities for understanding the world around us on a different level. It is imperative to understand, acknowledge, recognize, and appreciate epistemic cultures originating from various historical, social and cultural backgrounds, because these various epistemologies can significantly enrich the nature of human research enquiry and enhance our harmonic world perception.

[51] Carl Wenning, "Scientific Epistemology: How Scientists Know What They Know," *Physics Teacher Education Online* 5, 2 (2009): 13.

[52] Leanne Simpson, "Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing," in *Aboriginal Health, Identity and Resources,* ed. Jill Oakes (Winnipeg: Native Studies Press, 2000), 165-185.

KNOWLEDGE AND PERSISTENCE

Stephen SKERRY

ABSTRACT: States *are* states, in part, because they persist through time. Knowing is one such state, and it often persists beyond the time when evidence is first apprehended. The consequences for epistemology of this persistence are explored, including what are termed 'unearned knowledge,' and 'one-sided knowledge.' Knowing that you are not dreaming is one (important) example of unearned and one-sided knowing. The author contends that arguments for scepticism and for knowing as a purley mental state are undermined when this persistence is properly understood.

KEYWORDS: dreaming, knowledge, mental states, scepticism, persistence

I know that Barack Obama is President of the United States. By that I mean that I know *right now* that he is the President *right now*. As accomplishments go it's rather small. Hundreds of millions of people know the same thing and know that most other people know it as well. It's an odd thing to mention, but only because it's such common knowledge that Obama is the President. Still, odd or not, I do know it.

How, short of a though going scepticism, could this be thought problematic? One way might be to assume that I just awoke from a normal night's sleep and ask: What was Obama doing in the middle of last night while I slept? Was he feeling ill? Did he have any sort of health scare? Did he die from a sudden illness? Was there a personal crisis that might make a President suddenly resign? Did he in fact resign? Did the FBI uncover some malfeasance on his part that might make a Congress take immediate action against him? Was he impeached and tried while I slept? Did the Senate remove him from office? Was Joe Biden sworn in as President in the moments just before I woke?

As I sit here now at 9 A.M., having been out of contact with the world since about 10 P.M. last evening, having spoken to no one and having had no phone, internet, TV, or radio communication since then, is there any way I could know whether or not these things occurred? Based on what I already knew before sleeping, I might say that it's most improbable that events like these occurred. But could I totally rule them out? Do I *know* that they did not occur?

One possible counterargument to my claim to know *right now* that Barack Obama is President of the U.S. *right now* is this: you cannot possibly know *that*, for you have already admitted that you cannot and do not know for sure that he did not resign, or that he did not suddenly die, or that Congress did not legally

remove him from office while you slept, and surely if you do not know those things to be false, then you cannot know that he is (still) President.

Now, as it happens, in my paragraph two back from this I *did not admit* that I know none of these things. In fact I believe that I do know that he did not resign, or die, or get removed from office in the middle of the night. And if asked how I knew these things even while being out of touch with the world I would cite this argument: I know right now that Obama is President right now, and if he is President right now, then it follows that he did not die or resign or get removed during the night. I would admit that I don't know that he didn't get very ill, but would argue that if he did it didn't kill him. I would admit that it's possible that he experienced some personal crisis, but that if so it didn't cause him to resign on the spot. I would admit that Congress might possibly have instigated impeachment and trials against him, but if so these have not yet lead to his removal. *Some* of the things listed before I admit I do not and cannot know. But I maintain that I do know that the ones incompatible with his being President right now did not occur, and that I know this because I know that he is President right now.

We have a bit of a standoff. I say I know he didn't resign because I know that he is President and that he would not be the President if he had resigned. The contrary argument is that there is no way for a sleeping person to know what happened in Washington D.C. (if that's where he was) in the middle of the night and therefore no way to know that Obama did not suddenly resign (or die, etc.), and therefore no way to know *right now* this morning that he is President *right now*. It will further insist that any claim I make to know that Obama did not resign in the night uses circular reasoning since it assumes the very thing (viz: my knowledge that Obama is President right now) that is under debate. The question in the standoff becomes: is there a way to adjudicate this dispute?

This is a paper about the *persistence of knowledge*, about the characteristics of knowledge which allow it to maintain its status as real knowledge over a period of time, and to maintain this status even after the immediate apprehension of the evidence for that knowledge has passed, and to maintain this status of knowledge even over a period of time in which a known proposition *might* change truth value[1] (and so come to be unknown.) In brief, my argument is this: that knowing is a personal *state*, a state of a person, and that states, by their nature, maintain existence over time unless and until undone by internal or external forces, that

[1] Instead of talking about a proposition which changes truth value we might want to talk about a continuous series of propositions, e.g. "he is President right now … and now … and now …" which becomes discontinuous when one member of the series differs in truth value from its near predecessors.

this tendency to hold together over time is what we may call the *persistence of knowledge*, that this persistence is metaphysically required by the concept of knowledge, that, in addition, knowledge holds interest and utility for us as humans in large part because of its recognized persistence, that this persistence leads to knowledge of things which I deem '*unearned knowledge*,' things which, by their nature, can only be defended by circular arguments, that among this 'unearned knowledge' is, for instance, the knowledge that Obama did not resign in the middle of the night and, more generally, that I am not dreaming right now. In this paper the debate about knowledge of Obama will serve as something of a proxy for the age-old debates between sceptics and realists.

Knowledge and Persistence

Knowledge, in my view, may be compared to a store of capital or wealth, something we can draw on as needed and which persists over time despite undergoing fluctuations. Wealth is important to people, in part, because it, and its utility, persist. We do not need to spend each dollar we earn the second it comes into our possession. At least that is true in normal economic times. In an era of hyperinflation such as Germany experienced after the First World War it may be wise to spend right away because the currency devalues so rapidly. In more normal times a currency devalues due to inflation at a slow enough pace that the value of holding capital, and of letting that capital work in our favor, can overbalance this devaluation. So too with knowledge.

It's hard to understand why anyone would value knowledge, or care enough about knowledge even to try to raise the sceptical argument, if knowledge had no persistence. If knowledge, like the Mark in 1923, had a value so evanescent that it became worthless within minutes of our gaining it, then who would care whether we had it or not? I know that my passport is in a certain drawer. I didn't cease knowing this the last time I looked at it and then closed that drawer. It's logically (and even, in *some* sense, epistemically) possible that someone broke into my house last night and stole the passport. If this occurred then I certainly no longer know that it is in that drawer, for knowledge implies truth. But if it remains there and nothing about its position has changed, and nothing about my evidence for its whereabouts has changed, and nothing about the key relationships between its whereabouts and that evidence has changed (all if which I believe to be the case) then it seems to me that I still know that the passport is in that drawer even though it has been a few days since I last saw it there. My knowledge that it is in the drawer *persisted* through time and I value this knowledge precisely because I can count on it when it's needed.

If in the truest sense of 'knowledge' I do not know that my passport is in that drawer (even while making all of the assumptions I just made), either because some general sceptical theory is correct or for any other reason, then we ought to take a critical look at the real value of this knowledge concept. We might even consider junking that concept of knowledge as uninteresting and unimportant, and consider replacing it with a concept better suited to the needs of real people. We could do this just as the German nation replaced the Mark of 1923 with the Rentenmark as part of an effort to gain currency stability.

What then goes into the sort of epistemic stability I possess with regard to Obama's presidency and the location of my passport? What accounts for the fact that knowledge will persist over time? My view is a pretty common view nowadays: that knowing is a *state*. It is not an object, an event or a process,[2] but a state which people may find themselves in (or not.) In a very general sense, anything which is a 'state' must, I believe, meet the following necessary conditions:

1. it must consist of an organization, or integrated whole, of 'stuff'
2. it must exhibit continuity over time
3. it must have a characteristic manifestations[3]
4. it must play a predictable role in certain causal and explanatory chains.

Now if this view of a state is accepted then it follows from item 2 that states persist over time. The defining characteristic of a state, however, lies in its organizing principal, in that which causes us to see it as an integrated whole. Thus a state of panic is defined by an organization of mental and (perhaps) physical facts about a person which cause that person to behave in certain ways and which manifest in certain ways, perhaps in a certain facial expressions and other kinds of body language, perhaps in a disposition to make rash or hasty decisions, or in other sorts of physical and mental agitation. And so long as this

[2] Timothy Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), see especially Chap. 1 "A State of Mind." For the opposing view, more similar to my own, see Elizabeth Fricker, "Is Knowing a State of Mind? The Case Against," in *Williamson on Knowledge*, ed. Patrick Greenough and Duncan Pritchard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 31-59.

[3] Although I will not discuss the characteristic manifestation of knowing that p in this paper in any detail, I believe it is, in short, a disposition to assent (or perhaps to assent without qualification), at least internally, to a proposition p when it presents to the mind. I see this manifestation as not being much different, if at all, than the manifestation displayed through the state of belief, and that belief and knowledge may differ, not in this respect, but in lots of other respects.

organization of 'stuff' remains intact, the state of panic persists, and will persist even when the person involved does not experience a feeling of panic, and does not present to the rest of us as 'panicky.'

A state of knowing might consist of an organization of beliefs, mental events, pieces of evidence and facts about the world. I will defer till later in the paper the question of whether the 'stuff' so organized is solely mental, or physical, or mental/physical together with external facts. It is the job of epistemology, at least in part, to decipher as precisely as possible what the organizing principals of knowledge are – how the parts fit together to make up the state of knowing. A primary job is to determine how the ideas of evidence and epistemic justification fit into a presumed organization which constitutes knowing. But whatever details of this we can uncover, we are left with the idea of an organizing principal underneath the concept of knowing, and thus with the idea that knowing is a state which will persist so long as that organization remains intact.

Persistence, of course, does not make a state of knowing, or any other state, eternal. An organization of stuff may fall to pieces either through internal or external causes. In the case of knowing, an external cause might be the arrival of new evidence. If I turn on the news this morning and the headline story is "Obama resigns!" I then have significant new evidence that he is no longer President. By the time I check 2 or 3 networks and a few internet sites it becomes clear that the first headline I heard was not some oddball joke or prank. It is now clear that I no longer know what I previously knew, and it is clear that I didn't know it before I turned on the news (since it had been untrue for a while.)

I also believe that my knowledge may fall to pieces due to simple external changes in facts which present no new evidence to me, but this too I defer to a later section.

More interesting, perhaps, for the issue of knowledge persistence is this idea: that the state of knowing may decay of its own accord through internal causes, that it inherently has an internal, time based instability. Take this case: In the dead of winter, with 2 feet of snow on the ground, I travel back to the neighborhood of my upbringing and notice that the house where I was raised is now painted yellow. I see that it is and I know that it is painted yellow. The next morning I recall the experience and again know that the house in which I was raised is now painted yellow. A day after that I no longer thinking about the experience, but I still know that that house is painted yellow. By the time 6 months have passed, however, it seems clear that I no longer know this. In that period of time too many things might have caused the facts to change – a new

owner might have repainted, or the house might even have been torn down by then.

It seems in this example as though I am relying on prior knowledge of what it takes in terms of time and environment to repaint a house. We do not repaint with 2 feet of snow on the ground, and it takes more than a few days to repaint a sizeable home. And of course these factors do play into my thinking. But I believe that the state of knowing here runs down or decays of its own accord independent of my knowledge of the practicalities of house painting. If, for instance, I went into a coma the day after seeing the home and woke up 6 months later with a very clear recollection of the experience but believed that it had happened the previous day, would we think then that I still knew that the house of my upbringing was painted yellow? No. Independent of what I experienced or recollected we know that too much time had passed for me still to know the color of that house. The justification I had for the belief about that home has decayed, and has decayed independently of my ability to know the extent of decay.

Justification, and knowledge along with it, comes with a decay model similar to those of radioactive substances, similar to those of purchasing power in an era of inflation. Like radioactive substances different knowledge states decay at different speeds: there is a different 'half-life' for my justification of the claim that a certain house is painted yellow and for my justification of the claim that all men are mortal. Once we know, the knowledge will persist, but its justification is constantly running down as the clock moves, and unless refreshed by new evidence (e.g. new views of the house in each of the next 5 months) that justification will decay to the level where we might still believe, but believe without knowledge. To use yet another metaphor: justification comes with a 'freshness date' and once that date passes, the degree of justification no longer supports knowledge.

Could knowledge be different? Could it exist as a real thing without persistence? I suppose this would mean something like us knowing only for the time period in which we have direct apprehension of the evidence which leads to knowledge. It would mean, for example, that I could know that the house was panted yellow while right in front of it with a clear view, but not know the second I turned my back on the house. I have already argued above that such a concept of knowledge would hold little interest or value in the real world. But independent of the utility of knowledge, can we imagine a world where all knowledge was of this sort? The scenario under discussion is not the sceptical scenario, for under that view of the world we do not get to know that the house is yellow even when we directly perceive it to be yellow. But of course this scenario

is a first cousin, at least, to scepticism. For anyone who believed in it would soon be confronted with questions about how he could know that there was a persistent object which was a house to begin with.

It seems to me that a tendency to think that knowledge only pertains when evidence good enough for knowledge is itself directly perceived and experienced (either through vision, memory, reasoning, etc.) results from a confusion between the perceptual or reasoning events which lead us into a state of knowledge and the knowledge itself, a confusion between the *events* that spawn a state and the *state* itself. But events and states are 2 different things. All states are distinguishable from their precipitating and constitutive events. I may be thrown into a state of panic when I see from bank statements that my business partner has systematically stolen all of our assets. The state of panic might persist for weeks or months and certainly it persists over periods where I am not thinking about the theft, am not feeling agitated or panicky and do not present to the world that way. The state of panic which persists in me over time is not the same thing as the event of my feeling panic at one or another time. People observing me over time may detect my state of panic and are not confused by my failure to manifest symptoms of panic at each and every moment.

I do not claim that all states outlast their associated events. Dream states, for instance, seem to me to be strictly concurrent with the event of dreaming. As a state it decays very rapidly. A state of freshness in baked goods is thought of in reference to the time since the baking process (as a series of events) completed. But some baked goods decay out of freshness much more rapidly than others which might have been designed via the recipe for a more gentle and extended decay.

Asking "Can knowledge be the same thing without persistence?" is like asking "Can freshness be the same thing without persistence?" or "Can being wealthy be the same thing without persistence?" All three of these states are distinct from their originating, formative events, and all three are distinct from the events through which the states manifest themselves. Is freshness in a brownie the same thing if we insist the only truly fresh brownie is one direct from the oven? One can imagine this sort of usage but can also see that it is pointless. And it's pointless because someone who thought freshness was a strict function of time since baking ended would thereby have shown he did not really understand what we mean by 'fresh.' We can imagine the usage but it is not our usage.

My conclusion is that knowing is a state that exhibits continuity over time, a continuity which is independent of formative events and manifesting events. I say, therefore, that knowing requires persistence. My view is that I went to bed

last night knowing that Obama was President, woke up this morning knowing that he was President and therefore knew at each intervening moment, i.e. the moments when I was fast asleep, that he was President. To deny this line of reasoning is either to say I didn't know to begin with (e.g. last night and so forth for all the prior nights) that he was President, or that I lost that knowledge overnight, or that I knew it last night and this morning but not in between those times. The first view, which is the sceptical view, is at least coherent; we can follow the line of thought. But the latter two views I see less charitably. To think that I lost the knowledge forever merely by going to sleep is a non sequitur on par with "You lost the knowledge when you stubbed your toe" and deserves no more consideration. And to think that I lost the knowledge during sleep but regained it upon awakening is to beg the question of how I got the knowledge back. Remembering that I knew it last night won't do it, and remembering that he *was* President last night won't do it, remembering any state of affairs from last night won't do it. Because the question is not what was true last night but what is true now – i.e. is he really the President right now? Without continuity of a state of knowledge over time to bolster it, there could be no explanation of how or why I would know right now that he is President right now. To deny knowledge persistence and continuity over time is to embrace scepticism.

State continuity and persistence lead back to the questions I began with. Assuming that I knew continuously from last night to this morning that Obama is President right now, some surprising conclusions can be reached:

1. I do know right now that Obama did not resign (or die, etc.) in the middle of the night
2. I know plenty of things, the Obama case among them, while I am sleeping and dreaming
3. I know right now that I am not dreaming
4. Knowing cannot be a purely mental state, i.e. it is either non-mental or hybrid.
5. Dialectical circles are benign and inevitable. We must learn to embrace them.

Unearned Knowledge

A store of wealth can generate what is called 'unearned income' in the form of capital gains and dividends. I will call the kind of knowledge I have of Obama's non-resignation 'unearned knowledge' because I see it as being of a similar or related sort. It's a gain or dividend that accrues to me because I did earn other knowledge (through experience for instance) and stored that knowledge up in a

persistent state. My stock in company X goes up and I experience a capital gain without having contributed any direct labor to the generation of my new income. I can point to no labor which would justify this money belonging to me as opposed, say, to its remaining with company X. My knowledge that Obama is President stays intact overnight and I experience the gain of knowing he did not resign in the night without having any direct evidence for my new knowledge. I can point to no direct evidence against the contrary proposition that he did resign. If company X begins to do poorly, upsetting its prior track record of stable gains, then it will declare no dividend. If a question about whether Obama did resign is seriously broached (perhaps because a new visitor this morning heard a rumor), this may upset my previously stable view of the world and my dividend of unearned knowledge might disappear. And I would have nothing right now to contribute on the question of whether he had resigned. After all I was asleep and out of touch with the world.

This sort of unearned knowledge displays a curious asymmetry, a one-sidedness. Clearly if Obama had resigned in the middle of last night there would be no way for me to know this. If p = Obama resigned in the middle of the night, then I am saying:

a. If p then I don't know p

b. If ~p then I do know ~p

This seems to me far different than ordinary cases of, say, perceptual knowledge. In a typical case of perceptual knowledge I might be looking at a yellow house and know that it is painted yellow. But if the same house had been painted blue then I would know by sight that the house was not painted yellow. If q = the house is painted yellow, then I would say:

a. If q then I know q

b. If ~q then I know ~q

Perception allows me to discriminate the alternatives. Not so in unearned knowledge of the one-sided.

Knowledge and Dreaming

I believe that another case of the unearned, one-sided kind is my knowledge that I am not currently dreaming. I mentioned above my belief that I know plenty of things even while I am asleep and dreaming. To deny this is to deny the continuity over time of the knowledge state, to deny the persistence of knowledge. I think this conclusion is fully consistent with and reinforced by

considerations of natural usage. Consider the following conversation among friends:

> Bill: Does Fred know that Julie got the promotion? He was awfully anxious about it.
>
> Jane: He does.
>
> Bill: Are you sure? Do you know it for a fact?
>
> Jane: I was there when Julie told him in person. Fred was very excited for her.
>
> Bill: But I mean: does he know it now?
>
> Jane: Why wouldn't he?
>
> Bill: Possibly Fred has retired for the evening and is asleep. Ever think of that?
>
> Jane: So what?
>
> Bill: He might now even be dreaming of a conversation with Julie about promotions.
>
> Jane: Oh, look at the time!

It's easy to see in this fanciful conversation that Bill has gone way off the tracks. His questioning of whether Fred knows a thing right now has lead him to wonder if Fred has been robbed of his knowledge by falling asleep. And he might as well have asked Jane to consider the possibility that Fred no longer knew about Julie's promotion because, as far as either of them knew, Fred had recently stubbed his toe.

What is true about sleep, as far as I can see, is that it robs us of the ability to know of events whose temporal span is strictly included in the span of time when we are fully asleep. So, in the age-old example, a sleeping person dreams of a door slamming triggered by the sound of an actual door slamming, but he does not know that any door slammed.[4] True enough. Sleeping clearly shuts down a lot of our epistemic toolkit, and that kit will produce no new results for me (at least knowledge results) while the system is in the off mode.

But I think the conversation between Bill and Jane shows that we all know an awful lot of things while we are sleeping (and perhaps dreaming of whatever.) To cite 4 examples of what I knew while I slept last night: I knew that Obama was

[4] Barry Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) Stroud uses this and many other entertaining sceptical scenarios such as the one where a person is trapped in a room with TVs bringing him apparent news which he will never have a chance of evaluating against reality. Stroud's book remains the best survey of scepticism I know of. Unfortunately I disagree with almost all of his conclusions.

President; I knew that my passport was in that drawer; I knew that that house was painted yellow and I knew that all men are mortal. Unless we retreat all the way back to a general scepticism in which I cannot ever know any of these things, then this seems to me unavoidably true.

But of course dreaming is special. It's one-sided. One thing I can *never* know is that I am dreaming. For either I am not dreaming and therefore cannot know I am, or I am dreaming and therefore cannot know I am. I can never know that I am dreaming while I am dreaming. First my falling asleep puts my epistemic tools in the off mode. I may already know some things (I hope) before I sleep, but I won't be learning much of anything new for the next 6 to 8 hours. Then the dream state takes these tools and disorders them in a way that seems to turn them back on. The dream state puts the hammers where the wrenches are supposed to be and the screwdrivers where the levels are usually held. It then commences building. Vivid dream imagery may convince me, in some sense, that I am driving nails with a wrench or leveling a shelf with a screwdriver. But no new real work or knowledge grain results. I maintain what I knew but do not extend knowledge in any way – not even to the fact of my being in the dream state.

Dreaming is a mental state, and knowledge is a state of some sort. They can coexist, as with my knowledge of Obama persisting through a period of dreaming. But they do not always mix well. In fact, the dream state creates its own interesting blind spot in my knowledge. Williamson's well known argument against luminosity,[5] against the idea that I am always in a position to know I am in a mental state when I am in that state, strikes me as sound and convincing. But here's a much simpler route to the same goal: If dreaming is a mental state, then luminosity is obviously false since the dream state is not merely one I might at times not know I am in (when I am) it is one which I *never know* I'm in when I'm in it. Dreaming creates an epistemic blind spot similar in kind to the blind spot I have with regard to every proposition of the form 'p and I do not know p' which for a limitless collection of p substitutes is both true and unknowable by me. My dreaming is a mental state which, by its nature, has its own "but I don't know that" built in. It provides us with the ultimate epistemic blind spot, for while in many cases of p my blind spot with respect to 'p and I don't know that p' is removable by the process of coming to know p, there is no process or learning I

[5] Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits*, see Chap. 4 "Anti-Luminosity." Although I generally agree with the findings of that chapter of KAIL I must specifically dissent from section 4.7 "Scientific Tests" in which Williamson turns mental states so far from the light of luminosity that I am tempted to call the mental states he speaks of there "dark matter."

could experience which would allow me to come to know that I was dreaming *right now.*

But if it's impossible to know that one is dreaming, how can we ever come to know the opposite? How do I know I am not dreaming, i.e. that I am not in the blind spot, right now? I believe that the argument for this is simple and clear and has nothing to do with perception or knowledge of an 'external world.' Here it is:

1. I have spent the last 10 minutes trying to find a way to prove I am not dreaming.
2. Therefore, I am not dreaming.

My knowledge that I am not dreaming is the unearned byproduct of my knowledge of my own organized consciousness over a time. If I have this sort of consciousness over time then I must not be dreaming. This provides a parallel to the statement: if Obama is President right now he must not have resigned last night. If I plunge into a vivid sleep/dream state, or undergo a psychotic break with reality, or if I go into a deep and complete coma, then this state of organized consciousness will disappear and I will, of course, no longer know that I have had an organized conscious life over time (for it won't be true at those times.) Luckily enough for me none of those things has occurred in the last 10 minutes while I've been thinking about the problem of knowledge and dreaming. I've been trying to the best of my ability to think this thing through. And that's all I need. I cannot be dreaming. For if I had been dreaming then my consciousness would not have the organization that I directly apprehend. Whether that organization itself is apt, whether the arguments I propose are considered sound or silly hardly matters. That organization is there, for good or for ill. And if I were dreaming it wouldn't be. I know this because I know what dreaming is.[6] Even the worst argument against the dream hypothesis is, as it turns out, a pretty good argument.

Now if someone questions whether I know I have had an organized consciousness around the questions of dreaming and knowledge over the last 10 minutes, I cannot cite the fact that I am not dreaming without in some sense begging the question. If I say I know my consciousness has had a certain organization then I will be asked to show that I did not dream in the last second false memories of having been at work on the philosophical problem over the past

[6] In a sense I am trying to extend Descartes Cogito argument for his own existence to become an argument for his own non-dreaming existence. I wish he himself had taken this route instead of the more circuitous and, let's face it, far less convincing route through the goodness of God to determine that he was not dreaming. Stroud agrees with Descartes finding that "there are no certain marks or indications" of dreaming vs. non-dreaming, but it seems to me that organized consciousness of one's own thoughts over time do provide the needed mark.

while. And to that I have nothing much to say. At least I have nothing which won't be treated as circular, question-begging reasoning.[7] But the circle is part of the dialectic, not part of the fact of the matter. I can say that either I have been in a persistent state of knowledge of my conscious thoughts or I haven't. If I have been then I believe it correctly follows that I have not been dreaming. If I have not been doing this, if, for instance, there turned out to be no persistent 'I' to whom a stream of thoughts could attach, or if there is an 'I' but it (or I) have no continuous knowledge state of my own conscious states, then of course it will not follow that I am not dreaming. But this is indeed the retreat to a very full blown scepticism.

I mentioned that my epistemic gear is disordered and untrustworthy when I am in the dream state. I believe things are actually worse than that however. It's not just my epistemic or evidentiary framework which goes out of whack in a dream; it's virtually everything about my mental states which goes haywire (albeit in a pretty benign and natural way – for the most part.) Take for instance belief. Sceptics will often concede that I might believe (as in Descartes example) that "I am here by the fire with a paper in my hands." They simply argue that unless I can remove the dream possibility (in a non-question begging way) then I do not know this same thing. But beliefs and dreams seem to me not to be like that at all.

Do I actually *believe* while in Descartes dream scenario that I am there before the fire? I certainly concede that there is some similarity between what happens then and what happens when I believe something, but it is a very limited similarity. Suppose that I have one of those crazy dreams where I am flying beside an airliner looking in the window at some passenger I know. Do I for a few seconds *believe* that I am in flight? Do I *believe* at those times that I can fly? Or I dream, very vividly and very convincingly, of a meaningful conversation with a departed loved one. Do I, for those moments in the dream, actually *believe* that I spoke to a dead person? I think the answers are obvious: we simply do not attribute beliefs that way. We do not say "For a few minutes there you believed you could fly" or "At 3:16 A.M. you formed the belief that you were speaking with your uncle, someone you know to be dead." In recognition of the dreamers disordered epistemic and mental framework during the dream state we specifically do not describe him as forming beliefs during the dream. We say "He just dreamt

[7] W. V. Quine, *The Roots of Reference* (LaSalle: Open Court Publishing,1974), 2. Quine has the wonderful comment "This fear of circularity is a case of needless logical timidity, even granted the project of substantiating our knowledge of the external world." See also Stroud, *Philosophical Scepticism*, 209 ff. Stroud's chapter on Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized" has a fair discussion of this point.

that" and that covers it. If it were somehow to turn out that I was dreaming right now, then I would lack even the ability to form the belief I now have about sitting by a fire.

I can now refine the argument against dreaming:

1. I *believe* I have spent the last 10 minutes trying to find a way to prove that I am not dreaming.
2. Therefore, I am not dreaming.

When people say: "Well dreams may not cover the sceptical basis we need to establish, so let's invent the possibility of evil geniuses or brains in a jar;" I believe they are tacitly admitting what we all know. We know enough about dreams to say this isn't one of them. That's because we're all, to some extent at least, our own experts on the phenomenology of dreaming. We've all had the experience. So the sceptic retreats to a brain in a jar, which all of us hope and trust we have not experienced, which all of us hope and trust never to become expert in. But what of it? If mad scientists are manipulating my mental states so as to induce in me the sensations that would be produced by sitting near a fire with papers in my hands,[8] do we then say that I have come to *believe* I am near a fire? Look at it from the mad scientist's point of view. When he knocks off work and gets together with the other mad scientists for drinks at night, does he describe me as *believing* that I am seated near a fire? I doubt it. To that mad scientist I have the status of a rat in a mental-sensation induced maze. And if, as we would hope, there later comes a time when good scientists free my brain from the jar and reunite it with the proper body (currently in use by Daniel Craig) and I once again become a real actor on the stage of life, would I then reminisce about the bad old days and say "That's when I used to believe I was out of shape; I now see that I am extremely fit and significantly younger than I used to think." No, because these are not even real beliefs.[9]

Knowledge and Mental States

Finally, and as to the deferred question of what kind of 'stuff' the state of knowing consists of, I propose to dispute the Williamson thesis that knowing is a *purely* mental state. The persistence of knowledge convinces me that that cannot be the case. Consider two worlds in which I awake: one (the actual world) in which

[8] Someone might say: that seems like a lot of trouble to go to just to fool the likes of me.

[9] It seems to me that believing as a state, and certainly knowing as a state, require a sort of *agency* on the part of the believer/knower which is absent in virtually all the traditional sceptical scenarios. This is one reason so many of us find it difficult to accept the sceptical arguments even when we can see nothing wrong in the logic.

Obama last night proceeded with his life in the more or less expected way, one in which he didn't die or resign or get tossed from office. In that world he continues this morning as President and I continue to know now that he is President now because my previous knowledge state persisted through the night. In the second world everything is exactly the same as in the first until 3 a.m. this morning, at which point Obama resigns and Biden is sworn in as the new President. As I awake in that world I could not possibly know that Obama is President this morning, because he isn't.[10]

Either I knew last night at 10 p.m. that he was President or I didn't know that. But if I did know it then I must have known it equally in both worlds since they had not yet diverged. If I did know it in the 2nd world but woke up not knowing it, then we would all agree that I had undergone a state change from knowledge to non-knowledge at some point in the night (maybe, but not necessarily, right at 3 a.m.) And now the argument is simple: there is no reason at all to think of or describe that state change as *a change in a purely mental state*. The state that changed is my knowledge state; the states that are unchanged include all of my mental states. The causes and explanation of the state change have no reference whatsoever to my mental life, and indeed the causes have no resonance whatsoever in my mental life either while I am laying there asleep or at the time I awake. For purposes of this example, and on the assumption that I was in a deep sleep with no dreams, we might even imagine my entire mental life as being in a steady, unchanging state in the night.

It may be said that I might not have known he was President in either world last night. Maybe so, depending on the case. If Obama resigned at 3 a.m. last night for reasons he had secretly agonized over for the last 3 months, reasons unknown to all the rest of us, then I can agree that maybe none of us knew each morning, etc. etc. But this possibility just shifts the argument back in time to the point when I did lose knowledge because of his secret agonizing: was that a case of a change in one of my purely mental states? And the same argument applies: his secret reasons for considering resignation may have robbed me of knowledge (without my knowledge of course) but they had no resonance at all in my mental life and should not be considered a purely mental change. And if he had never before considered resignation but made a hasty decision based on the arrival of

[10] It should be noted that the view I espouse here is consistent with Williamson's thesis that mental events and states like belief may be 'world involved,' i.e. his externality thesis. It may well be that a person could not believe that some tigers live in Asia if in fact there had never been tigers in the world. This thesis, as Williamson acknowledges, does not imply that knowing as a factive state is also purely mental.

some unexpectedly horrible news, then what is the case for saying I didn't know last night at 10 p.m. that he was President? The mere possibility of horrible news followed by a hasty resignation is always present, but seems to me never to overcome the persistent knowledge I possess from day to day. To think it does or would is to lead us straight back into scepticism.[11]

I am proposing that there can be no difference in my *purely mental states* across these two worlds if there are no differences in the *purely mental objects, events, processes and relationships* of my life over those two worlds. *Purely* mental states may be nothing more than organizations of the *purely* mental from some such taxonomy of the mental, and with no differences in the stuff to be organized across these worlds there will be no difference in the purely mental states either. It seems plain enough to me that there could be two such worlds with no difference in my procession of mental events (etc.), and therefore in my mental life, and therefore in my mental states. And if my purely mental states are the same in these worlds but I know Obama is President in one but not the other, then none of my purely mental states could be identical to my state of knowing he is President.[12] Any purely mental state I possess must have the cooperation of non-mental facts, such as Obama's non-resignation, in order to constitute knowledge. Knowing, therefore, cannot be purely a mental state.

Conclusion: Knowledge and Scepticism

I conclude that if there is any knowledge at all, and if the logic of knowledge requires persistence, and if persistence requires that there be unearned knowledge, and if unearned knowledge requires there be things known for which there is no non-circular argument, then we shouldn't be surprised to find that in the midst of our enormous store of knowledge there are such unearned, no non-circular defensible, bits of knowledge. My hypothesis is that "I am not dreaming right now" is one such. Here I have a non-circular argument that circularity is bound up in the logic of knowledge.

[11] It must be emphasized here that I am not surreptitiously introducing 'luminosity' premises into this argument. I stated earlier in the dream section that I agree heartily with Williamson on the question of luminosity, and, if anything, have staked out an anti-luminosity position to the right of his own. My problem is not that I expect people to be able to know of every change in their mental states, it is in positing a *change* in a purely mental state of mine when there are no grounds for tying the change to anything remotely involving my mental life.

[12] Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits*, 59: "... if knowing p is a mental state, then anyone in exactly the same mental state as someone who knows p also knows p."

I have tried in this paper, not to refute the sceptic, for I agree with the sceptic that there are no non question begging arguments which prove he is in error. But knowing is not the same as proving, and far less is it proving within the very narrow ground rules the sceptic lays down (viz: debating evanescent sense impressions with no circles allowed.) What I have tried is to show is that a very robust set of real world knowledge is possible if one begins from what I believe are fairly uncontroversial assumptions about the metaphysics of knowledge as a state, and states as requiring persistence. What is then said to the sceptic is not "I can prove you are wrong," but "*This* – e.g. that Obama is President – is what knowledge is like; you have taken it to be some other thing."

PEER DISAGREEMENT AND THE LIMITS OF COHERENT ERROR ATTRIBUTION

Nicholas TEBBEN

ABSTRACT: I argue that, in an important range of cases, judging that one disagrees with an epistemic peer requires attributing, either to one's peer or to oneself, a failure of rationality. There are limits, however, to how much irrationality one can coherently attribute, either to oneself or to another. I argue that these limitations on the coherent attribution of rational error put constraints on permissible responses to peer disagreement. In particular, they provide reason to respond to one-off disagreements with a single peer by maintaining one's beliefs, and they provide reason to moderate one's beliefs when faced with repeated disagreement, or disagreement with multiple peers. Finally, I argue that, though peer disagreement is rare, the occasions on which it does occur tend to be especially important, and the kind of response supported here is correspondingly important. In particular, how leading researchers spend their time and effort depends, in part, on how they respond to peer disagreement. And only a response of the kind supported here strikes the right balance between allowing individual researchers to freely pursue what seems to them to be worthwhile projects, and requiring that they pursue those research projects that the community of experts as a whole believes to be likely to yield significant results.

KEYWORDS: disagreement, epistemic peers, epistemic reasons

1. Preliminary Issues

Say that *A* and *B* are *epistemic peers relative to question Q* if and only if all of the evidence that either one has, which bears on the answer to *Q*, is shared by the other, and their ability to reason from this evidence is identically well developed. Understand all future references to "epistemic peers" to be implicitly qualified: it is *relative* peerhood that is my concern.

Disagreement between epistemic peers gives rise to a number of perplexing epistemological questions, both theoretical and practical. My interest here is with questions that are practical, in the sense that a proper answer to them should provide epistemic agents with advice about what to *do*.

The most pressing practical question about peer disagreement might be best put like this:

> (The Guidance Question) If one takes oneself to disagree with an epistemic peer, ought one to moderate one's disputed beliefs?

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Where moderating one's beliefs can be understood in terms of surrendering them, reducing the confidence with which they are held, or reducing the gap between the credence that one assigns to a proposition and the credence that one assigns to its negation. Construing "belief moderation" in this way allows us to frame a single practical question that can be (and has been) answered from within a variety of epistemic frameworks.

It is worth noting that it is the *appearance* of disagreement, whether veridical or not, that is practically significant, not the fact that one actually is a party to a peer disagreement. For if a disagreement is unrecognized, or if the fact that the parties to it are epistemic peers is unrecognized, the mere fact of the disagreement need not provide either party with a reason to *do* anything.[1] Moreover, if one mistakenly takes oneself to be party to a peer disagreement, one's practical position will be the same as that of someone who recognizes that they are party to a genuine peer disagreement. Whatever reasons tell for or against belief moderation in the latter case should tell for or against belief moderation in the former case as well. I will omit the relevant qualifications below, but it is always with the appearance of peer disagreement (whether veridical or not), and with those who are taken to be epistemic peers (whether they actually are or not), that I am concerned.

We can recognize several kinds of peer disagreement. Call one-off disagreements with a single epistemic peer 'simple disagreements.' These disagreements contrast with those in which one repeatedly disagrees with a single epistemic peer, or in which one disagrees with many different epistemic peers.

Some views take it that all peer disagreements, simple and otherwise, call for identical treatment. Two such views are:

> Strong Conformism: Whenever an agent is party to any peer disagreement, that agent ought to moderate his or her disputed beliefs.
>
> and
>
> Strong Non-Conformism: Whenever an agent is party to any peer disagreement, that agent ought not moderate his or her disputed beliefs.

[1] This fact has recently been noted in the literature. See Nathan L. King, "Disagreement: What's the Problem? *Or* A Good Peer is Hard to Find," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 85 (2012): 252-253, Axel Gelfert, "Who is an Epistemic Peer?" *Logos & Episteme: An International Journal of Epistemology* 2 (2011): 507, and Jennifer Lackey, "A Justificationist View of Disagreement's Epistemic Significance," in *Social Epistemology*, ed. Adrian Haddock, Alan Millar, and Duncan Pritchard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 302-303.

There are, however, positions of intermediate strength. Of particular interest will be:

> Weak Non-Conformism: Most simple disagreements ought to be met with a refusal to moderate one's disputed beliefs, but one ought to react to most other peer disagreements by moderating one's disputed beliefs.

And, for the sake of completeness, we can mention:

> Weak Conformism: One ought to react to most simple disagreements by moderating one's disputed beliefs, but most other peer disagreements ought to be met with a refusal to moderate one's disputed beliefs.[2]

Obviously these characterizations do not exhaust the space of possible responses to the Guidance Question, and the weak versions admit of degrees of strength themselves.[3]

Some have recently argued that peer disagreement is relatively uncommon.[4] They are, I suspect, right about this. Peer disagreement is bound to be uncommon, if for no other reason than that epistemic peers are uncommon. But some of the situations in which peer disagreement *does* arise are of special epistemic significance. Peer disagreement is relatively likely to arise amongst leading researchers in mature branches of inquiry. There are two reasons why this is so. First, in mature branches of inquiry it is usually relatively uncontroversial which findings are significant, and leading researchers should be expected to be familiar with them. Second, in such branches of inquiry, there is a relatively robust consensus among leading researchers about how one ought to go about answering questions in their field.[5] The former consideration provides reason to believe that the evidence sets possessed by two leading researchers in a mature branch of inquiry, that bear on some question in their field, are relatively likely to be

[2] Weak conformism is not a promising view, and, as far as I know, no one defends it. I mention it merely for the sake of completeness. It will be ignored below.

[3] Lackey distinguishes conformist from non-conformist positions. As Lackey defines these terms, however, it would not make sense to speak of "weak" versions of these views. My use of this vocabulary, therefore, represents a slight modification of her use. See Lackey "A Justificationist View," 298-302.

[4] This is one of the main points of King, "Disagreement."

[5] Concerning a given mathematical theory, for example, it is uncontroversial what constitutes a valid proof. This is not to deny, of course, that there are competing mathematical theories that do not recognize the proofs of their competitors as valid. Within classical mathematics, for example, it is uncontroversial that indirect proof is valid, even though it is uncontroversial, within intuitionistic mathematics, that it is not.

identical. The second consideration provides reason to believe that their respective capacities to reason from this evidence are relatively likely to be identical.

My purpose here is to argue for weak non-conformism. Weak non-conformism has a number of virtues. First, I will argue that competing views require those who are party to peer disagreements to attribute rational errors to epistemic agents in situations in which they cannot coherently do so. See sections two and three. I will also argue, in section four, that only weak non-conformism strikes the right balance between allowing individual researchers in mature branches of inquiry to freely pursue what seems to them to be worthwhile projects, and requiring that they pursue those research projects that the community of experts as a whole believes to be likely to yield significant results. Strong conformism would too-easily force researchers to abandon promising lines of research, and strong non-conformism would allow them too much license to pursue unpromising lines of research. The time and cognitive resources of leading researchers in mature branches of inquiry have considerable social value, as their work is relatively likely to yield results of practical social significance. Moreover, their work is usually supported by governments, universities or businesses, and so its social significance is also partly a product of the claims that it makes on institutional resources. So support for weak non-conformism comes from two directions: alternative views require parties to peer disagreements to attribute errors to agents in situations in which they cannot coherently do so, and other views misallocate important social resources.

2. Simple Disagreement

2.1. Sources of Disagreement

In *some* cases of simple disagreement, it is obvious that one ought not moderate one's beliefs. These are situations in which one can tell that the other party to the disagreement holds their belief as a result of something other than the evaluation of evidence or the exercise of their rational faculties. If one has a peer who is generally rational, but who, in this instance, holds a belief because of, say, fear or prejudice, and one can tell that this is his/her reason for holding the belief in question, one is under no obligation to moderate one's beliefs.

Now, this is not to say that all disagreements that arise through non-rational causes are without epistemic significance. Those that are without significance are those produced by non-rational causes that one does not recognize as reliably producing true beliefs. Say that Mary can reliably distinguish ravens from crows on sight, but that her ability does not depend on reasoning from the

evidence that she has available, and the mechanism whereby it operates is opaque to her. If Laura knows that Mary has this ability, that Mary disagrees with Laura about whether or not a particular bird is a crow or a raven is, at least plausibly, an epistemically significant fact. And, indeed, it may require Laura to moderate her beliefs. However, even if Mary and Laura are epistemic peers, the fact that this disagreement is of epistemic significance is due not to the fact that they share evidence and reasoning abilities, rather, it is due to the fact that Mary has a particular skill that operates independently of her evidence and reasoning ability. I propose, therefore, to put such cases aside.

Let a *purely epistemic reason* be a reason for holding a belief that concerns only the goal of knowing which propositions are true and which are false. Let a *direct reason* be a reason to hold a belief that concerns only the particular proposition at issue. So, for example, my visual perception that there is a book on the table in front of me is a direct purely epistemic reason to believe that there is a book on the table in front of me. By contrast, the fact that I was offered $100 to believe that there is a book on the table in front of me is a direct but not purely epistemic reason to believe that there is a book on the table in front of me. Finally, if it is a fact that believing that there is a book on the table in front of me will allow me to come to know many *other* truths (perhaps because I can read about them in the book), then that fact is a purely epistemic, but not direct, reason to believe that there is a book on the table in front of me.

The examples of peer disagreement that are discussed in the literature are largely disagreements in which both parties hold their beliefs for direct and purely epistemic reasons.[6] Likewise, we can expect the most common peer disagreements – those between leading researchers in mature branches of inquiry – to be such that both parties hold their views for direct and purely epistemic reasons. It is with such cases that I will be concerned. Assume that all of the beliefs discussed below are held for direct and purely epistemic reasons, and all disagreements mentioned are disagreements over beliefs held for such reasons. What Laura ought to do, if she takes Mary's knack for telling ravens and crows apart to be as reliable as her own reasoned discriminations, is an interesting question, but not one that will be addressed here.

[6] See, for example, Lackey, "A Justificationist View," which discusses disagreements about how to split the bill at a restaurant, King, "Disagreement," Peter van Inwagen, "We're Right, They're Wrong," in *Disagreement*, ed. Richard Feldman and Ted Warfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), which address disagreement over the nature of free will, and Earl Conee "Rational Disagreement Defended," in *Disagreement*, ed. Richard Feldman and Ted Warfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) which discusses disagreement about mereology.

2.2. Peer Disagreement as Involving Attribution of Rational Error

The first premise in my argument for weak non-conformism is that one must see those beliefs that one holds for direct and purely epistemic reasons as being rationally required of one. This is fairly intuitive, but an argument for it is not hard to construct. Say that Rachel believes that there is a book on the table because she seems to see a book on the table. This is, we said above, a direct and purely epistemic reason for believing that there is a book on the table. Consider what must be the case if Rachel holds this belief, but does *not* consider it to be rationally required of her. She could:

> A. Believe it, but hold that some incompatible belief is rationally required of her.
>
> B. Believe it, but hold that suspension of belief is rationally require of her.

or

> C. Believe it, while holding that no particular belief is rationally required, though any of several are permitted.

It is clear that A and B are unsatisfactory. If Rachel were to believe that some incompatible belief is rationally required of her – the belief that there is *no* book on the table, say – she would, in an effort to comport with her purely epistemic reasons, surrender her current belief and adopt that one. By hypothesis, this is not what she does. Similar reasoning shows that she must not hold that suspension of belief is rationally required of her. If she believed that suspension of belief was rationally required of her, then, in an effort to comport with her purely epistemic reasons, she would suspend belief. Since, by hypothesis, she does not suspend belief, we can conclude that B is also unsatisfactory.

Consider, then, the final option. If one believes that *P* for direct and purely epistemic reasons, can one take it that no particular belief is rationally required, but that any of several (among which *P* is found) are permitted? No. If any of several are permitted, then one's reasons do not tell in favor of *P* over its rivals. By hypothesis, however, Rachel takes it that her reasons *do* tell in favor of *P*. There are no other alternatives. So, one must take it that those beliefs that one holds for direct and purely epistemic reasons are rationally required of one.[7]

[7] On a related point, see Roger White, "Epistemic Permissiveness," *Philosophical Perspectives* 19 (2005): 445-459. White argues that epistemic theories that do not require a unique belief of agents, given some evidence, are problematic because they would permit agents to choose

Now, what one is rationally required to believe is a matter of one's evidence and one's ability to reason from that evidence. Therefore, one significant result of the fact that epistemic agents must see the beliefs that they hold for direct and purely epistemic reasons to be rationally mandatory for them is that they must, likewise, see those beliefs as rationally mandatory for their epistemic peers.[8] Those with different evidence may believe differently, and those with more- or less-well developed reasoning faculties may believe differently, but those with identical evidence sets, and equally well-developed reasoning faculties, are rationally required to share beliefs.

This fact is important. It means that one must see at least one party to any peer disagreement in which one takes part as having suffered a failure of rationality. That is, if one must see one's direct and purely epistemic reasons as rationally mandating that one hold some particular belief, one must see at least one party to the dispute as holding a belief that that person's reasons forbid him or her from holding.

Now, attributing a failure of rationality to someone does not require saying that they are not, in general, rational. Being rational, in the relevant sense, is a matter of having some ability; it is an ability to, perhaps, reason well from one's evidence. And abilities are such that those who genuinely possess them can, in isolated cases, fail to successfully exercise them. For example, if Derek Jeter, a great baseball player, has the ability to hit curve balls, the fact that he swung at, and missed, a curve ball in the game this afternoon does not mean that he does not, in fact, have the ability to hit curve balls. Since he often does hit curve balls, one does better in explaining his failure this afternoon by saying that he suffered from a "performance error": that some unusual feature of the game this afternoon prevented his ability from being exercised successfully. In general, failure to exercise an ability does not show that one does not have the ability in question. So attributing a failure of rationality to someone does not require attributing *irrationality* to that person, it requires attributing only a *rational performance error* to him or her.

That being said, any failure to exercise a skill is some (however weak) *evidence* that the agent does not possess the skill. That Jeter missed a curve ball might be *best* explained by attributing to him a performance error; nevertheless,

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randomly between permitted beliefs, but that randomly deciding what to believe is never rationally permissible.

[8] Conee denies a related claim (see Conee, "Rational Disagreement," 71). He does not require two people to have identical evidence sets in order to count as "epistemic peers," however, so he is actually discussing a different (though related) issue.

that he missed the curve ball on this occasion is *some* reason, though a very weak one, to believe that he does not have the ability to hit curve balls, despite what we may have previously thought.

Now, the significance of this fact is that each time one attributes a performance error to an agent, the case becomes stronger that the agent has not been suffering from performance errors, but that he or she does not, initial appearances to the contrary, possess the ability in question at all. So there may be no trouble in explaining Jeter's failure to hit curve balls on one or two occasions by attributing performance errors to him. But if he *repeatedly* misses curve balls – if he misses, say, twenty in a row – those repeated failures are an indication that our attributions of performance errors to him were mistaken, and that we ought, instead, to have determined that he does not have the ability to hit curve balls. So it is with the attribution of rational performance errors. One can charitably explain a single instance of failed reasoning by attributing to the agent a rational performance error, but with each additional attribution, further attributions become less tenable. Having attributed, say, twenty rational performance errors to an agent (over a short period of time, or without interruption), one is forced to conclude that one's previous attributions of rational performance error were mistaken, and that the subject is not, despite one's original belief to the contrary, generally rational.

These considerations tell in favor of some kind of non-conformism. Conformism, of any kind, requires that one (often or always) respond to simple peer disagreements by moderating one's beliefs. Doing so requires attributing a failure of rationality to oneself: it requires saying that the belief that one holds, or the credence-level that one assigns to it, is, in fact, prohibited by one's evidence. Now, this failure of rationality can be, indeed, must be, thought to be a mere rational performance error. But each attribution of a rational performance error to oneself makes any additional such attributions less reasonable than those that came before. Just as Jeter's repeated failure to hit curve balls is some evidence that he is *unable* to hit curve balls, so one's own failure of rationality is some evidence that one is not generally rational.

The problem with conformism, and so the root of the case for non-conformism, is that attributions of rational error to oneself are, in a certain way and to some degree, *self-undermining*. In short, the problem is that attributions of rational error to oneself give one evidence that one is not, in general, rational, and if one has (sufficiently strong) evidence that one is not, in general, rational, one ought not to trust one's own judgments. In particular, one ought not trust *that*

judgment. That is, one ought not trust one's own judgment that one ought not trust one's own judgments.

Look at the situation in the following way. Prior to encountering an epistemic peer who disagrees with you, you have some confidence in your own rational faculties. If you respond to the disagreement by attributing a rational performance error to yourself, you thereby admit that there is some reason to believe that this confidence was misplaced. Now, the determination that you committed the rational error was a product of your rational faculties. So the net effect of this line of reasoning is that your rational faculties provide you with some reason to believe that your rational faculties are unreliable. That is, they provide you with a reason not to trust the reasons that they provide for you, *including this one*. And this is incoherent.

So one must not, on pain of incoherence, attribute too many rational performance errors to oneself. But, because simple disagreements are not repeated, there is no similar problem with attributing rational performance errors to those with whom one disagrees. Since one's peers, by definition, enjoy no advantage in evidence or reasoning ability, the balance of reasons usually supports attributing the error to the other party and refusing to moderate one's beliefs. Notice, however, that weak non-conformism leaves open the possibility that there are some cases of simple disagreement, limited in number, in which moderating one's beliefs may be the thing to do. If one attributes only a small number of rational performance errors to oneself, the evidence that they provide to the agent that she is generally unreliable may be quite weak. And so, given that she has attributed only a small number of rational performance errors to herself, she can say that she is, typically, reliable, but that she happened to make a mistake in some particular case.[9]

Now, a complete account of the epistemic significance of peer disagreement should be able to sort those cases in which one may attribute the error to oneself

[9] Compare this to Egan and Elga's view. They say: "News of unreliability can come by way of the very faculty whose reliability is called into question. The news need not completely undermine itself, since the reasonable response can be to become confident that the faculty is unreliable, but has happened to deliver correct news in this instance." (Andy Egan and Adam Elga, "I Can't Believe I'm Stupid," *Philosophical Perspectives* 19 (2005): 82.) If the faculty at issue, however, is the one whereby *this* judgment (that the faculty is unreliable but has, in this instance, provided correct information) is made or evaluated, then the course of action recommended by Egan and Elga is incoherent. For in that case, one should not trust that this judgment was correctly made. As far as I can see, in order for Egan and Elga's view to work, there would need to be "nested" faculties: for each (or, more reasonably, for some) there would be another faculty that checks to see if it provided the right verdict in each case.

from those in which one must not, but my project is not so ambitious.[10] To support weak non-conformism, it suffices to show that most simple peer disagreements ought not be met with belief moderation, but that most non-simple peer disagreements ought to be. I take it that the case has been made for the former claim. The latter claim will be vindicated below.

3. Complex Disagreement

3.1. Repeated Disagreement with a Single Epistemic Peer

Elga has an argument that was designed to show that parties to a peer disagreement are not permitted to prefer[11] their own views, to those of the other parties to the dispute. Call this his "no-bootstrapping" argument. Say that Adam takes Katie to be his epistemic peer. He finds, however, that they repeatedly disagree with each other. If Adam is, on each occasion, permitted to prefer his own view to Katie's, he can inductively infer that he is more reliable (on the matters under dispute) than is Katie. The inference is simple: he was right and Katie was wrong the first time they disagreed, as well as the second time, and the third time, and so on. Therefore, he will probably be right in the future, and Katie will probably be wrong. But it is obvious that this inference is no good: the mere fact that he prefers his own views to Katie's does not give him grounds for

[10] It may be possible to combine the present view with other views currently in the literature, to yield a complete account of the significance of peer disagreement. For example, Lackey holds that belief moderation is required in inverse proportion to the degree of justified confidence with which one's disputed belief is held (see Lackey, "A Justificationist View"). One might accept this, but use the fact that one ought not, in most cases, moderate one's beliefs in light of simple disagreements, to fix a lowest bound of justified confidence, above which belief moderation is not permitted. That is, one could order one's beliefs by the degree of justified confidence with which they are held, and take the line that separates those that may be moderated given a simple disagreement, from those that may not, to be given by the fact that, if one moderates all of those beliefs below the line, as well as at least one above it, one will be able to draw the incoherent conclusion that one's rational faculties are unreliable. I do not intend to endorse this strategy here; only to note that weak non-conformism is consistent with some answers to the Guidance Question that may already be found in the literature, and to point to the possibility that it might be usefully combined with them.

[11] Elga cashes out this notion of "preference" in terms of the relative weights that are to be given to the credence levels that the various parties to the dispute assign to their beliefs, which are then averaged. But this is optional. For example, one could understand "preferring one's own views" in terms of refusing to suspend judgment when faced with peer disagreement, and the argument will work just as well.

inferring that he is more reliable than she is.[12] So, in such cases, one must not be permitted to prefer one's own views to those of one's peers.

Now, we must be careful not to draw a stronger conclusion from Elga's argument than it warrants. Notice that Adam has the opportunity to inductively infer that he is more reliable than Katie only if they *repeatedly* disagree with each other. And so if the no-bootstrapping argument tells against conformist views, it only tells against strong versions of conformism. It does not tell against views that permit agents to stick with their beliefs only when they encounter simple disagreements, or those that permit them to only infrequently prefer their own views when faced with repeated disagreements. Simple disagreements are a one-time affair, and so they provide no firm inductive base from which to argue that those with whom one disagrees are at an epistemic disadvantage. So, if Elga's argument is sound, and if the argument of the last section, which shows that one usually has good reason to refrain from moderating one's beliefs when faced with simple disagreement, is any good, then we have an argument for weak non-conformism. The view supported is non-conformist because my argument from the last section indicates that simple disagreements should usually be met with a refusal to moderate one's beliefs, but it is a weak version of non-conformism, because Elga's argument indicates that repeated disagreements call for moderating one's beliefs.

Unfortunately, the situation is not as simple as this suggests. I will argue that Elga is right about repeated disagreements: they usually ought to be met with belief moderation. But his no-bootstrapping argument likely applies to fewer cases of repeated peer disagreement then it may initially appear to, and so other considerations must be found to fill the gap. Consider again the case of Adam and Katie. Adam initially judges that Katie is his epistemic peer. However, whenever they disagree Adam holds that his view is correct and that Katie is in the wrong. I will argue that this may or may not give Adam grounds for inductively inferring that he is more reliable than Katie, but that, even when it does not, Adam still has reason to moderate his beliefs.

Consider the following.[13] There are computer programs that have been designed to produce "academic papers" appropriate for one discipline or another,

[12] See Adam Elga, "Reflection and Disagreement," *Noûs* 43 (2007): 486-487, for Elga's presentation of the argument.

[13] This thought experiment was inspired by the Sokal Hoax. Alan Sokal, a physicist, wrote a paper that was a "farrago of deliberately concocted solecisms, howlers and non-sequiturs" (according to Paul Boghossian, "What the Sokal Hoax Ought to Teach Us: The Pernicious Consequences and Internal Contradictions of 'Postmodernist' Relativism," *Times Literary Supplement*, December 13, 1996, 14), and submitted it to the journal *Social Text*, where it was

simply by stringing together jargon, and citing authorities in the field. Imagine that one of these papers has been submitted to a journal, and that Paul has been asked to review it. Paul fails to notice that it is without intellectual merit, and recommends that the journal publish it. Prior to reviewing the paper, Paul had a certain level of confidence in his ability to reason well concerning matters in his field. When it comes to light that the paper is of no intellectual merit, how ought Paul to respond? It would seem that the proper response is for Paul to reduce his confidence in his own competence in the field. If he could reason at all well, about matters in his field, he should be able to differentiate papers that deserve to be published from those that were produced by a computer program that produces imitations of academic papers.

Return now to Adam, who believes that Katie is his epistemic peer, but who repeatedly disagrees with her. Each time they disagree, Adam refuses to moderate his beliefs, and maintains that Katie has made a mistake. Prior to disagreeing with her, Adam had some degree of confidence in his own reasoning ability, and he was just as confident in Katie's reasoning ability (this is part of what it is to take her to be his epistemic peer). Now, after many disagreements, Adam inductively concludes that he is more reliable than Katie. That is, he inductively concludes that, despite his original opinion to the contrary, Katie is not really his epistemic peer. What ought this conclusion do to Adam's confidence in his own reasoning abilities? I would like to suggest that it should reduce it. Just as Paul's inability to sort meritorious papers from those that are hoaxes should reduce his confidence in his own abilities in his field, so Adam's inability to sort those who are his epistemic peers from those who are not, should reduce his confidence (though to a smaller degree) in his.

So, the practical effect of reducing Adam's confidence in his own reasoning abilities should be to reduce his confidence that he has judged correctly that he is right, and Katie is wrong, about the matters under dispute. After a small number of disagreements, his opinion of Katie's abilities ought to decline only a small amount, and so he can conclude that Katie is *almost* his epistemic peer. In this situation it is not difficult to see how he could have thought that she really is his peer, and so his confidence in his own abilities need be lowered only a small amount. But after they have disagreed many times, he must conclude that her

published. Sokal's purpose in perpetrating the hoax was to expose abuses of science in some branches of the humanities, but I think it can also be useful to reflect on the epistemic position of those who agreed to publish his paper. See Alan Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," *Social Text* 46/47 (1996): 217-252.

reasoning abilities are substantially impaired. And an explanation of how he could have mistaken someone whose reasoning abilities are substantially impaired for an epistemic peer requires reducing his confidence in his own abilities a great deal. Taken far enough, this is incoherent, because it would require him to judge that his earlier judgments (that he was right and Katie was wrong) were the product of an unreliable reasoning faculty.

For the sake of clarity, it may be useful to assign values to the confidence levels that Adam assigns to his own reliability, and that of Katie. All numbers, however, are for the purposes of illustration only. Say that, prior to disagreeing with Katie, Adam believes that *P* is the case, and he is 80% confident in his ability to judge correctly in such matters. He finds that Katie, whom he takes to be his epistemic peer, disagrees with him. Adam decides not to moderate his beliefs, and so concludes that Katie is wrong. He can explain Katie's false belief by ascribing to her a rational performance error. But they also disagree about *Q* and *R*, say. Again, he refuses to moderate his beliefs, with the result that he has the basis for an inductive argument that he is more reliable on these matters than is Katie. But now he finds that he was previously unable to sort those who are his epistemic peers from those who are almost his epistemic peers, which calls into question his ability to reason well about the matters under dispute. Say that being unable to sort peers from almost-peers ought to reduce his confidence in his own reasoning abilities by 10%.

So after disagreeing with Katie about *P*, Q and *R*, Adam is 72% confident in his ability to accurately judge such things. Now say that he finds that Katie also disagrees with him about *S*. Again, he refuses to moderate his beliefs. After *this* disagreement, he must say that he was unable to sort those who are his peers from those who are quite far from being his peers. And if he is unable to do so, his confidence in his own abilities ought to drop by another 10% (call this Adam's 'epistemic discount rate', and remember that numbers in this example are for illustrative purposes only). So his confidence in his own abilities falls to 64.8%. And so on, each time they disagree. As his opinion of Katie drops, so his opinion of himself should drop. Once his opinion of himself has fallen far enough, he should no longer be confident that he was correct when he maintained his belief in *P* against Katie's opposition. Adam might be able to maintain his obduracy if he and Katie disagree only a few times, but as the number of times that they disagree

increases, it becomes more and more rational for Adam to moderate his beliefs, *whatever* he thinks about Katie's reasoning abilities.[14]

Adam can claim that he is more reliable than Katie only if he finds (what he takes to be) many occasions on which he has arrived at a true belief whereas Katie arrived at a false one. But given that he previously took Katie to be his epistemic peer, as these cases proliferate, his confidence that they *are* cases in which he arrived at a true belief ought to fall. Whether or not there are any cases of repeated peer disagreements in which one can bootstrap one's way into an argument that one is more reliable than one's peers depends on what one's epistemic discount rate is.[15] If the discount rate is low, then Elga's no-bootstrapping argument shows that one ought to moderate one's beliefs when one repeatedly disagrees with an epistemic peer. If the discount rate is high, one cannot inductively infer that one is more reliable than those with whom one disagrees, but then the considerations surveyed here provide independent support for the claim that, when one repeatedly disagrees with an epistemic peer, one usually ought to moderate one's beliefs. Either way, repeated peer disagreement usually calls for belief moderation.[16]

3.2. Disagreement with Many Epistemic Peers

Lackey takes one of the principle weaknesses of non-conformism to be that it does not recognize that when many of your epistemic peers hold their views independently, and yet disagree with you, you have reason to moderate your beliefs.[17] Only strong non-conformism, however, is required to say that one need not moderate one's beliefs in this situation, weak non-conformism has room to say

[14] We should note that Adam can avoid concluding, on this basis, that he is generally unreliable, by moderating his beliefs before his opinion of his own abilities falls below the threshold beyond which that conclusion is rationally mandatory.

[15] If the epistemic discount rate is very high, then preferring one's own opinions to those of one's peers will never permit one to argue that one's own judgments are more reliable than those of one's peers. Imagine, for example, that the discount rate is 100%. Then as soon as Adam has enough evidence to judge that Katie is not his peer, he ought to lose all confidence in his own reasoning abilities. Now, of course no one's discount rate is 100%, but it need not be that high in order to undermine Adam's confidence in his own beliefs.

[16] As any peer disagreement is uncommon, we should expect repeated peer disagreement to be extremely uncommon. If it is, then moderating one's beliefs when one encounters it should not force one to draw the incoherent conclusion warned against in the last section.

[17] Jennifer Lackey. "What Should We Do When We Disagree?" in *Oxford Studies in Epistemology: Volume 3*, eds. Tamar Szabó Gendler and John Hawthorne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 278.

that when many of your epistemic peers disagree with you, you ought to moderate your beliefs.

Weak non-conform, unlike the strong version, takes it that peer disagreement is of *some* epistemic significance. One reason that it is significant is that disagreement calls for explanation. When it is widespread it can be more easily explained by attributing to oneself a rational performance error than by attributing such an error to many other people. Consider: there must be some mechanism whereby a performance error can be explained. If Jeter fails to hit a curve ball, we can say that he suffered from a mere performance error, but in order to do so we must suppose that there is some fact that caused him to fail to successfully employ his (typically reliable) ability to hit curve balls. Likewise, if a rational performance error is to be attributed to someone, we must suppose that there is some particular (and unusual) reason that that person was unable to successfully employ his or her rational faculties.

But if the dispute is with many (independent) epistemic peers, it is more plausible that an explanation of a performance error in the single individual can be found, than it is that an explanation of many performance errors in those who disagree with him/her can be found. Say that I am speaking to a group that I take to consist of my epistemic peers. If they all disagree with me about some claim that I make, it is more likely that I am, say, tired, and so have, in this case, reasoned poorly, than that everyone in my audience is tired, absent outside information to that effect. So in a situation in which a single agent disagrees with many epistemic peers once, the agent has good reason[18] to attribute the performance error to him/herself,[19] and so moderate his/her views in light of the view held by the other parties to the dispute.[20]

[18] Although this reason can be outweighed if, for example, one has good evidence that the other parties to the dispute are unusually tired.

[19] As noted above, this cannot be done too many times. But as a practical matter (and it is with practical matters that I am concerned), this need not trouble us. Even simple peer disagreement is relatively uncommon. Disagreements with groups of epistemic peers should, then, be expected to be extremely uncommon. So it is unlikely that disagreements with groups of epistemic peers would push one to attribute outright irrationality to oneself.

[20] Assuming, of course, that they do, or at least, appear to, share a view. If one disagrees with many epistemic peers, *who disagree with each other*, the case for retaining one's prior belief gets stronger. In such a case, rational performance errors must be attributed to many people, no matter what happens. The more thoroughly the community of epistemic peers is fragmented, the more reasonable it is to attribute the performance errors to others and not to oneself.

4. The Social Advantages of Weak Non-Conformism

That it is incoherent to believe that your own rational faculties are unreliable provides the rationale for some version of non-conformism. Elga's no-bootstrapping argument, as well as the argument of section 3, shows that it is a weak version of this view that we must opt for. I would now like to argue that there is substantial utility, in particular, substantial *social* utility, in weak non-conformism. And this utility is not shared by strong conformism, *nor* by strong non-conformism.

We said above that we can define a notion of a *relative* epistemic peer. Relative epistemic peers are probably rare, but it is reasonable to believe that they occupy some socially significant epistemic roles. King argues that novices to a discipline are fairly likely to be relative epistemic peers,[21] but of special interest here is the fact that leading researchers in some fields are also fairly likely to be relative epistemic peers. Fields that are most likely to produce relative epistemic peers are those in which there is widespread agreement on how to answer questions in that field, or within a particular sub-branch of it, as well as widespread familiarity with the results of other researchers whose work bears on whatever question might be at issue.[22] These features are characteristic of "mature" branches of inquiry.[23]

Now, strong conformism has some undesirable social consequences in such fields. It would have the leading scholars in mature branches of inquiry moderate their beliefs whenever their epistemic peers (other leading scholars) disagree with them. This gives individual scholars with idiosyncratic views too much power to direct the research of their colleagues. Imagine that Alice and Beth are leading researchers in a mature branch of inquiry. Alice, along with most of her colleagues, believe that *P*. Beth disagrees, and has been unable to win any converts to her view. If strong conformism is true, then Alice should respond to this disagreement by either suspending her belief on the question of whether or not *P*, reducing her confidence in *P*, or reducing the gap between the level of credence that she assigns to *P* and that which she assigns to not-*P*. Reacting in any of these ways would stifle research. Moderating her beliefs would force Alice to abandon,

[21] King, "Disagreement," 255.

[22] These are some of the features of what Kuhn calls 'normal science.' They are, according to Kuhn, characteristic of most periods of research in well-developed branches of inquiry. (See Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), chapters 3-4.)

[23] So we should expect to find more epistemic peers about questions concerning, for example, mathematics, and fewer concerning questions about morality.

or make it more likely that she would abandon, a promising line of research, simply because one colleague disagrees with her. The practical problem with strong conformism is that it assigns too much weight to the views of idiosyncratic individuals, and those individuals can then close off promising avenues of research for others.

Strong non-conformism suffers from a complementary problem. Strong non-conformism never requires epistemic peers to moderate their beliefs in the face of disagreement. Imagine again a leading scholar in a mature field of inquiry who has idiosyncratic views. As far as we, collectively, can tell, pursuing those views is not a promising way to arrive at true beliefs. As far as we, collectively, can tell, the idiosyncratic scholar is wasting his or her time, and thereby misallocating important epistemic resources. Strong non-conformism, however, would allow him or her to pursue his/her idiosyncratic research program. Ideally, our leading scholars would pursue all and only promising avenues of research. Strong conformism is objectionable because it closes off promising avenues of research; strong non-conformism is objectionable because it allows researchers to pursue unpromising ones.

Weak non-conformism, by contrast, allows us to avoid both problems. A few cases of simple disagreement will not compel a leading scholar to abandon his or her research project. That is, as long as the leading researchers in the field largely regard a project as promising, weak non-conformism will not prevent a researcher from pursuing it. But frequently repeated disagreement, or disagreement with many (independent) epistemic peers, will compel a researcher to abandon or re-direct the course of his or her research. And it *should*. In such situations we no longer have reason to trust that the research that the scholar is pursuing is a wise use of epistemic resources (most notably, his or her time and effort). Perhaps research could once have been conducted by a solitary individual. But that is no longer true. Most of our significant research is now done in an institutional setting, whether supported by universities, grants, or private businesses, and so the allocation of the time and effort of researchers is now of considerable social and institutional significance. One advantage of weak non-conformism is that it works to efficiently employ these resources.

5. Conclusions

There are limits to how much rational error one can attribute to an agent, whether oneself or another. This fact tells in favor of a weak non-conformist response to the Guidance Question. I have argued that when faced with a simple disagreement over a belief held for direct and purely epistemic reasons, one

usually ought to refuse to moderate one's beliefs. Repeated disagreements with a single epistemic peer, or a single disagreement with multiple epistemic peers, over a belief held for direct and purely epistemic reasons, I have argued, should be approached differently. In such cases, one usually has good reason to moderate one's beliefs. If these arguments are any good, together they support weak non-conformism.

Additional support for weak non-conformism is found in the fact that plausible alternative answers to the Guidance Question encourage the misallocation of social epistemic resources. Research communities ought not to have the direction of their work changed by the influence of lone dissenting members. One weakness of strong conformism is that it requires members of the larger research community to moderate their beliefs when faced with a single member that disagrees with the group consensus. Strong non-conformism faces a complementary problem. If there is a lone member of a research community that pursues a program that his or her peers see as misguided, s/he ought to let that fact shape his/her research. But strong non-conformism allows idiosyncratic researchers to ignore the opinions of their peers. Weak non-conformism, on the other hand, yields the correct result in both cases. According to weak non-conformism, simple disagreements typically do not require those who are party to them to moderate their beliefs. So researchers whose work represents the group consensus need not change their views in light of a single disagreement with a single peer. Moreover, those who disagree with a group of epistemic peers typically have a reason to moderate their beliefs, so the lone dissenter typically has reason to bring his or her views more closely in line with those that are taken, by his or her peers, to be on the right track.

Notice, finally, that weak non-conformism also leaves room for genuinely innovative research to make an impact in the research community. Peer disagreements arise only when the parties to the disagreement have identical sets of evidence and identically well-developed reasoning abilities. Innovative research can make an impact in the community when it *improves* either our evidence or our reasoning abilities. Newton deserved recognition by the community of physicists not because he was a dissenting peer and they were obligated to moderate their beliefs in light of his disagreement with them, but because he provided a *better* way to think about physics. That he was *not* their peer was what mattered. Weak non-conformism does not allow those who *merely* have novel views from misdirecting research, but it does not prevent innovators who are the epistemic *superiors* of other leading researchers (whether because they have better

evidence, or because they can reason better from their evidence) from directing the course of research.

Much has been made, recently, of the fact that peer disagreement is rare. Indeed, one gets the impression that this observation is supposed to serve as evidence that it is less important than has typically been thought. But the importance of peer disagreement is not a function merely of its frequency, but it is also determined by the importance of the individual disagreements that we *do* encounter. Peer disagreement is unusual, if only because there are few epistemic peers. But I think that we ought not infer, from that fact, that it is unimportant. In fact, those relative peer disagreements that do occur are most likely to occur among leading researchers in mature branches of inquiry, and how those disagreements are resolved is of significantly more importance than, say, how disagreements over how to split a restaurant bill are resolved. How leading researchers approach the practical questions raised by peer disagreement determines, in part, how efficiently resources spent on research and development will be employed. The Guidance Question is a pressing question, not because of the frequency with which it is asked, but because of what turns on the answer given, in the few cases in which it must be answered. The limits on the coherent attribution of rational error suggest that a weak non-conformist answer is appropriate, and giving some such answer also helps ensure that the resources that will be deployed, in one way or another, depending on how we answer the question, are not wasted.[24]

[24] An early draft of this paper was presented as a part of the 2012 Prometheus Seminar Series at The Johns Hopkins University. I would like to thank everyone who attended that seminar for the helpful feedback that they provided.

DEBATE

IN DEFENSE OF VIRTUE-RESPONSIBILISM

Christopher BOBIER

ABSTRACT: Modest realism affirms that some of the *objects* of our beliefs exist independently of our beliefs. That is, there is a mind-independent world that we can epistemically access. The Cartesian skeptic claims that we can't offer any non-question-begging arguments in favor of modest realism and therefore we are not justified in believing that modest realism is true. Reliabilists argue that the skeptic assumes an evidentialist-internalist account of justification and that a proper account of justification jettisons this. Hence, our belief in modest realism can be justified. I argue in this paper that virtue-responsibilism offers an analogous response to the Cartesian skeptic. According to the virtue-responsibilist, my belief that *P* is an instance of knowledge iff it maps onto reality and is the result of an act of virtue. I show that the virtue-responsibilist theory excludes evidentialist-internalism, and allows for our belief in modest realism to be justified. However, it may be objected that the virtue-responsibilist can't offer non-question-begging reasons for thinking that the virtues are reliable. I argue that this objection fails and that we can know that the virtues are reliable by empirical study. Thus, virtue-responsibilism provides a satisfactory response to the Cartesian skeptic.

KEYWORDS: virtue-responsibilism, reliabilism, skepticism

Upon seeing a car in my driveway, I find myself with the belief *that the car is in my driveway.* As I reflect on this belief, I find myself convinced that the car's sitting in my driveway is a fact independent of my belief *that the car is in my driveway.* That is, I believe that the world isn't influenced or altered by my belief about the car. Furthermore, I believe that the world isn't influenced or altered by many, if not all, of my beliefs. Modest realism is the view that there is a mind-independent world that we can (sometimes) epistemically access. It is modest because it affirms that we *can* access the external world and it is realist because it affirms that there is an external world. Yet, historically, philosophers have pointed out that I can't offer non-question-begging support for my belief *that modest realism is true*. According to the Skeptic, this inability precludes me from being justified in holding that belief; that is, my belief *that modest realism is true* is unjustified. This historically prominent form of skepticism (which I shall hereafter refer to as Cartesian skepticism) is the topic of this paper.

Throughout the past quarter-century, reliabilists have been arguing that the Cartesian skeptic succeeds in undermining our *belief* in modest realism *only if* an evidentialist-internalist conception of justification, according to which justification requires the having of appropriate evidence, is assumed. Reliabilists

jettison that assumption and argue that for a belief to be justified is for it to be produced by belief-forming faculties that produce more true than false beliefs. Since they do not share the assumed conception of justification with the skeptic, they avoid Cartesian skepticism altogether. While much ink has been spilled over contemporary reliabilist responses to the Cartesian skeptic, few have stopped to think about whether or not virtue-responsibilism (the view held by Linda Zagzebski) offers a satisfactory response as well. According to virtue-responsibilism, a belief counts as knowledge if, and only if, it maps onto reality and was produced by an act of intellectual virtue.[1] While differing drastically over what it takes for a true belief to count as knowledge, I will argue that virtue-responsibilism offers a similar response to the Cartesian skeptic: that, in virtue of rejecting the evidentialist-internalist conception of justification, virtue-responsibilism can explain why our belief in modest realism can be or is justified and perhaps even count as knowledge. If I am right, then virtue-responsibilism and reliabilism are structurally closer than proponents of either view may have initially thought.

In section I, I clarify what belief in modest realism amounts to and the skeptical argument it faces. In section II, I argue that the skeptic assumes an evidentialist-internalist component of justification. In section III, I lay out the main contours of the virtue-responsibilist theory defended by Linda Zagzebski. I show that her theory has the resources to provide us with knowledge of and justification for our belief in modest realism. In other words, if her theory of justification and knowledge is correct, Cartesian skepticism does not arise. In section IV, I respond to a pressing objection to my argument, and then draw the final conclusions of this paper together in section V.

I

I shall start by clarifying what modest realism is and why the Cartesian skeptic threatens our belief regarding its truthfulness. In seeking beliefs that represent how the world *actually* is, human beings are seeking a kind of objectivity.[2] Modest realism is a view about the kind of objectivity available to human beings; it states that "at least some of [the objects of] our beliefs [are] objective, that is, logically

[1] Linda Zagzebski, "What is Knowledge?" in *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology,* eds. John Greco and Ernest Sosa (Malden: Blackwell, 1999), 109; Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 264-273.

[2] The view of modest realism and the skepticism that threatens is borrowed heavily from, Paul Moser, "Realism, Objectivity, and Skepticism," in *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology,* 70-92.

and causally independent of someone's conceiving of [those] thing[s]."[3] I take this to mean, A is logically independent of B if B's obtaining doesn't logically entail or preclude A's obtaining, and A is causally independent of B if B's obtaining isn't brought about or influenced by A's obtaining. I shall not offer a precise meaning of 'brought about' or 'influenced' since they are sufficiently intuitive and an analysis of these concepts would take us too far afield.

An example may clarify. Take a fact in the world, say the Lakers winning last night. The fact that the Lakers won last night is logically and causally independent of my belief *that the Lakers won*. The Lakers winning last night is not entailed by my belief *that the Lakers won.* In fact the Lakers winning last night would still obtain even if I believed that they lost the game or that they didn't play at all. Moreover, my belief *that the Lakers won* didn't cause it to be the case that the Lakers won. The Lakers winning the game is 'radically' independent of my beliefs about the game. Modest realism correlates nicely with the following account of truth: my belief *that p* is true if and only if the world is as P says.[4] My belief *that the Lakers won last night* is true if and only if the world is such that the Lakers won last night. Modest realism and this view of truth is intelligible and *prima facie* intuitive. Ask people if the results of Lakers games depend on what they believe and most likely they will offer a resounding *No*.

As with most views however, our belief that modest realism is true is open to skeptical doubts. It is common sense among philosophers that one shouldn't provide a question-begging argument or evidence in favor of a view. While philosophers disagree about what 'question-begging' amounts to, for the purposes of this essay a question-begging argument is one where the truth of the conclusion is viciously assumed in the premises. Let me clarify with an example: if I were to argue that the faculty of sight is reliable by pointing out how nicely my perceptual beliefs align with the world, I would beg the question, for the only reason my perceptual beliefs would align with the world is if my sight is reliable.[5] Thus understood, it is obvious that question-begging arguments offer no argument at all. If we allow ourselves to beg the question in philosophy, we will be closer to affirming unsupported truths rather than reasoned positions. Given the reasonableness of rejecting question-begging arguments, the skeptical argument against our belief in modest realism arises once we ask ourselves whether or not

[3] Moser, "Realism, Objectivity, and Skepticism," 71.

[4] Moser, "Realism, Objectivity, and Skepticism," 72.

[5] My argument does not hinge on the distinction between logical and epistemic circularity made by William Alston in "Epistemic Circularity," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 47 (1986): 1-30.

we can deliver non-question-begging reasons or evidence in favor of modest realism.[6] How can someone who believes *that there is a mind-independent world that we can epistemically access* offer support for his or her belief that does not beg the question against someone who thinks that we are all being massively deceived by an evil demon?

Take a perceptual belief of mine. I currently see a book. I see it to be a certain color, shape and size. On the basis of my perceptual experience, I form the belief *that the book is on the table.* I (along with all non-philosophers) assume that this belief is justified on the basis of my perceptual experience alone. After all, I have no reason to believe that my perceptual experience yielded a false belief, and we can assume that my friends agree with me that the book is on the table. So how could my belief be anything other than justified? Enter the skeptic. She says, "Your belief *that the book is on the table* is based on perceptual experience. You believe it because you perceived it. Your friends agree with your belief because they too had a perceptual experience of the book. But you can't take *that* to justify your belief. Your perceptual experience, lack of doubt, and communal support is compatible with your being a brain-in-a-vat, being deceived by a demon, or with the book disappearing into thin air the second you walk away. Your perceptual experience of a book and your perceptual experience of a book-hologram would be indistinguishable to you such that you couldn't tell which one you were looking at. Therefore, you cannot assume that your perceptual experience of the book is evidence of the existence of the book (as opposed to the book-hologram). Thus, what grounds do you have for thinking that perception and other sensory experiences delivers true beliefs about objects cognitively independent of you? "[7]

What the Cartesian skeptic is doing is drawing our attention to the following fact: If our belief in the existence of a mind-independent world (modest realism) is true, its truthfulness has nothing to do with our reflectively available evidence or reasons.[8] All of our supposed 'evidence' of sensory experience is compatible with the truthfulness of skeptical hypotheses. Our sensory experience would phenomenally appear to be the same regardless of whether modest realism or some skeptical hypothesis is true, and thus our sensory experiences do not privilege modest realism. Therefore, if our belief in modest realism is true, it is

[6] Moser, "Realism, Objectivity, and Skepticism," 73.

[7] Hume, in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (12.1.11), writes: "By what argument can it be proved, that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects, entirely different from then, though resembling them… and could not arise either from the energy of the mind itself, or from the suggestion of some invisible and unknown spirit?"

[8] This is what Duncan Pritchard calls "Reflective Epistemic Luck." See his *Epistemic Luck* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), Chapters 5 and 6 (especially section 6.5).

only *luckily* true; its truthfulness would have nothing to do with our 'evidence.' It would just be a matter of luck that what we believe is true. Since luckily true beliefs are not justified nor count as knowledge, it follows that our belief in the truthfulness of modest realism is not justified nor does it count as knowledge. Therefore, our belief in modest realism lacks justification.

As if this isn't devastating enough, the skeptic goes on to point out that if we are to be justified in believing that modest realism is true, we must have *some positive reason or evidence* for thinking that it is true;[9] after all, arguing that *all* of the skeptical scenarios fail wouldn't justify our belief in modest realism since it wouldn't follow that modest realism is true. Putting the many skeptical scenarios aside, there are many different views about the kind of objectivity available to human beings. Even if the proponent of modest realism argued against all of those views too, it *still wouldn't follow that modest realism is true.* Perhaps there is a view of objectivity we have yet to consider. Therefore, one should have reasons or evidence for believing that modest realism (as opposed to some other skeptical scenario) is true. The skeptic argues that we do not possess any such reason or evidence and are therefore not justified in believing that modest realism is true.

The skeptical inquiry results in the epistemic status of one's belief in modest realism being undermined. Skepticism of this form disregards whether or not modest realism is true. Its focus is on the status of our belief in modest realism; its result is sobering.

II

There are two ways to respond to a skeptical argument. On the one hand, we can diagnose the argument and see what background assumptions are propelling it. On the other hand, we can meet the argument head on and argue that it fails. This skeptical argument is not new and there have been numerous responses to it along both lines; of particular concern to this paper, however, is that reliabilists attempt the former move. I shall follow in their footsteps and attempt to show that the skeptical argument assumes an evidentialist-internalist view of justification.[10]

The skeptic argues that if our belief in modest realism were true, it would only be luckily true. This is because there is no non-question-begging evidence that can be offered in its defense. Since luckily true beliefs are not justified, our belief in modest realism is unjustified. In arguing as she does, the skeptic is

[9] Moser, "Realism, Objectivity, and Skepticism," 74.

[10] The skeptic obviously doesn't have to assume a thoroughly 'internalistic' conception of justification. My argument goes through on any conception of justification that essentially includes an internalistic component such as this.

reasonably assuming that justified beliefs are not luckily true beliefs and that luckily true beliefs are not justified beliefs. This raises the more general question as to what it means for a belief to be lucky or justified? Or, put another way, what theory of justification is the skeptic assuming? It seems to me that the Cartesian skeptic is assuming an evidentialist-internalist account of justification. According to evidentialist-internalism, a belief's justificatory status depends on the evidence that the subject possesses. Following Richard Feldman and Earl Conee, we can state it more formally as follows:

> Evidentialist-internalism (EI): S's belief *that p* is epistemically justified for S at t1 if and only if S's belief fits the evidence E that S has at t1.[11]

EI nicely captures the intuition that what matters for justification is the possession of proper evidence and it is intended to rule out luck. Intuitively, if I have evidence for my belief *that p* then my belief is not lucky; if, however, I do not have evidence for my belief *that p* then it is not justified and its truthfulness will be a matter of luck.

The Cartesian skeptic assumes that EI is the rubric that draws the distinction between lucky and justified beliefs. The skeptic is arguing that our belief in modest realism lacks justification because it lacks evidential support. Let me be clear, however, that the skeptic is not arguing that since we cannot *offer* justifying evidence for our belief in modest realism, we are unjustified. Rather, the skeptic is arguing that there is *no* justifying evidence at all! What we originally thought was evidence in favor of modest realism turned out not to be evidence. Our sensory experiences of the world are compatible with a whole host of skeptical scenarios and therefore do not evidentially privilege modest realism. Once the skeptic argues that sensory experiences are not evidence in favor of modest realism, she goes on to ask what other non-question-begging evidence is there for that belief. She argues that there is none and that our belief *that modest realism is true* is unjustified. Therefore, since our belief in modest realism lacks evidence it is unjustified. This is to assume that EI is true.

Moreover, as reliabilists are apt to point out, EI is essential to the skeptic's argument. If the Cartesian skeptic does not assume EI, the conclusion of her argument does not follow; someone could be justified in believing *that modest realism is true* all the while lacking evidence. But if this were the case, this would not be a skeptical problem. The skeptic does not entertain the possibility of someone saying, "I cannot give non-question-begging evidence for my belief in

[11] Richard Feldman and Earl Conee, "Evidentialism," *Philosophical Studies* 48 (1985): 15-34.

modest realism, but I am nevertheless justified in believing it. Evidence is not necessary for justification." Therefore, it is EI that propels the skeptical argument.

III

Having shown that the Cartesian skeptic presupposes an internalist component (EI) is one thing, arguing that EI is false is another. A cottage industry of responses to Cartesian skepticism along reliabilist lines have arisen since Alvin Goldman's seminal paper "What is Justified Belief" appeared in 1979.[12] Reliabilists argue that a proper account of justification does not require an evidentialist-internalist component and that one can be justified in believing *that p* without possessing any evidence for *P.* (More on this below.) Whether or not the reliabilist diagnosis and response work is still hotly debated. What is of concern to us is whether or not virtue epistemology and virtue-responsibilism in particular offers an analogous response. Now, the field of virtue epistemology can be divided into two camps: virtue-reliabilists and virtue-responsibilists.[13] The difference between the two camps concerns their conception of what an intellectual virtue is. Virtue-responsibilists think that the virtues are acquired over time, and require proper motivation and habituation; the intellectual virtues are more like acquired personality traits than innate cognitive powers or abilities.[14] The paradigm virtues for virtue-responsibilists are intellectual courage, intellectual autonomy, and open-mindedness; they deny that the faculties of sight and hearing are intellectual virtues.[15] Virtue-reliabilists disagree. For them, the intellectual virtues are natural or acquired cognitive powers and abilities that don't necessarily require proper motivation and habituation. An intellectual virtue is any properly human faculty or habit that enables a person to arrive at the truth. Virtue-reliabilists think that the paradigm virtues are the natural faculties like sight and hearing.

Now virtue-reliabilists, just like their reliabilist predecessors, have a ready reply to Cartesian skepticism. According to reliabilism, "If S's believing *p* at *t* results from a reliable cognitive belief-forming process (or set of processes), then S's belief in *p* at *t* is justified."[16] A reliabilist argues that our lack of evidence for our belief in modest realism is irrelevant to its justificatory status. So long as a

[12] Alvin Goldman, "What is Justified Belief?" in *Justification and Knowledge*, ed. George Pappas (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1979), 1-23, reprinted in *Epistemology: An Anthology*, eds. Ernest Sosa and Jaegwon Kim (Malden: Blackwell, 2000), 340-353.

[13] Heather Battaly, "Virtue Epistemology," *Philosophy Compass* 3, 4 (2008): 639-663.

[14] John Greco, "Virtues in Epistemology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*, ed. Paul K. Moser (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 287.

[15] Greco, "Virtues in Epistemology," 287.

[16] Goldman, "What is Justified Belief," 347.

reliable belief-forming process produced this belief, it is justified. Virtue-reliabilism is a successor to reliabilism. What distinguishes reliabilism and virtue-reliabilism can be brought to light by focusing on a problem that plagues reliabilism:

> Imagine that Bob has a brain lesion that spontaneously fuses with Bob's cognitive faculties and causes him to form only one belief, the belief *that he has a brain lesion.* This belief is true, and since the brain lesion produces only true beliefs, it is a reliable belief-forming process. Therefore, Bob's belief is justified.[17]

The troubling intuition is that a brain lesion is not the sort of belief-forming process that ought to give rise to justified beliefs; yet, it satisfies the reliabilist account of justification. What this case shows is that the belief-forming processes that matter are *properly human* belief-forming processes, and brain lesions are not a *properly human* belief-forming process, even if they are reliable. The virtue-reliabilist hones in on this intuition and claims that intellectual virtues are *properly human* abilities and processes that reliably produce true beliefs. They go on to offer an account of justification in terms of the intellectual virtues: S's belief *p* is justified at t1 if, and only if, S's belief *p* is produced by intellectual virtue(s) at t1.[18] This does not impose an EI account of justification. Insofar as our belief in modest realism is virtuously formed, we can be justified.

The virtue-reliabilist response is well known through the work of Ernest Sosa, John Greco and others.[19] *But what is not as well known and what is especially interesting is, virtue-responsibilists have an equally strong reply.* In what follows, I will argue that the Cartesian skeptic is vitiated on a virtue-responsibilist account of knowledge. That is, assuming the truthfulness of virtue-responsibilism the skeptical argument does not arise. I will focus on the work of Linda Zagzebski who was the first to fully articulate and defend a virtue-responsibilist account of knowledge and justification. I will argue that her account offers a response to the skeptical argument along similar lines as the reliabilist and virtue-reliabilist. The upshot of this will be that Zagzebski's theory is structurally similar to reliabilism.

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[17] This common objection to reliabilism can be found in Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 197-207.

[18] This is an oversimplified account; for much fuller detail, see John Greco's *Achieving Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Ernest Sosa's *Reflective Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and "Reflective Knowledge in the Best Circles," in *Epistemology: An Anthology,* 274-295, among others.

[19] Refer to note 18.

Zagzebski defines knowledge as "cognitive contact with reality arising out of acts of intellectual virtue."[20] At once the skeptic will object that Zagzebski is assuming modest realism by defining knowledge as "contact with reality." But this definition of knowledge is compatible with views of reality other than modest realism. This is because *reality* functions in her definition as that which knowledge is of. If idealism (roughly, the view that reality is mental) were true, then "reality" would be the mental images that we have knowledge of. Thus, "reality" in her definition doesn't assume the truth of modest realism.

Central to her account of knowledge are acts of intellectual virtue. An act of intellectual virtue A does not require that one possess virtue A. It only requires that one act in accord with that virtue. (I can act open-mindedly even if I don't possess that virtue.) An act of intellectual virtue A has three components.[21] First, the act must arise from the motivational component of virtue A. Each intellectual virtue has a dual motivation component, a specific and a general one. Most intellectual virtues are generally motivated towards truth;[22] they each have a specific motivational component that differentiates them from each other. For example, open-mindedness and intellectual courage are both motivated toward truth but have a specific motivational component. To act open-mindedly is to be motivated to entertain other viable alternatives to one's view, while to be intellectually courageous is to be motivated to defend one's belief against counter-evidence. Thus, an act of virtue A requires that the act be motivated by the general and specific motivational component of A.

Second, the act must be one that a person with virtue A would characteristically do in the situation. Whether we cash out this virtuous person as an ideal observer or a human being is irrelevant. All that matters is that the act is one an intellectually virtuous person with virtue A would do. The virtuous person may perform actions E, F, and G in situation X to arrive at belief *that p*; therefore, if I am to arrive at knowledge through an act of virtue A, I must perform those actions E, F, and G in situation X.

Third, the act of virtue must be successful in achieving knowledge due to the previous two features of the act. The motivational component of A, along with the fact that the act is what the virtuous person would do, *results in* a true belief. John Greco has labeled this "*resulting in*" relation a causal-responsible relation where: The agent's acts and motivations are causally responsible for the resultant belief and the agent's acts and motivations are the most salient features of the

[20] Zagzebski, "What is Knowledge," 109.

[21] Zagzebski, "What is Knowledge," 108.

[22] "Most" because some intellectual virtues, like creativity, are not aimed at truth.

resultant belief.[23] If I know *that P*, it is because my virtuous motivations and actions produced the belief and there are no other (Gettier-like) factors involved. An analysis of my knowledge of P will refer solely to my actions and motivations.

Zagzebski's account is straightforward. Knowledge is contact with reality arising out of an act of virtue. Acts of virtue require (1) proper motivation[s], (2) proper action(s) and (3) success because of those motivation[s] and action(s). Her account lends itself nicely to an analysis of other epistemic terms.[24] To be justified in believing P on her account, one must satisfy conditions (1) and (2) of an act of virtue. One must be properly motivated in believing P and act how the virtuous person would act. Justification, therefore, requires the first two conditions of an act of virtue but jettisons the success condition. This captures our intuitions that a justified belief is an epistemically blameless belief that may be false, and thus her account nicely accommodates our intuitions regarding justification.

What is important to notice about Zagzebski's account of knowledge and justification is that it excludes the evidentialist-internalist constraint found in the skeptic's argument. Recall the evidentialist-internalist constraint: S's belief *that p* is epistemically justified for S if and only if S's belief fits the evidence E that S has. The possession of evidence or reasons is a necessary condition for justification according to the Cartesian skeptic. *Zagzebski's account of knowledge and justification imposes no such restraint.* Acts of virtue do not require that one possess evidence or reasons. If I believe *that p* because of intellectually virtuous motivations and actions, I can be justified in believing *that p* despite my lack of evidence. An example may help: if I see a car down the road and form the belief *that there is a car*, I am justified in my belief. I am justified because I am motivated to believe perceptual beliefs (which are a source of knowledge) and act as a virtuous agent would (virtuous agents believe perceptual beliefs in absence of counter-evidence). It is not essential to the justificatory status of my belief that I have evidence for my belief *that there is a car*.

The skeptical argument presupposed an evidentialist-internalist account of justification. With that constraint, we cannot be justified in our belief in modest realism since we lack non-question-begging evidence. Zagzebski's account of knowledge jettisons the internalist constraint (EI) that is presupposed in the skeptical argument. On her account, we can *be justified in our belief in modest realism as well as have knowledge that moderate realism is true.* Belief in modest realism can be justified if it meets the first two conditions of an act of intellectual

[23] Greco, "Virtues in Epistemology," 309.

[24] It is not clear to me that Zagzebski would agree with my account of justification; hereafter, I will proceed assuming that she would. However, see her account on 241 of *Virtues of the Mind.*

virtue. Belief in modest realism (assuming it is true) can be knowledge for a person if it meets all three conditions of an act of virtue. Thus, the skeptical argument against our *belief* in modest realism fails on a virtue-responsibilist account of knowledge. This result is exciting.

IV

Discontent with how easy this response seems to be, the Cartesian skeptic may be tempted to reformulate the skeptical argument as follows. Assuming that knowledge is cognitive contact with reality arising out of acts of intellectual virtue, can we provide any non-question begging reasons for thinking that the virtues are reliable? Virtue-responsibilism posits that we can have knowledge and justification through acts of virtue. But this account of knowledge presupposes that the virtues are reliable conduits of truth. Yet how can we know that the virtues are reliable conduits of truth? One cannot use the virtues to determine whether or not the virtues are reliable because that would beg the question. Since all knowledge is arrived at through virtuous actions, we can never know that the virtues are reliable. So, it appears that a new skeptical challenge arises for the virtue-responsibilist.

The first thing to notice is that Zagzebski can respond by simply *denying* that we can't have knowledge that the virtues are reliable.[25] Recall that on her account, one doesn't have to provide reasons for a belief in order to have knowledge. Thus, one could have knowledge that the virtues are reliable without providing reasons for their reliability. All that is required is that the belief in their reliability be arrived at through an act of virtue. While I am partial to this response, I think there is a more satisfying response available.

To better understand this objection, it will be helpful to see how it functions against reliabilist theories of justification. Recall the reliabilist theory: If S's believing *p* results from a reliable belief-forming process (or set of processes), then S's belief in *p* is justified.[26] Perception, deduction and hearing are paradigm processes that yield true beliefs more often than false ones. My belief *that sight is reliable* is justified if and only if a reliable process produced that belief. The problem for reliabilism is that we can never be sure that our cognitive faculties are indeed reliable. How can we be sure that our faculty of sight is reliable without using sight? How can we be sure that our faculty of taste is reliable without using that very same faculty? It appears that we can never independently verify that reliabilism is true! All reliabilism gets us is the following conditional: *if* reliabilism

[25] This is the line Ernest Sosa appears to take in "Reflective Knowledge in the Best Circles."
[26] Goldman, "What is Justified Belief," 347.

is true *and* our cognitive faculties are reliable, *then* we have justified beliefs.[27] Reliabilists can respond in a number of ways, but for our purposes we shall overlook these. What is worth pointing out is the intuitive force of the objection: it is dissatisfying that this theory should not allow for verification of reliability.

The question before us is: Does virtue-responsibilism fare any better than reliabilism? We may initially think not since the virtue-responsibilist responded to the Cartesian skeptic in the same way as the reliabilist and virtue-reliabilist. All three jettison the EI. We may think that virtue-responsibilism gets us only the following conditional: *If* virtue-responsibilism is correct *and* the intellectual virtues are reliable, *then* we can have knowledge. I will argue that this is not correct and that virtue-responsibilism has the resources to provide non-question-begging evidence of the reliability of the intellectual virtues.

All virtue-epistemologists agree that the primary locus of epistemic evaluation is the intellectual virtues. Accounts of justification and knowledge are cashed out in terms of the intellectual virtues; recall Zagzebski's account of justification: a belief is justified if and only if it is produced by the proper motivations and proper actions. Likewise with the virtue-reliabilist: a belief is justified if and only if it is produced by intellectual virtues. For both the virtue-reliabilist and Zagzebski, a belief's justificatory status depends upon or supervenes upon the intellectual virtues that gave rise to the belief. This primacy of the intellectual virtues in accounts of justification and knowledge is a general feature specific to virtue-epistemology. Heather Battaly states:

> [I]n *virtue epistemology,* agents rather than beliefs are the primary objects of epistemic evaluation, and intellectual virtues and vices, which are evaluations of agents, are the fundamental concepts and properties. Specifically, virtue epistemology takes intellectual virtues and vices – types of agent-evaluation- to be more fundamental than justification, knowledge, or any other type of belief-evaluation.[28]

In a similar vein, Ernest Sosa says,

> Virtue epistemology is distinguished by its emphasis on the subject as seat of justification … [T]he subject and her cognitive virtues or aptitudes … hold primary interest for virtue epistemology.[29]

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[27] This point is taken from Barry Stroud. See his "Scepticism, Externalism and the Goal of Epistemology," *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 68 (1994): 291-307. John McDowell makes a similar point in his "Knowledge and the Internal," in *Epistemology: An Anthology,* 413-423.

[28] Battaly, "Virtue Epistemology," 640.

[29] Sosa, "Reflective Knowledge in the Best Circles," 278

If a virtue epistemologist wants to criticize or commend a belief, they criticize or commend the intellectual traits of character that gave rise to that belief.

Two points are worth emphasizing regarding Zagzebski's conception of intellectual virtues. First, the intellectual virtues require time and habituation to *acquire*. She states, "Intellectual virtues… require training through the imitation of virtuous persons and practice in acting virtuously."[30] One isn't born intellectually courageous, rather one becomes intellectually courageous. (Remember that she does not countenance the faculty of sight, hearing and the like as intellectual virtues.) Second, according to Zagzebski, each intellectual virtue "has a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end."[31] The intellectual virtues are differentiated by their *specific* motivations that reliably give rise to *particular* types of actions. For example, the open-minded individual is motivated to entertain competing hypotheses and regularly does so. The intellectually courageous individual is motivated to entertain possible objections and regularly does so. These two points lead to a third point – given that the intellectual virtues are constituted by a specific motivation that gives rise to a type of action, it follows that these motivations and actions are empirically verifiable. What do I mean by this? Simply that people can *see* that an open-minded person is motivated to entertain competing hypotheses and regularly does so. People can *see* that an intellectually courageous individual is motivated to entertain possible objections and regularly does so. That these motivations and actions are empirically verifiable is taken for granted on the virtue-responsibilist account of knowledge. After all, we *acquire* the intellectual virtues by acting and modeling after an intellectually virtuous person, and we can only do this if we can *see* that the person is virtuous and acting from virtue.

We are now in position to show how one can, on a virtue-responsibilist theory, arrive at knowledge of the reliability of each particular virtue in a non-question-begging manner. Given that the intellectual virtues are empirically verifiable character traits of people, we can establish their reliability by empirical examination. We can take open-minded people and examine how often they arrive at true beliefs. Moreover, in undertaking this empirical examination and arriving at the knowledge that open-mindedness reliably produces true beliefs, we (who are doing the testing) don't have to *assume the reliability of open-mindedness* nor *do we have to act open-mindedly ourselves.* To see why, recall

[30] Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind,* 157-158.

[31] Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind*, 137.

that Zagzebski defines knowledge as "cognitive contact with reality arising out of acts of intellectual virtue," and that acts of virtue require that one be motivated and act as a virtuous person would.[32] Notice that this account does not stipulate, however, that acts of virtue require acting in accordance with *all* of the intellectual virtues. An act of virtue that results in knowledge may require only one or two of the intellectual virtues being acted in accordance with. Therefore, it may be that gathering empirical data and arriving at the knowledge that a particular virtue *X* is reliable does not require that one perform an act of virtue in which virtue *X* is acted in accordance with. In this case, one can arrive at the knowledge that virtue *X* is reliable *without utilizing virtue X.*

For example, take intellectual courage. We start by isolating the clearly distinguishable and specific motivations and actions that are found in someone with intellectual courage. We can do this because we can *see* that the person is motivated by courage and acts accordingly. The next step would be to discern how often he or she arrives true beliefs, or how often intellectual courage has assisted in the production of true beliefs.[33] In this way, we can determine whether or not intellectual courage reliably leads to true beliefs. But notice that in arriving at this knowledge of the reliability of intellectual courage, we who are doing the testing *do not necessarily have to act intellectually courageous ourselves*. An act of virtue that gives rise to the knowledge *that intellectual courage is reliable* may not depend upon the exercise of intellectual courage. In fact, the empirical results of isolating a courageous person and determining their likelihood of truth acquisition seems to be independent of whether or not I am intellectually courageous myself, and so it would seem that a person arriving at this knowledge via an act of virtue would not be acting courageously. Therefore, we can test the reliability of intellectual courage without being courageous ourselves.

It may be objected that the virtue-responsibilist is arguing in a circle. Assume that there are three intellectual virtues A, B and C. The virtue-responsibilist maintains that we can arrive at the knowledge that virtue A is reliable by utilizing virtues B and C in an act of virtue. It is true that we are not deploying virtue A in arriving at the knowledge of its reliability, but the objection continues, aren't we assuming that virtues B and C are reliable indicators of the

[32] Zagzebski, "What is Knowledge," 109.

[33] It may be objected that this 'empirical examination' would be next to impossible; how would we know that it is intellectual courage and not some other virtue that led to the subject's true belief? Why assume that one virtue is responsible for arriving at true beliefs? Response: All I aim to show is that it is *possible.* But, its being possible does not entail that it is easy. An empirical investigation into the reliability of the virtues is going to be difficult, but not impossible!

truth? If we don't assume that they are reliable, then we have no reason to suppose that our considerations regarding A's reliability are reliable. So we must determine whether or not virtue B is reliable, but the only way to do so is to exercise virtues A and C! The same goes for virtue C. We are stuck in a precarious position: we cannot arrive at knowledge regarding the reliability of a specific intellectual virtue without *assuming* the reliability of the other intellectual virtues.

In response, virtue-responsibilism does not require that one *know* or *assume* that the intellectual virtues are reliable in order to have knowledge. All it requires is that one act in accordance with them. Thus, when one arrives at the knowledge that virtue A is reliable, all that is required is that one performs an act of virtue (according to virtues B and C) and arrives at the truth because of it. This is enough to answer the skeptical argument that challenged the virtue-responsibilist to provide non-question-begging evidence for the reliability of the specific virtues. It shows that one can have evidence for the reliability of virtue A without assuming the truthfulness of virtue A. To charge that the virtue-responsibilist is *assuming* the reliability of all of the virtues is irrelevant; what is relevant is only that the virtues are in fact reliable and not that we assume or believe that they are. If the skeptic is to insist that *this* assumption is problematic on the part of the virtue-responsibilist, then it is incumbent upon her to argue for this. How would such an argument go? Is it that the virtue-responsibilist is *unjustified* in assuming that the virtues are reliable? That is an unimpressive argument, for the virtue-responsibilist will merely respond that she can be justified in believing that the virtues are reliable on her account of justification and knowledge. Therefore, in the absence of further argument, the virtue-responsibilist can rest content in her response.

V

Showing that a philosophical theory has the resources to solve outstanding philosophical problems is an essential part of establishing the plausibility and acceptability of the theory. Thus, while I have not been arguing directly for the truth of the virtue-responsibilist account of knowledge, the thrust of this paper should make clear that it has attractive virtues. Let me conclude by recapping what they are. The prospects for a virtue-responsibilist reply to the Cartesian skeptic are quite promising. The skeptical argument against the epistemic status of our belief in modest realism is of no force for the virtue epistemologist. On all accounts of virtue epistemology (virtue-reliabilist and virtue-responsibilist) this skeptical argument does not arise, since virtue-epistemologists reject the

presupposed evidentialist-internalist account of justification that is essential to it. In the course of evaluating the virtue-responsibilist reply we saw that it is structurally similar to reliabilism in, at least, two respects: both views have a reliability component (for Zagzebski, the virtues are reliable) and both reject evidentialism. Moreover, whereas reliabilists cannot establish the reliability of the belief-forming faculties that they take to be the source of justification, virtue-responsibilism can. The virtue-responsibilist can establish in a non-question-begging way the reliability of each specific intellectual virtue. Therefore, virtue-responsibilism proves to be all the more viable and epistemologists would be wise to take a closer look at it.

FOLEY'S SELF-TRUST AND RELIGIOUS DISAGREEMENT

Tomas BOGARDUS

ABSTRACT: In this paper, I'll look at the implications of Richard Foley's epistemology for two different kinds of religious disagreement. First, there are those occasions on which a *stranger* testifies to me that she holds disagreeing religious beliefs. Typically, I'm dismissive of such religious disagreement, and I bet you are too. Richard Foley gives reasons to think that we need not be at all conciliatory in the face of stranger disagreement, but I'll explain why his reasons are insufficient. After that, I'll look at those types of religious disagreement that occur between epistemic *peers*. Foley has argued for a conciliatory position. I worry that his position leads to what some in the literature have called "spinelessness." I also worry that his view is self-defeating, and vulnerable to some apparent counterexamples. I'll end the paper by sketching my own, non-Foleyan, solution to those problems.

KEYWORDS: peer disagreement, Richard Foley, equal weight view, conciliatory views, knowledge by acquaintance, skepticism

Stranger Disagreement

In Part I of his 2001 book, Foley provides an interesting and thoughtful summary of historical attempts to refute skepticism. He worries that the only way in which we could completely refute skepticism is by embracing an epistemology on which "the conditions of rational belief are conditions to which we always have immediate and unproblematic access."[1] He calls this epistemology of direct acquaintance "Russellian Foundationalism," after you-know-who. Unfortunately, he says, few epistemologists are willing to take that kind of "extreme" epistemology seriously anymore,[2] presumably because of the "withering attacks" of the last half-century,[3] and because, as Foley says, "there is no way of providing non-question-begging assurances of the reliability of one's faculties and beliefs."[4] So, he concludes:

[1] Richard Foley, *Intellectual Trust in Oneself and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 23.
[2] Foley, *Intellectual Trust*, 23-24.
[3] Foley, *Intellectual Trust*, 5.
[4] Foley, *Intellectual Trust*, 4.

> Once we give up on [Russellian Foundationalism], we have no choice but to acknowledge that significant intellectual projects require correspondingly significant leaps of intellectual faith.[5]

And so direct acquaintance takes a back seat to self-trust for the rest of Foley's book. Giving up on an epistemology of direct acquaintance is, I think, a bit hasty, and in the final section of this paper I'll try to sell you on a more moderate cousin of Russellian Foundationalism. For now, let's focus on self-trust, which, according to Foley, explains why we generally trust the testimony of others:

> The presumption of trust in others is generated out of self-trust. My opinions have been shaped by faculties and circumstances that shape the opinions of others. Thus, insofar as I trust my opinions and faculties, I am pressured to trust the opinions and faculties of others as well, even when I know little or nothing about their track records of reliability or their specific circumstances or backgrounds.[6]

Naturally, this presumptive trust may be defeated by information indicating I'm an epistemic superior. And that's not all, Foley continues:

> In addition, there is an important and common way in which the prima facie credibility of someone else's opinion can be defeated even when I have no specific knowledge of the individual's track record, capacities, training, evidence, or background. It is defeated when our opinions conflict, because, by my lights, the person has been unreliable. Whatever credibility would have attached to the person's opinion as a result of my general attitude of trust toward the opinions of others is defeated by the trust I have in myself. …[W]hen my opinions conflict with a person about whom I know little, the pressure to trust that person is dissipated because, with respect to the issue in question, the conflict itself constitutes a relevant dissimilarity between us.[7]

Let's say a *stranger* is, in my case, someone about whose track record, capacities, training, prior evidence, and background I have little or no specific knowledge. In the absence of such knowledge, Foley says, my prima facie reason to accept another person's testimony "is defeated if I have a conflicting opinion," and yet, "it nonetheless may still be epistemically rational for me to defer to the person, but only if I have special reasons indicating that he or she is better positioned than I to assess the claim in question."[8] For example, Foley says,

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[5] Foley, *Intellectual Trust*, 24.

[6] Foley, *Intellectual Trust*, 108.

[7] Foley, *Intellectual Trust*, 108.

[8] Foley, *Intellectual Trust*, 110. Though he uses the first-person, I take it that Foley here is expressing a general policy on disagreement. It's an interesting question whether Foley's own account of rationality is consistent with this or any other general policy on disagreement. Foley

specialized skills, faculties, training, or information can put one in a better position.

Later, Foley restates this claim in terms of degrees of belief:

> Degrees of belief are in general best represented not by precise subjective probabilities but rather a range of subjective probabilities. Thus, my degree of belief in P might be best represented by the range .7 to .9. If your degree of belief lies entirely outside this range, for example, in the range .4 to .6, we have conflicting degrees of belief. Your opinion also conflicts with mine if part of its range lies outside the range of my opinion, for example, if your degree of belief in P is in the range .6 to .8. In both kinds of cases, the prima facie reason I have to trust your opinion is defeated, and hence **I have no reason to move my opinion in the direction of your opinion** unless I have special reasons for thinking that you are in an especially good position to assess P.[9]

So, in sum, Foley thinks the following is true:

> STRANGER CLAIM:
>
> If I know that a stranger and I have conflicting degrees of belief in *p,* and I don't have special reasons to think that she's in a better position than I am to assess *p*, then (ceteris paribus) I have no reason to move my opinion in the direction of her opinion.[10]

If STRANGER CLAIM were true, it would excuse those who, like me, politely but firmly shut the door on those pesky proselytizers on the porch. Foley's STRANGER CLAIM would license that dismissive behavior since, by our lights, these strangers have proven themselves unreliable simply by disagreeing with us. This is a relevant dissimilarity, Foley says, and entails that we have no reason to move our opinions in the direction of those strangers' opinions.

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understands epistemic rationality as invulnerability to self-criticism. More carefully: Smith's belief B is rational just in case B is in accord with Smith's other reflective first-order opinions, as well as with her reflective second-order opinions about the ways she can reliably acquire opinions (*Intellectual Trust*, 28). But there are very many epistemically disordered (i.e. crazy) people out there, including unreflective people who only gently self-criticize as well as hyper-reflective people who harshly self-criticize. And so it may easily come out as Foley-rational for some hyper-self-critical Smith to defer to a disagreeing stranger even when Smith lacks special reasons indicating that the stranger is better positioned to assess the claim in question – steadfastness may not hold up to Smith's inordinately severe self-criticism. And so it looks like Foley's general principle here is inconsistent with his favored account of rationality. I believe this is also true of his other general principles discussed below, but I won't mention it again.

[9] Foley, *Intellectual Trust*, 114, emphasis mine.

[10] The *ceteris paribus* clause here is meant to exclude cases in which I have other, independent reasons to move my opinion in the direction of the stranger's opinion.

Counterexample

Unfortunately, STRANGER CLAIM is false, and we can't excuse our dismissive behavior so easily. Here's an example to help us see why. Suppose I know that, on average, adult humans are 85% accurate when it comes to distinguishing maple trees from non-maple trees. I've tested myself on the question, and I'm perfectly average: 85% accurate. One day I'm staring at what I'm *certain* is a maple, and an adult human stranger approaches. "What a fine lookin' non-maple tree," she says. "Yep, *definitely* not a maple!" I have very little if any specific knowledge about her track record, background, etc.[11] I don't have special reasons indicating she's better positioned than I am. But, as Foley's STRANGER CLAIM entails, do I really have *no* reason to be *any* less confident that it's a maple? Surely not. It's clear that I have at least some reason to at least slightly lower my confidence. (If you disagree, imagine another stranger arrives and independently gives the same testimony: "Yep, *definitely* not a maple!" And then another. And then another. Would it really be rational for me to end up with the same degree of confidence that I started with? Foley says "Yes," but intuition shouts "No!") But then STRANGER CLAIM gives the wrong verdict here, and so it isn't true. So, we'll have to look for some other explanation of why it is excusable to dismiss the opinions of disagreeing strangers.[12]

Here's my proposal: the reason I typically don't wilt when confronted by strangers who disagree with me on religious questions is that – forgive the immodesty – I believe I'm better than average at assessing those religious questions. Perhaps my degree of belief should fade slightly – but not very much, since I think I'm substantially more reliable than the average person, at least with

[11] Foley includes "evidence," but I've omitted it here, since I worry that it's very easy to have "specific knowledge" about someone's evidence, in which case the antecedent of STRANGER CLAIM will virtually never be satisfied. I take it Foley wouldn't want to say that my "specific knowledge" of the tree – or my experience-type of the tree, or the fact that this stranger is looking at the tree – prevents the antecedent of STRANGER CLAIM from being satisfied in this case. I should also hope that my knowledge that the onlooker is an adult human doesn't constitute enough "specific knowledge" of her background or capacities to make her a non-stranger. Otherwise, genuine strangers will be very rare indeed, and STRANGER CLAIM will be flirting with triviality.

[12] As discussed below, Foley elsewhere (*Intellectual Trust*, 110-111) says "Insofar as it is reasonable for me to regard us as exact epistemic peers with respect to the issue, it is reasonable for me to withhold judgment until I better understand how one or both of us have gone wrong." So perhaps Foley's view on peer disagreement entails that I should be conciliatory in the maple tree case, even though his view on stranger disagreement clearly entails that I shouldn't. If so, Foley's combined view is incoherent.

respect to some subset of religious questions.[13] If my reliability were just average, I should be much more deferential towards disagreeing strangers, as the maple tree example illustrates. And when I was younger, I often took the religious disagreement of strangers very seriously, since I estimated myself to be at best average with respect to assessing those religious issues. And if, for example, a stranger at a distinguished philosophy of religion conference disagreed with me about religious issues, I would take that very seriously, since I'd have antecedent reasons to believe that she's better than average at assessing very many religious questions.

So it's not, as Foley says, that the stranger's prima facie credibility is defeated because, by my lights, she's proven unreliable. Rather, in at least some disagreements the stranger remains credible, depending on how reliable I antecedently believe she is compared to me. A stranger's disagreement may, therefore, provide me with some reason to significantly change my degree of belief. But then Foley's STRANGER CLAIM just isn't right.

Peer Disagreement

Now I'll lay out Foley's views on disagreement between epistemic peers. Then, I'll offer some objections to his position, and express worries that his view doesn't have the resources to answer these objections.

Foley says this about peer disagreement:

> [S]uppose it is rational for me to believe that we are equally well positioned to evaluate the issue and equally skilled and equally well informed and that we have also devoted an equal amount of time and effort to thinking about the issue. …I have no reason to simply defer to your authority. On the other hand, neither is it permissible for me simply to go on believing what I had been believing. Insofar as it is reasonable for me to regard us as exact epistemic peers with respect to the issue, it is reasonable for me to withhold judgment until I better understand how one or both of us have gone wrong.[14]

In the context, it is clear that Foley is working with an all-or-nothing model of belief here. And so, the last sentence in the above quotation seems to be a rough statement of an equal-weight view of peer disagreement:

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[13] I think Foley himself might agree here, since he says (*Intellectual Trust*, 119): "experts are unlikely to have reasons to think that others are in a better position than they to evaluate issues within their specialty." I'd add that experts are also unlikely to have reasons to think that others are in an *equal* position.

[14] Foley, *Intellectual Trust*, 110-111.

> FOLEY'S EQUAL-WEIGHT VIEW:
>
> If I reasonably believe we disagree about *p*, and that we're equally well positioned, well informed, skilled, and diligent with respect to *p,* then it's reasonable for me to give your opinion on *p* equal weight as my own.

If, as Foley says, in such a case my opinion is *p* and yours is not-*p*, then it's reasonable to withhold judgment on *p.* I think that the equal-weight view has much intuitive appeal, and that it delivers the right verdict in a wide variety of cases. So enamored am I by the equal-weight view that I've even defended a version of it in print, against apparent counterexamples and against the charge of self-defeat.[15]

However, my defense relied on an epistemology of direct acquaintance, something in the neighborhood of Russellian Foundationalism. I worry that, since Foley has given up on Russellian Foundationalism and instead embraced an epistemology of self-trust, he lacks the resources to prevent his equal-weight view of peer disagreement from issuing absurd verdicts, defeating itself, and requiring an unappealing degree of spinelessness, which would extend to our most deeply held religious beliefs. (Serious charges indeed!)

Let me first explain the problematic cases I have in mind. Consider **Extreme Restaurant Check**: You and your friend go out to dinner, and it's time to split the check. You both know the value of the bill, and you reasonably believe that, here in the circumstances, you're peers when it comes to this sort of arithmetic. The bill total is only $75, but, after careful and sober calculation, your friend sincerely declares that each share is $450, a far sight over the whole tab. Intuitively, it's not reasonable to give her assessment equal weight in this apparent case of peer disagreement. But that's contrary to what the equal-weight view – Foley's version in particular – seems to recommend. So here we have an apparent counterexample.

Now consider **Extreme Skepticism**: You're at the restaurant again, and you reasonably believe your friend to be a peer on questions about what happened within the last hour in this restaurant. But then the bill arrives, and your friend sincerely, soberly, and triumphantly announces that you need not pay the bill, since the world popped into existence a mere five minutes ago with the appearance of age, including this bill and the food in your stomachs. Intuitively, it's not reasonable to give her assessment equal weight in this apparent case of peer disagreement. But that's contrary to what the equal-weight view – Foley's

[15] Tomas Bogardus "A Vindication of the Equal-Weight View," *Episteme: A Journal of Social Epistemology* 6 (2009): 324-335.

version in particular – seems to recommend. So here too we have an apparent counterexample.

Finally, consider the charge of **Self-Defeat**: Critics of the equal-weight view point out that its advocates know of epistemic peers who disagree strongly enough for the equal-weight view to recommend giving itself up. And so, the critic concludes, if the equal-weight view is true, we shouldn't believe it. And of course if it's false we shouldn't believe it either.

A moderate version of Russellian Foundationalism supplies satisfying responses to the above cases. We need not subscribe to Foley's extreme construal of Russellian Foundationalism, namely that we *always* have immediate and unproblematic access to the conditions of rational belief. As long as we occasionally have this access, the problems of the previous paragraphs may be avoided. Let me explain.

When you take your faculties to be as reliable as your friend's, and each of your faculties are given the same inputs, it is clearly unacceptably arbitrary to dismiss the report that *p* from your friend's faculties on the basis of the report that not-*p* from your own faculties. But if you're relying not on a *report* from your faculties, but rather on your immediate and unproblematic access to the fact that not-*p,* steadfastness is clearly called for. And this is just what happens in **Extreme Restaurant Check**. On that occasion, you have – via what some philosophers have called "rational intuition" – immediate and unproblematic access to the fact that *each share of this check is not $450.* Or so I claim.[16]

This reasoning can be extended to the problem of **Self-Defeat**. In the last paragraph, we learned how steadfastness may be called for in cases involving knowledge from that unmediated access to the truth of propositions sometimes afforded by rational intuition. And it's plausible that the equal-weight view is itself a deliverance of rational intuition. Even Thomas Kelly, a prominent opponent of the equal-weight view, admits that "reflection on certain kinds of

[16] And, importantly, you may demote your friend from peerhood in a way that doesn't presuppose the truth of your answer or the falsity of your friend's answer – thereby respecting the central motivating insight of the equal-weight view – since you may reason in roughly this way: I have immediate access to a pertinent piece of evidence. Either my friend also does, or she doesn't. If she doesn't, I have relevant evidence she lacks, so she's not a peer. If she does have this access, then either there's merely verbal disagreement (and so this isn't a case of peer *disagreement*), or she genuinely disbelieves something that she has immediate and unproblematic access to. If so, she's cognitively malfunctioning, and so not a peer. In any event, then, and even setting aside the truth-values of our answers and the reasoning that got us to them, this isn't a case of peer disagreement.

cases can make it seem almost trivial or obviously true."[17] With further reflection, I think, not only does it *seem* obvious, but it just *is* obvious. Its non-adherents have, for all their virtues, failed to fully appreciate this. And if an adherent of an equal-weight view does have immediate and unproblematic access to its truth, steadfastness will be called for in the face of a disbeliever. And so, under those circumstances, the view won't be self-defeating.

Now for **Extreme Skepticism**. It is clearly unacceptably arbitrary or question-begging to respond to an apparent case of peer disagreement in this way: "My friend's faculties report that *p* is true. But, given the same inputs, my faculties report that *p* is false. So my friend's faculties are malfunctioning, and so she's not a peer." But it is clearly not unacceptably arbitrary to demote your friend from peerhood if you have immediate and unproblematic access to a fact of the form *my friend's answer here indicates malfunction*. This may happen if, for example, your friend claims that she is the messiah.[18] And this is relevant to Extreme Skepticism. There, your friend's answer isn't obviously false, as it is in Extreme Restaurant Check. Rather, what's immediately apparent is that your friend's answer here indicates cognitive malfunction, just as it would if she had sincerely claimed that she's a pony. In light of your immediate and unproblematic access to the impropriety of your friend's answer, steadfastness is called for.[19]

Now here's the problem for Foley: he's no fan of anything in the neighborhood of Russellian Foundationalism. As he says, "there is no way of providing non-question-begging assurances of the reliability of one's faculties and beliefs."[20] So I don't think he'd accept even my more moderate version of Russellian Foundationalism. Instead, he opts for an epistemology of intellectual trust in oneself and others. But – and here's my central worry for Foley – how will such an epistemology circumvent the absurdity and self-defeat that lie in wait for conciliatory views of peer disagreement? On what basis may I explain the

[17] Thomas Kelly, "Peer Disagreement and Higher Order Evidence," in *Disagreement,* ed. Richard Feldman and Ted Warfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 111-174.

[18] David Christensen, "Epistemology of Disagreement: The Good News," *Philosophical Review* 116 (2007): 187-217. See page 198 for discussion of the messiah case.

[19] And, importantly, you may demote your friend from peerhood in a way that doesn't presuppose the truth of your answer or the falsity of your friend's answer, thereby respecting the central motivating insight of the equal-weight view. Your friend *may* be right about the universe popping into existence five minutes ago – her claim is broadly logically possible, and compatible with all appearances. Nevertheless, that she believes so in this case is an obvious sign of cognitive malfunction, even setting aside the truth values of your answers and the reasoning that got you to them.

[20] Foley, *Intellectual Trust*, 4.

disagreement in Extreme Restaurant Check in terms of my friend's error, if all that I have access to are the report of my faculties and the report of my friend's faculties, both of which, by hypothesis, I trust equally? If Russell's direct acquaintance is off the table, how will my preference for the report of my faculties fail to be unacceptably arbitrary, how will it fail to be the unpalatable *I'm me, so I win!* response to peer disagreement?

It seems to me that, if direct acquaintance is off the table, we'll be in the position of a man with disagreeing reports from two thermometers that he takes to be equally reliable. Since conciliation is called for in the thermometer case, I think Foley is committed to saying that conciliation is also called for in Extreme Restaurant Check and Extreme Skepticism. And this would extend to our most deeply held religious beliefs as well. But that's the unhappy "spineless" result we'd like to avoid. For similar reasons, I don't see how Foley can avoid the charge of self-defeat.

This isn't a knock down argument against Foley's epistemology – I'm failing to see how it might survive rather than successfully seeing that it can't. Rather, this is an invitation for Foley to say more about how his epistemology eludes those absurd, spineless, and self-defeating results.

I think these considerations give us a strong reason to take another look at an epistemology that countenances direct acquaintance. Such an epistemology can endorse the intuitively attractive equal-weight view, while at the same time accommodating our intuitions in Extreme Restaurant Check, Extreme Skepticism, and Self-Defeat.

And those explanations I've given have interesting and far-reaching consequences for religious disagreement. A few of our religious disagreements will be similar to Extreme Restaurant Check: cases in which we can just see the falsity of our friend's answer.[21] A few more of our religious disagreements will be similar to Extreme Skepticism: cases in which our friend's answer is a clear sign of cognitive malfunction.[22] The equal-weight view will not commit us to conciliation in any such cases, for reasons given above. And of course a vast swath of our religious disagreements will not be with epistemic peers at all, since it's very rare indeed to perfectly share the relevant evidence, talent, diligence, etc. with another person. And then there are the "close questions," as jurists say, between bona fide epistemic peers. Such cases, though not impossible, will be extremely rare. And so

[21] For example, disagreement with a Hindu who tells you that all is one, so she is you, and you are π, etc.

[22] For example, friends of Reformed Epistemology might think it obvious that belief in God is properly basic, and that atheism – like solipsism – is a clear sign of cognitive malfunction.

the religious disagreement we actually find around us will be significantly less concerning to an epistemology that countenances direct acquaintance, e.g. mine.[23]

[23] For more on why the equal-weight view, properly understood, does not require spinelessness when it comes to very many of our religious beliefs, see Tomas Bogardus, "Disagreeing with the (Religious) Skeptic," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* (forthcoming).

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LIES AND DECEPTION: A FAILED RECONCILIATION

Fernando BRONCANO-BERROCAL

ABSTRACT: The traditional view of lying says that lying is a matter of intending to deceive others by making statements that one believes to be false. Jennifer Lackey has recently defended the following version of the traditional view: A lies to B just in case (i) A states that *p* to B, (ii) A believes that *p* is false and (iii) A intends to be deceptive to B in stating that *p*. I argue that, despite all the virtues that Lackey ascribes to her view, conditions (i), (ii) and (iii) are not sufficient for lying.

KEYWORDS: lying, lies, deception, concealment, deceit

Jennifer Lackey[1] has recently defended a version of the traditionally held view of lying according to which A lies to B if and only if (1) A states that *p* to B, (2) A believes that *p* is false and (3) A intends to deceive B in stating that *p*. Lackey reviews some counterexamples to the necessity of (3), criticizes several alternative definitions that do not connect lying with deception, and concludes that, although the cases show that (3) is not necessary for lying, the connection between lying and deception has been dropped too quickly in the literature. To preserve that connection and thus keep the spirit of the traditional account, Lackey makes a slight modification to (3):

> LIE-L: A lies to B if and only if (i) A states that *p* to B, (ii) A believes that *p* is false and (iii) A intends to be deceptive to B in stating that *p*.

According to Lackey, LIE-L has many virtues, such as that it delivers the correct result in the counterexamples to the traditional account, that it avoids all the problems that afflict rival views or that it distinguishes lying from irony, joking and acting. I will not dispute any of these points. Rather, my argument against LIE-L will be more straightforward: I will show that conditions (i), (ii) and (iii) are not jointly sufficient for lying. In other words, I will show that a subject might state that *p*, believe that *p* is false and intend to be deceptive in stating that *p* without her statement counting as a lie.

[1] Jennifer Lackey, "Lies and Deception: An Unhappy Divorce," *Analysis* 73, 2 (2013): 236-248.

1. Lackey's notion of being deceptive

What does it take for A to be deceptive to B regarding whether *p*? Lackey gives no definition but she puts forward two sufficient conditions:

> CONCEALMENT OF INFORMATION PRINCIPLE (CIP): If A aims to conceal information from B regarding whether *p*, then A is deceptive to B with respect to whether *p*.
>
> DECEIT PRINCIPLE (DP): If A aims to bring about a false belief in B regarding whether *p*, then A is deceptive to B with respect to whether *p*.[2]

We can give the following working definition of 'being deceptive' using CIP and DP:

> DECEPTIVE: A is deceptive to B with respect to whether *p* if and only if A aims to conceal information from B regarding whether *p* or A aims to bring about a false belief in B regarding whether *p*.

DECEPTIVE might need a few more disjuncts but it will suffice for our purposes. Given DECEPTIVE, condition (iii) of LIE-L (A *intends* to be deceptive to B in stating that *p*) can be read as follows: in stating that *p*, A *aims* to conceal information from B or A *aims* to bring about a false belief in B. Putting all the pieces together, LIE-L can be reformulated in the following way:

> LIE-L: A lies to B if and only if (i) A states that *p* to B, (ii) A believes that *p* is false and (iii), in stating that *p*, A aims to conceal information from B or A aims to bring about a false belief in B.

2. Success conditions are not an option for Lackey

Why is Lackey interested in formulating condition (iii) in terms of *aiming* to conceal information or to bring about false belief rather than in terms of *succeeding* in concealing information or in bringing about false belief? The reason is that if Lackey included success conditions, her opponent could reject, for instance, her analysis of bald-faced lies. Cases of bald-faced lies are cases in which both A and B know that *p* and each know that the other knows that *p* and yet A states that not-*p* to B. Lackey gives an example in which a student is caught flagrantly cheating on an exam for the fourth time and tells the Dean 'I did not cheat on the exam' despite both know he cheated on the exam and despite they

[2] Lackey claims: "[N]otice that concealing information is sufficient, though not necessary, for being deceptive; thus, it is merely one instance of a more general phenomenon. Obviously, another way of being deceptive is to be deceitful, where one's aim is to bring about a false belief in one's hearer" (Lackey, "Lies and Deception," 6).

each know that the other knows this.[3] If success conditions of the type <A conceals information from B regarding whether *p*> or <A brings about a false belief in B regarding whether *p*> were included in LIE-L, the definition would incorrectly rule out as cases of lying cases in which there is common knowledge of that which is being lied about. The reason is that A and B's common knowledge of *p* is inconsistent with A's succeeding in concealing the fact that *p* from B and with B's believing falsely that *p*. In brief, success conditions of that type are not an option for Lackey.

3. A counterexample to LIE-L

Consider the following case:

CHICAGO REDUX

> Having just arrived at the train station in Chicago, B wishes to obtain directions to the Sears Tower, which is at location L1. She looks for a good informant and selects A, a person who looks like a police officer. However, A happens to be a person cleverly disguised as a police officer whose intention is to give wrong directions to outsiders. In addition, A has hidden all the evidence available at the train station that could show outsiders the location of Chicago landmarks (e.g., Chicago city maps, guides, info stands, etc.). It also happens that when A is about to state "The Sears Tower is at location L2," a benevolent Genie moves the building to L2 so that A speaks truly. Consequently, B's belief that the Sears Tower is at L2 is true.[4]

In CHICAGO REDUX, (i) A states that the Sears Tower is at location L2 to B, (ii) A believes that it is false that the Sears Tower is at location L2, (iii) A attempts to conceal information regarding the location of the Sears Tower from B and A attempts to bring about in B the false belief that the Sears Tower is at location L2. That is, conditions (i), (ii) and (iii) of LIE-L are satisfied. However, A's statement that the Sears Tower is at location L2 is not a lie in virtue of the following intuitive condition:

FALSITY: A lies to B in stating that *p*, only if *p* is false.

In fact, one of the key factors that differentiate lying from deception is precisely that lying requires making false statements while deception might arise from true statements.[5] In addition, note that LIE-L could rule out CHICAGO REDUX

[3] The example appears in Thomas L. Carson, *Lying and Deception: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[4] The case is a modification of an example that appears in Jennifer Lackey, "Why We Don't Deserve Credit for Everything We Know," *Synthese* 158, 3 (2007): 345-361.

[5] Carson, *Lying and Deception*, section 2.III.1.

as a case of lying if it included success conditions of the type <A conceals information from B regarding whether *p*> or <A brings about a false belief in B regarding whether *p*> (the latter would not hold). However, this is not an option for Lackey, as we have seen. Finally, note that CHICAGO REDUX is not an isolated philosophical fiction. There is a whole range of imaginable scenarios in which A states that *p* with the clear intention of lying to B but in which, unbeknownst to A, *p* is true in virtue of factors that go beyond her control and, therefore, given FALSITY, her statement that *p* is not a lie. To conclude, Lackey argues that the divorce between lies and deception should never have happened. I have shown that she has not succeeded in reconciling them.

DON'T KNOW, DON'T BELIEVE: REPLY TO KROEDEL

Clayton LITTLEJOHN

ABSTRACT: In recent work, Thomas Kroedel has proposed a novel solution to the lottery paradox. As he sees it, we are permitted/justified in believing some lottery propositions, but we are not permitted/justified in believing them all. I criticize this proposal on two fronts. First, I think that if we had the right to add some lottery beliefs to our belief set, we would not have any decisive reason to stop adding more. Suggestions to the contrary run into the wrong kind of reason problem. Reflection on the preface paradox suggests as much. Second, while I agree with Kroedel that permissions do not agglomerate, I do not think that this fact can help us solve the lottery paradox. First, I do not think we have any good reason to think that we're permitted to believe any lottery propositions. Second, I do not see any good reason to think that *epistemic* permissions do not agglomerate.

KEYWORDS: the lottery paradox, justification, knowledge, Thomas Kroedel, epistemic permissibility

Introdution

Lottery propositions are puzzling. It seems that you have exceptionally good reason to believe that the ticket you've been given will lose, and yet it seems you can't know that it will lose until the results of the drawing have been made public. This calls out for explanation. If held for good reasons and true, why wouldn't my belief that my ticket will lose constitute knowledge? It seems that you have exceptionally good reason to believe of any ticket that it's going to lose, and yet it seems you shouldn't believe of each ticket that it's going to lose. This also calls out for explanation. If it's permissible for me to believe any lottery proposition, why shouldn't it be permissible for me to believe every lottery proposition?

We have two puzzles, one that has to do with knowledge and another that has to do with proper or justified belief. In recent work, Kroedel tries to solve the justification puzzle.[1] In previous work, I've argued that his proposed solution

[1] Thomas Kroedel, "The Lottery Paradox, Epistemic Justification, and Permissibility," *Analysis* 72 (2012): 57-60 and "The Permissibility Solution to the Lottery Paradox – Reply to Littlejohn," *Logos & Episteme* 4, 1 (2013): 103-11.

won't work. My earlier criticisms did not persuade him, so I shall try again.[2] A better approach, I shall argue, is a knowledge-first approach.

Permissions don't agglomerate. If you're permitted to take the gun and permitted to take the cannoli, it doesn't follow that you're permitted to take the gun and the cannoli. If epistemic justification is just a matter of epistemic permissibility, you might be permitted to believe that t1 lost, permitted to believe t2 lost, and permitted to believe t3 lost even if you're not permitted to hold all three beliefs. If you think that we shouldn't believe of each lottery ticket that it's going to lose, it doesn't follow that you don't have for each ticket a permission to believe that it loses. If you take the gun, you might lose the permission you had to take the cannoli. If you believe that t1 lost, you might lose the permission you had otherwise to believe t2 lost.

Kroedel wants to solve the justification puzzle by appeal to two assumptions that I happen to find quite plausible. The first is that justifications are permissions (J=P). The second is that permissions don't agglomerate (NA). With NA, you can straightforwardly explain why it wouldn't follow from the fact that you're permitted to believe t1 lost, permitted to believe t2 lost, … permitted to believe t1,000,000 lost that you're permitted to believe t1-t1,000,000 lost. With this and J=P, you can the straightforwardly explain why it wouldn't follow from the fact that you have justification to believe t1 lost, justification to believe t2 lost, … justification to believe t1,000,000 lost that you have justification to believe t1-t1,000,000 lost. While sympathetic to both J=P and NA, I don't see how J=P and NA could solve or dissolve our puzzle about justification.

If NA and J=P are going to do any explanatory work, we have to make the following assumptions:

> Start. Feel free to add at least one lottery belief to your belief set (i.e., you can justifiably believe a lottery ticket will lose).
>
> Stop. Don't add all the lottery beliefs to your belief set (i.e., you can't justifiably believe each of the tickets will lose).

Moreover, it seems there's a constraint on a fully adequate explanation:

> AC. The permissibility solution should explain Start and Stop (i.e., why permissions/justifications don't agglomerate in this case).

We should want to know why the case of lottery propositions is a case in which permissions don't agglomerate (i.e., why it is permissible to believe some lottery propositions but not all of them).

[2] Clayton Littlejohn, "Lotteries, Probabilities, and Permissions," *Logos & Episteme* 3, 3 (2012): 509-14.

I'm skeptical of the permissibility solution because I'm skeptical of Start and skeptical of a view that combines Start and Stop. (If Kroedel did not accept Start, we do not need NA or J=P to explain anything. Similarly, if Krodel did not accept Start and Stop, we would not need NA to explain anything.) Let me press two objections.

Don't: Start and Stop

To motivate Start, Kroedel argues that we can have justification to believe some lottery propositions because their probability is so high. Understood one way, the probabilistic rationale for Start undercuts the combination of Start and Stop. Understood another way, the probabilistic rationale conflicts with AC.

Why should we accept Start? The standard answer is that the lottery propositions are very likely to be true given the evidence we have for them. If the high evidential probability gives you permission to believe p, you have permission/justification to believe any of the tickets in a lottery will lose. Kroedel's remarks suggest that he'd appeal to the following thesis to support Start:

> High-PJ: If the evidential probability of p is sufficiently high, you have justification to believe p.

Here's a worry about putting High-PJ to work. The probability of each of the lottery propositions on your evidence is the same. If it's high enough for one, it's high enough for each of them. If it's high enough for each of them, why can't you justifiably believe all of them? The rationale offered thus far supports Start but threatens to undercut Stop.

Kroedel's response can't *just* be NA because we want to know specifically why this is a case in which you can't justifiably/permissibly take advantage of all the justifications/permissions you had before you started adding beliefs about lottery propositions to your belief set. It's at just this point where I think we need to get clear on which probabilities matter to the permissibility of the lottery beliefs added to your belief set. As you add lottery beliefs to your belief set, there's something that remains invariant and something that changes. You come to believe t1 is a loser and there's a perfectly good sense in which the evidential probability of t2 remains the same. You come to believe t1 will lose and there's a perfectly good sense in which the evidential probability of erring by adding a belief about t2 to your belief set changes. The risk of erring by adding a belief about t2 to a set that includes t1 is greater than the risk of erring by adding t2 to your belief set where that's your only belief about lottery propositions.

If Kroedel accepts High-PJ and wants to say that the case at hand is a case in which permissions don't agglomerate, he has to say that this second sort of

probability is the relevant one when it comes to determining what can be justifiably believed. Thus, it looks like his solution to the lottery will incorporate High-PJ, the thesis that high evidential probability is sufficient for propositional justification, with a principle along these lines:

> Risk-DJ: If the probability of acquiring an error-containing belief set would get too high by adding the belief that p to your belief set, you cannot justifiably believe p.

I can't see how the permissibility solution could satisfy AC unless something like Risk-DJ is assumed. Without it, it's hard to see why someone who has sufficient propositional justification to believe p couldn't come to justifiably believe p by basing her belief on the evidence that provides this justification.

There's good reason to reject Risk-DJ. We can imagine epistemically conscientious students in our epistemology lectures who start to reflect about their own fallibility for the first time. They appreciate that there's an incredibly high probability that they have belief sets that contain errors. According to High-PJ, they have sufficient justification to believe the following proposition:

FB: There is at least one false belief in my present belief set.

We might imagine that *prior* to contemplating FB, they had sufficient propositional justification for each of their beliefs. And we might imagine that each of their beliefs was justifiably held. (These are *very* good students!) Should they believe FB?

It seems obvious to me that they should. Indeed, it seems obvious to me that they *know* FB. If they can justifiably believe FB, they can justifiably take on a set of beliefs that obviously contains a falsehood. This is something they can easily work out for themselves. If they can justifiably believe FB, we have a counterexample to Risk-DJ. Without Risk-DJ, I don't think we have any explanation as to why we can't justifiably make use of all the justifications we (allegedly) have to believe the lottery propositions. I take it that one lesson to take from the preface paradox is that the kind of evidential probability that Risk-DJ concerns has no bearing on whether the beliefs one holds one holds justifiably. This is why we shouldn't endorse both Start and Stop. I can see endorsing Start and rejecting Stop. I can see rejecting both. I can't see any reason to stop once you start.

The kind of risk that figures in Risk-DJ provides the wrong kind of reason to refrain from continuing to add beliefs about lottery propositions to your belief set. The kind of risk that evidential probability measures provides the right kind of reason to refrain from continuing to add beliefs about lottery propositions to your

belief set. That's why I think it's easy to explain why you shouldn't believe your ticket will win.

In response to my criticism, Kroedel suggests that I've committed some sort of fallacy because I've endorsed a kind of factual detachment. Not at all. To commit that fallacy, I'd have to try to derive the conclusion about what you ought to believe from a premise about what you do believe and a wide-scope 'ought' (e.g., Since you ought to believe that the world is created in less than a week if you believe it was created in six days and you happen to believe the world was created in six days, you ought to believe that it was created in less than a week).[3] I couldn't have done that because I didn't claim that the permissions at issue *do* combine to give you a permission to believe all the lottery propositions, only that we haven't seen yet why why don't. The point I was making was dialectical. To explain why you shouldn't believe all the lottery propositions, the permissibility solution needs something like Risk-DJ. Unfortunately, it looks like the principle it needs is false. Thus, I say, the solution doesn't meet AC.

Don't Start

I do have a persisting worry about Start. (Even if this worry is baseless, we might still reject the permissibility solution to the lottery paradox.) If Start is false, there's nothing for the permissibility solution to solve. We needn't worry about why epistemic permissions don't combine if we don't have any right to believe lottery propositions in the first place.

Because he accepts Start, Kroedel thinks that there's some maximum number of lottery propositions n that you can justifiably add to your belief set where n is greater than 0 and less than the number of tickets, m. Let's suppose that Coop believes n lottery propositions. Coop thinks, say, t1 will lose, t2 will lose, t3 will lose, …, tn will lose, and so will, if asked, believe that the winning ticket will be found in the set of remaining tickets. Let's call these sets the L-set and W-set. Coop hasn't yet thought of things in just this way, yet. He's simply come to believe that a handful of tickets, say, held by his friends, will lose. We explain to Coop what the L-set and W-set are and ask him if he knows where the winning ticket is. He says this:

> (*) No, I don't know where the ticket is, but it's in the W-set.

I think this is an incredibly odd thing to say. Kroedel agrees, but thinks that we might just chalk this up to the assertion. We might simply disagree on this point, but I think that the oddity isn't limited to the saying.

[3] The example is from John Broome, 'Normative Requirements,' *Ratio* 12, 4 (2002): 398-419.

Before we introduce the notions of the W-set and the L-set to Coop, he has no views on whether the ticket is in the W-set or the L-set. When he considers the question, 'Is the winning ticket in the L-set or the W-set,' it seems he might answer by 'telling himself' that the ticket is in the L-set, the ticket is in the W-set, or by telling himself that he doesn't know.[4] If he tells himself he doesn't know, it seems he simply suspends judgment on the matter. To suspend judgment on the matter and then judge that it's in the L-set or the W-set is a very odd way to be. Most of us think that if this is possible to have a mental life like this, it's only because the subject who has a mental life like this is deeply irrational. If it's deeply irrational to believe (*), it's hard to see how it could be justifiably believed.

If you shouldn't believe what you don't know and you cannot know lottery propositions, Coop is right that he can't know where the winning ticket is found and has no right to believe that it's found in the W-set. You don't need the knowledge norm of belief to understand why you shouldn't believe the winning ticket is in the W-set or why you shouldn't believe of any ticket that it's a loser. You really just need the much weaker assumption that when you know you're not in a position to know p, you shouldn't believe p. The guiding idea here is that if you know you're not in a position to know p, you know that your epistemic position is too weak for you to take a stand on the issue. If you came to believe what you knew you weren't in a position to know and it turned out that your belief was correct, we'd still criticize you for having formed your belief. We wouldn't say that you shouldn't have believed p for failing to meet the truth or belief requirement on knowledge. By elimination, it seems that the grounds of criticism would have to do with the inadequacy of your justification or with some purely Gettier-type feature of your situation. Intuitively, the case of the lottery proposition doesn't feel like a Gettier-type case. If it's not a Gettier-type case, it seems that the reason you're in a good position to know that you aren't in a good position to know whether a ticket will lose is precisely because there's something wrong with the justification you have to believe. If you think that knowledge is the norm of belief, you can use that to try to explain (*), but you can also try to explain (*) using far less demanding norms.

It seems that the cost of saying that you can justifiably believe what you know you can't know is too high a cost to embrace the permissibility solution. Let me note one further worry, one that has to do with NA. We need NA to understand how Start and Stop could be true. I don't want to defend the view that permissions agglomerate here because I think that it's clear that the practical cases show that the right to do A and the right to do B doesn't constitute or provide the

[4] John Gibbons, *The Norm of Belief* (Oxford University Press, Forthcoming).

right to do A and B. Are there cases in which *epistemic* permissions don't agglomerate? I think this is an interesting question. I don't think the answer is obvious.

Consider the hypothesis of epistemic permission agglomeration:

> EA: If you're permitted to believe p and permitted to believe q, you are permitted to believe p and to believe q. [NB: The right to believe p and to believe q might not be the right to believe p&q.]

If it's false, there should be a counterexample. What might a counterexample to EA look like?

Suppose there's a body of evidence that lends some support to p, some support to q, but p and q are incompatible. You might think that if the degree of support afforded p is sufficient and the degree of support afforded q is sufficient, you still shouldn't believe p if you believe q. After all, you might think, you shouldn't believe two incompatible propositions. I don't think this could be a counterexample to EA because I don't see how a single body of evidence could provide an adequate degree of support to two incompatible propositions. A body of evidence has cannot provide adequate support to believe p unless the evidential probability of p exceeds the evidential probability of ¬p. That condition isn't met in this case. If the evidential probability of p exceeded that of ¬p, the evidential probability of q wouldn't be high enough to receive adequate support.

If this is right, the potential counterexamples have to involve cases in which there are pairs of *compatible* propositions that receive perfectly adequate evidential support that shouldn't be believed in combination. These would be cases in which there's a sufficiently high degree of evidential probability where you can't justifiably add one of the beliefs to your belief set when the other one is added. My general worry about the possibility of such cases is that if they have the kind of structure that the lottery case has, we'd only regard them as counterexamples to EA insofar as we bought into a principle along the lines of Risk-DJ. The problem with that principle is that it implies that you cannot know or justifiably believe FB.

Consider a case that's structurally unlike a lottery case. Maybe your evidence supports q and you have further evidence that you're not competent at handling the evidence that bears on whether q (e.g., evidence that you've been drugged or that you've been dealing with issues too complex for you to work out competently on your own). Could this evidence be sufficient to justify believing q and sufficient to justify believing that you're not competent at handling the evidence that bears on whether q? I don't see why not. It does seem, however, that you shouldn't believe both propositions. Have we found our counterexample

to EA? It's possible, but I have some reservations about this sort of case. If this truly were a case in which you'd be permitted to believe q, we'd have to assume that the evidence that provides an adequate degree of support to believe that you're not competent to respond to the evidence doesn't undermine the justification you have to believe q. That doesn't ring true. It might be that the evidence undercuts without undermining the permission, but I don't see why we'd have to describe the case that way. Even if this is a counterexample to EA, it doesn't give us any reason to think that the lottery case involves the failure of permissions to agglomerate.

If counterexamples cannot be found to EA, the permissibility solution cannot be made to work. Even if such examples exist, if they aren't structurally like the lottery, the failure of EA shouldn't encourage us to try to solve the lottery by appeal to EA. I don't see why the practical cases should call into question EA. The adequacy of practical and theoretical reasons turns on very different considerations. Maybe epistemic permissions agglomerate even if practical permissions do not.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper wasn't to show that there's a decisive objection to the permissibility solution that Kroedel offers, but only to show that the set of assumptions needed to develop his proposal in full detail are quite problematic. In the meantime, I think we can take some comfort in the thought that the justification puzzle might be easily dissolved. If, as I've suggested, you shouldn't believe what you know you can't know and you know you can't know lottery propositions, we needn't worry about permissions agglomerate because we shouldn't start believing lottery propositions in the first place.

PARADOXICAL ASSERTIONS: A REPLY TO TURRI

Charlie PELLING

ABSTRACT: In earlier work, I have argued that the self-referential assertion that "this assertion is improper" is paradoxical for the truth account of assertion, the view on which an assertion is proper if and only if it is true. In a recent paper in this journal, John Turri has suggested a response to the paradox: one might simply deny that in uttering "this assertion is improper" one makes a genuine assertion. In this paper, I argue that this 'no assertion' response does not dissolve the paradox in the way Turri suggests.

KEYWORDS: John Turri, assertion, paradox, propriety, truth

In a recent paper in this journal, John Turri[1] responds to a paradox which I have raised for the truth account of assertion, the view on which an assertion is proper if and only if it is true.[2] The paradox itself is easily stated:

> Suppose I assert that "this assertion is improper." If my assertion is true, then it is improper. If it is false, then it is proper. Either way, it constitutes a counterexample to the truth account of assertion.[3]

In response, Turri argues that when I utter the words "this assertion is improper," I do not thereby assert anything. My utterance does not constitute an assertion, any more than an utterance of "obey this command" constitutes a command. Appearances to the contrary, Turri argues, are explained by the fact that the expression 'this assertion' is "naturally understood as anaphorically referring to a contextually salient, antecedently existing assertion."[4] Since there is no such antecedent assertion in this case, 'this assertion' does not refer. The question of the truth or falsity of "this assertion is improper" therefore does not arise, and there is no paradox.[5]

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[1] John Turri, "Preempting Paradox," *Logos & Episteme* 3, 4 (2012): 659-662.

[2] Matthew Weiner, "Must We Know What We Say?" *The Philosophical Review* 114 (2005): 227-251.

[3] Charlie Pelling, "A Self-Referential Paradox for the Truth Account of Assertion," *Analysis* 71 (2011): 288.

[4] Turri, "Preempting Paradox," 661.

[5] Turri argues that if this response works, it should also work as a response to a similar paradox which I have raised for a form of the knowledge account of assertion (in "Paradox and The

In what follows, I shall argue that this 'no assertion' response does not dissolve the paradox in the way Turri suggests. There is still a problem for the truth account of assertion. Before I come to criticize the no assertion view, however, I want to start by registering my agreement with Turri that it does at least *matter* whether the view is tenable.

One might doubt that if one accepted a set of claims recently advanced by Jeff Snapper.[6] Snapper argues that the propriety paradox is merely a disguised form of the liar paradox, and that as such it should admit of exactly the same solutions. Snapper considers a strengthened form of the propriety paradox which arises from the assertion that "this assertion is not proper." He claims that the "only solution" to this paradox – analogous to what he sees as the only solution to the liar paradox – is *either* to reject the principle that no assertion is true and not true, *or* to restrict in some way the principle that an assertion of '*p*' is true if and only if *p*.[7] However, this is to overlook an obvious candidate solution to the propriety paradox which is not available in the case of the liar: one might simply reject the truth account of assertion. This shows that the propriety paradox is not merely a disguised form of the liar paradox, and it also shows why the former puts a distinctive kind of pressure on the truth account. For that reason, I agree with Turri that it would be useful to advocates of the truth account if the no assertion response were available.

So what is wrong with the no assertion response? To illustrate what I see as the main problem, I want to focus on some remarks Turri makes near the end of his paper.[8] Turri concedes that even if we rule out the possibility of making self-referential assertions of *certain* types – such as "this assertion is improper" – we should not take this strategy too far: the scope of the no assertion view should not be too broad. The reason is that some self-referential assertions really do seem bona fide. For example, Turri observes that in the course of teaching a person English one might assert:

1. This is an example of an assertion

This is surely right: one surely can assert (1). But if so, it seems one might also assert:

2. This is an example of an improper assertion

Knowledge Account of Assertion," Forthcoming in *Erkenntnis*). I accept that conditional but deny its antecedent. The focus here will remain on the paradox as it arises for the truth account.

[6] Jeff Snapper, "The Liar Paradox in New Clothes," *Analysis* 72 (2012): 319-322.

[7] Snapper, "The Liar Paradox," 321.

[8] Turri, "Preempting Paradox," 661-2.

And (2) threatens to raise the same paradox for the truth account of assertion as "this assertion is improper." Turri considers this point but argues that (2) is not paradoxical. The reason is that in uttering (2) one actually makes two assertions:

(2a) This is an example of an assertion, and

(2b) It (2a) is improper

Neither (2a) nor (2b) are paradoxical, according to Turri: (2a) is proper and true, while (2b) is improper and false.

The problem, however, is that this 'divide and conquer' strategy for handling assertions such as (2) is not available across the board. For example, suppose I assert:

3. This is not an example of a proper assertion

Asserting (3) does not amount to asserting the conjunction of:

(3a) This is an example of an assertion, and

(3b) It (3a) is not proper

For if asserting (3) involved asserting (3a), then by parity of reasoning asserting (4) would involve asserting (4a):

4. This is not an example of a proper question

(4a) This is an example of a question

This is implausible, however: asserting (4) surely does not involve asserting (4a).

So the divide and conquer strategy seems to fail: whether or not it offers a convincing treatment of (2), it is in any case unconvincing as regards (3). This seems to leave Turri with a dilemma. Either he allows that utterances of (2) and (3) express genuine assertions, but then it seems that the propriety paradox for the truth account of assertion would return. Or he simply denies that (2) and (3) express genuine assertions. The trouble is that the latter approach seems to carry little independent plausibility.

HISTORY OF EPISTEMOLOGY

‘PHILOSOPHIE DER SYMBOLISCHEN STRUKTUREN’? ZU EINIGEN PARALLELEN BEI ERNST CASSIRER UND CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS

Christian MÖCKEL

ABSTRACT: In order to answer the question formulated in the title, we firstly need to point out some theoretical constraints. A lot of parallels allow us to speak about a ‘philosophy of symbolic structures’ or, better, about a ‘philosophy of structural symbolic systems’ in Lévi-Strauss theory. This is possible only if we establish an equivalence between the concepts ‘Form’ and ‘Structure,’ as they are used by Lévi-Strauss and Cassirer. The orientation of this implicit philosophy of Lévi-Strauss is not that of a philosophy of culture based on a philosophical-anthropological reflection (as it is the case with Cassirer), but a scientific research of concrete primitive societies, together with their empirical cultures and their unconscious, hidden laws of formation.

KEYWORDS: comparative analysis, structural analysis, sign, meaning, system, structure, symbolic form

Einleitende Bemerkungen.

Die im Folgenden aufgezeigten – bzw. zumindest angedeuteten – philosophischen Parallelen in den Werken des Kulturphilosophen Ernst Cassirer und des philosophisch gebildeten Ethnologen Claude Lévi-Strauss,[1] die zwei unterschiedlichen Generationen angehören und unterschiedlichen philosophischen Denktraditionen entstammen, lassen zwar keinen belastbaren Schluß auf einen geistigen Einfuß des ersteren auf den letzteren bzw. der ‘Philosophie der symbolischen Formen’ auf den Strukturalismus in der Linguistik und Ethnologie zu, wohl aber auf die philosophische und wissenschaftliche

[1] “Sie wissen, daß ich früher nie Ethnologie betrieben hatte. Meine Bildung war eine philosophische, ich war Philosophielehrer gewesen und ging nach Brasilien, ohne eine Ahnung von Ethnologie zu haben und ohne jemals eine Ethnologievorlesung besucht zu haben.” – Claude Lévi-Strauss: “Die strukturalistische Tätigkeit. Ein Gespräch mit Marco d’Eramo” (1979) in ders., *Mythos und Bedeutung. Fünf Radiovorträge*. Gespräche mit Claude Lévi-Strauss, Hrsg. von Adelbert Reif (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), 273f.

Aktualität und Anschlußfähigkeit der Cassirerschen Kulturphilosophie und seiner "Phänomenologie des mythischen Bewußtseins."[2]

Vielleicht kann man Lévi-Strauss' bislang noch nicht geklärte Beziehung zum Werk Cassirers aber mit derjenigen vergleichen, die er für sich selbst zum Werk des russischen Formalisten Wladimir Propp, *Morphologie des Märchens* (1928), beschreibt, wobei er sich auf die von Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson verfaßte Einleitung zur Übersetzung des Buches aus dem Russischen ins Englische (1958) bezieht: "Wenn, wie Frau Pirkova-Jakobson schreibt, der [Autor] dieser Zeilen 'die Methode von Propp angewandt und weiterentwickelt' zu haben scheint, dann bestimmt nicht bewußt, denn das Buch von Propp ist ihm bis zur Veröffentlichung dieser Übersetzung unzugänglich geblieben. Doch durch Roman Jakobson ist etwas von seiner Substanz und seinem Geist zu ihm gedrungen."[3] Die Bedeutung des auch mit dem 'amerikanischen' Cassirer in wissenschaftlichem Kontakt stehenden Jakobson für Lévi-Strauss ist wohl kaum zu unterschätzen, wird doch dieser später einmal betonen, daß er erst in den USA "bei Jakobson entdeckte, was Linguistik ist und somit auch, was strukturale Analyse ist. Es ist ein Abschnitt in meinem Leben, dem ich alles verdanke."[4] Im bereits erwähnten Beitrag 'Die Struktur und die Form,' verfaßt 1960, lesen wir einige Seiten weiter: "Was zunächst im Werk von Propp auffällt, ist die Tatsache, wie stark es den späteren Entwicklungen vorgreift. Diejenigen von uns, die die strukturale Analyse der mündlichen Literatur etwa um 1950 aufgenommen haben, ohne unmittelbare Kenntnis des Versuchs von Propp, der ein Vierteljahrhundert vorher unternommen wurde, finden darin verblüfft Formeln, manchmal sogar ganze Sätze wieder, die sie ihm doch nachweislich nicht entlehnt haben."[5]

Bei der Lektüre von Lévi-Strauss' *Traurige Tropen* und *Das wilde Denken*, zu der mich im Jahre 2008 der 100. Geburtstag ihres Autors angeregt hatte, hat sich mir genau dieser Eindruck hinsichtlich des symbolphilosophischen Werkes von Ernst Cassirer aufgedrängt; auch hier bleibt der Verweis auf die vermittelnde Rolle Jakobsons relevant. Seitdem beschäftigen mich sowohl die Suche nach möglichen Parallelen in den philosophischen Ansätzen Cassirers und Lévi-Strauss' als auch die Frage einer möglichen Cassirer-Rezeption durch Lévi-Strauss. Einige Gründe für ein entsprechendes wissenschaftliches Interesse und einige

[2] Ernst Cassirer: "Das mythische Denken" (1925) in *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, Zweiter Teil (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 18.

[3] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Die Struktur und die Form. Reflexionen über ein Werk von Wladimir Propp" (1960) in ders., *Strukturale Anthropologie* II (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), 135-168, hier: 136.

[4] Lévi-Strauss, "Strukturalistische Tätigkeit," 273.

[5] Lévi-Strauss, "Die Struktur und die Form," 148.

methodische Überlegungen, welche Richtungen künftige Recherchen einschlagen sollten, habe ich kürzlich veröffentlicht.[6] Dabei steht die Suche nach den philosophischen Parallelen beider aus sehr unterschiedlichen intellektuellen Milieus herkommenden Denker im Mittelpunkt; die Frage nach einer – von Lévi-Strauss nicht offen gelegten – unmittelbaren oder mittelbaren Rezeption betrachte ich dagegen als sekundär.

Eine Annäherung an die Antwort auf diese Frage möchte ich mit der Abwägung versuchen, inwieweit wir bei Lévi-Strauss eine vergleichbare implizite Kulturphilosophie vorfinden, die statt von symbolischen Formen von 'symbolischen Strukturen' handelt. Bei den nachstehenden Überlegungen stütze ich mich vor allem auf Lévi-Strauss' *Strukturale Anthropologie I/II*, die Texte aus den 50er Jahren enthält, und auf Cassirers *An Essay on Man* (1944), in dem dieser sowohl die letzte Fassung seiner 'Philosophie der symbolischen Formen' zur Darstellung als auch seine Wertschätzung der strukturalen Methode in der zeitgenössischen Linguistik zum Ausdruck bringt. Diese Wertschätzung erklärt sich u.a. daraus, daß sich nach seiner Überzeugung deren Prinzipien auch in anderen Wissenschaften (Feldphysik, Biologie, Gestaltpsychologie) als ganzheitlicher Ansatz durchzusetzen beginnen.[7] Die folgenden Bemerkungen stützen sich zudem auf Recherchen und Diskussionen, die zwei im SoSe 2011 bzw. 2012 an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin veranstaltete Seminare mit sich gebracht haben.

Wenn wir nach Parallelen in den philosophischen Ansätzen, die kulturellen Systeme menschlicher Gemeinschaften auf die ihnen zugrundeliegenden Strukturen und Strukturprinzipien zurückzuführen, Ausschau halten wollen, dann erweist es sich methodisch als angebracht zu klären, ob Cassirer den Strukturbegriff überhaupt in einer mit dem strukturalistischen Ansatz Lévi-Strauss' vergleichbaren Weise verwendet; daß er ihn selbst in den frühen Schriften schon häufig gebraucht, ist völlig evident, sobald man diese zur Hand nimmt. Offensichtlich ist auch, daß beide Denker mit diesem Begriff das innere Prinzip einer Ordnung, eines Systems beschreiben. Während bei Cassirer zumindest der System- und Ordnungsbegriff grundsätzlich mit dem des

[6] Christian Möckel, "Mythisch-magisches Denken als Kulturform und als Kulturleistung. Eine Fragestellung bei Ernst Cassirer und Claude Lévi-Strauss" in *Rethinking Culture and Cultural Analysis / Neudenken von Kultur und Kulturanalyse* (*Culture – discourse – history*, Bd. 3), Hg. Joaquim Braga/Christian Möckel (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2013), 77-98. Wichtige Vorarbeiten einer solchen Recherche finden sich zudem in Muriel Van Vliet, *La forme selon Ernst Cassirer – De la morphologie au structuralisme* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013).

[7] Siehe Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man. An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), 189.

Lebendigen, des Organischen in Beziehung steht bzw. in Analogie gedacht wird und sich von dem des Mechanischen, Unbelebten abgrenzt, scheint Lévi-Strauss mit dem System oder zumindest mit dem Begriff seiner Struktur eher die entgegengesetzte Intention zu verbinden, wenn wir den Worten Bernhard Waldenfels' Glauben schenken können, daß bei den Strukturalisten "Ausdrücke wie Prozeß, Mechanismus, Unbewußtes, […] Konstruktion, Rekonstruktion, Einschnitt, Transformation, Diskurs und – als pars pro toto – die Struktur" dominieren.[8] Unabhängig von der Frage, mit welchen Intentionen Cassirer den Blick auf die 'Struktur' richtet und wie er ihn letztlich mit Bedeutung ausfüllt, er ist zutiefst davon überzeugt, daß derjenige, der eine philosophische Darstellung der Zivilisation, der Welt der Kultur und ihrer universellen Formen zu geben beabsichtigt, "require fundamental structural categories."[9]

Mit dem auf den Strukturbegriff gerichteten Fokus ist eine Ebene methodischen Vergleichens vorgegeben, freigelegt. Wir wollen uns diesem angestrebten Vergleich beider Denker in mehreren Schritten nähern, weshalb zunächst die jeweiligen Vorstellungen von Gesellschaft und Kultur zu einander in Bezug gesetzt werden sollen. Daran schließt sich ein Hinterfragen der Begriffe Struktur, System und Gesamtzusammenhang an, um dann die Komparation auf der Ebene von System, Zeichen und Symbol fortzusetzen. Im Anschluß rücken wir dem Strukturbegriff näher, indem auf das für die Strukturalisten entscheidende 'Unbewußte' Bezug genommen wird, um davon ausgehend nach dem statischen oder beweglichem Charakter der 'Strukturen' zu fragen und die Beziehungen zwischen Systemen bzw. Strukturen zum thematisieren. Den Abschluß bilden Überlegungen zur Beziehung von Formbegriff und Strukturbegriff bei beiden Denkern, denen der Versuch einer Antwort auf die im Titel des Beitrages suggestiv gestellte Frage folgt.

[8] "Worte wie Subjekt, Mensch, Erlebnis, Bewußtsein, Intention, leibhaftige Gegenwart, Sinn, Auslegung, Konstitution, Teleologie, Ursprung, Kontinuität, Totalität, Dialektik, Freiheit und Entfremdung… werden [von den Strukturalisten – C.M.] überprüft, beargwöhnt und im äußersten Falle liquidiert. An ihre Stelle treten Ausdrücke wie Prozeß, Mechanismus, Unbewußtes, Begehren, Topik, Abwesenheit, Signifikantenkette, Sinneffekt, Konstruktion, Rekonstruktion, Einschnitt, Transformation, Diskurs und – als pars pro toto – die Struktur." – Bernhard Waldenfels, *Phänomenologie in Frankreich* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2. Aufl., 1998), 488.

[9] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 70.

1. Gesellschaft und Kultur.

Am Beginn der Erörterungen soll die These stehen, die mehr als Hypothese aufzufassen ist, daß wir bei Lévi-Strauss ein ähnliches Konzept von kulturellen Ordnungen wie in der 'Philosophie der symbolischen Formen' antreffen. Allerdings umgreift dieses Konzept nicht lediglich Sinnordnungen geistigen Schaffens, wie bei Cassirer, sondern bekanntlich auch solche des sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Lebens. Es läßt sich jedoch auch bei Cassirer eine gewisse Annäherung an diese Bezugsebene feststellen, wenn er in den beiden in Yale veröffentlichten Schriften *An Essay on Man* (1944) und *The Myth of the State* (1946) die symbolischen Formen und das gesellschaftliche Leben in Form der Sozialordnung in einen engeren wechselseitigen Zusammenhang als in früheren Schriften (*Das mythische Denken* [1925]) setzt. Nun dominiert der Gedanke, daß "all human works arise under particular historical and sociological conditions" und wir deshalb z.B. "cannot understand the form of primitive mythical thought without taking into consideration the forms of primitive society."[10] Anderseits dürfte die von Lévi-Strauss getroffene Feststellung, daß es die strukturale Analyse nicht einfach mit empirischen "sozialen Beziehungen", sondern mit "nach jener Wirklichkeit konstruierten Modellen" zu tun habe,[11] für die Kulturphilosophie ebenso gelten wie seine Klarstellung, daß diese Modelle als "Symbolsysteme" zu verstehen sind.[12] Der Begriff der "sozialen Struktur" darf also auch bei ihm nicht mit den empirischen "sozialen Beziehungen" einer konkreten Gesellschaft verwechselt werden, ist doch die Struktur "den Beziehungen im voraus gegeben", ist sie doch selbst "etwas anderes… als die Beziehungen."[13]

Dennoch scheint es offensichtlich, daß der Philosoph Cassirer mit seiner allgemeinen Formenlehre der Kultur methodisch einen anderen Ansatz verfolgt als der seine Methoden außerordentlich tiefsinnig reflektierende Ethnologe Lévi-Strauss, dem es im Grunde immer um konkrete, empirische, reale 'primitive' Gesellschaften zu tun ist, der allerdings ebenso den Anspruch erhebt, in ihnen – bzw. in den Kulturleistungen ihrer Mitglieder – allgemeine, universale Gesetzmäßigkeiten, Strukturgesetze aufzudecken. Der Zusammenhang der Begriffe Kultur und Gesellschaft, den Lévi-Strauss zudem im Sinne von Marx und

[10] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 68f.
[11] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I (Frankfurt/Main, Suhrkamp 1977), 301.
[12] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 24.
[13] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 330f.

Engels zu gebrauchen meint,[14] erschließt sich jedoch nicht auf einfache oder gar evidente Weise.[15] Unter Umständen haben wir ihn in Analogie zu dem Verhältnis von 'Überbau' und 'Basis' zu verstehen,[16] wenn auch manche Definitionen des Begriffs Kultur dem zu widersprechen scheinen.[17] Der Versuch, die Begriffe Kultur und Gesellschaft in den bei Lévi-Strauss intendierten Zusammenhang zu bringen, ließe sich noch um einen dritten Begriff, den der Zivilisation, erweitern.[18] Dagegen erweisen sich Feststellungen, wonach Kultur in unterschiedlichsten Koordinatensystemen verortet sein kann, von einem menschheitlichen bis hin zu "familiären, beruflichen, konfessionellen, politischen" Systemen,[19] keineswegs durch einen tiefen Graben von den

[14] "Herr Rodinson wirft mir eine Verkennung des Strukturbegriffs vor, den ich glaubte, Marx und Engels – unter anderen – entlehnt zu haben, um ihm eine wesentliche Rolle zu geben, … Am Ende rät mir Herr Rodinson, den Begriff 'Kultur' zugunsten dessen der 'Gesellschaft' aufzugeben. Ich habe, ohne auf den ersten zu verzichten, nicht auf Rodinson gewartet mit dem Versuch, beide in einer Perspektive zu plazieren, die mit den Prinzipien des Marxismus vereinbar ist." – Brief an den Chefredakteur von *La Nouvelle Critique*, 25 November 1955, in Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 358.

[15] So wenn er von einer "anthropologischen Unterscheidung zwischen Kultur und Gesellschaft" spricht, die Saint-Simon antizipiert habe, wobei die 'Gesellschaft' für die 'Herrschaft' von Menschen – und Dingen – über Menschen, die 'Kultur' für die 'Verwaltung' der Dinge durch – freie – Menschen zu stehen scheint.

[16] Dies z.B., wenn Lévi-Strauss ausführt, daß die "maschinistische Revolution des 19. Jahrhunderts" es perspektivisch ermöglichen werde, "jene dynamische Funktion auf die Kultur zu übertragen, welche die protohistorische Revolution der Gesellschaft zugewiesen hatte" (Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 41). Dann könnte 'Kultur' für die Institutionen und Systeme des 'Überbaus,' und 'Gesellschaft' für die sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Ordnungen stehen. Oder wenn von der zukünftigen Gesellschaftsform die Rede ist, die aus einem "Verschmelzungsprozeß" von 'kalter,' d.h. außerhalb der Geschichte stehender 'primitiver,' stationärer Gesellschaft, und 'warmer' Gesellschaftsform, d.h. geschichtlicher, dynamischer 'zivilisierter' kapitalistischer Gesellschaft, hervorgehen könnte, und in der der Kultur – d.h. den Überbauordnungen wie Wissenschaft, Kunst etc. - vollständig die Aufgabe zufalle, "den Fortschritt zu produzieren," was "die Gesellschaft von [dem] jahrtausendealten Fluch befreit, der sie zwang, die Menschen zu knechten, damit Fortschritt sei," d.h. die soziale und wirtschaftliche Ordnung ('Basis') von der Notwendigkeit der wirtschaftlichen Ausbeutung des Menschen und seiner sozialen Instrumentalisierung im Dienste des materiellen und geistigen Forschritts 'befreien' würde (Ebd., 41).

[17] "Wir nennen Kultur jede ethnographische Gesamtheit, die, vom Standpunkt der Untersuchung aus, gegenüber anderen bezeichnende Abweichungen aufweist." – Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 320.

[18] Darauf hat mich Jana Suhl in ihrer Seminararbeit "Der Begriff der Kultur in der Strukturalen Anthropologie von Claude Lévi-Strauss" aufmerksam gemacht.

[19] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 321.

Interpretationen Cassirers getrennt. Zudem besteht für Lévi-Strauss Kultur sowohl aus spezifischen Formen wie dem Sprachsystem oder der Mythologie als auch aus Regeln bzw. Formen, die selbst kulturindifferent sind und in Natur wie in Kultur funktionieren.[20] Letzterem würde Cassirer wohl nur in dem Sinne zustimmen können, daß es sich hierbei um Analogien des 'als ob' handelt.[21]

Bei der Erläuterung dessen, was die strukturale Analyse und die 'Philosophie der symbolischen Formen' unter Gesellschaft und Kultur verstehen, stoßen wir, wie bereits deutlich geworden ist, immer wieder auf die Begriffe System und Struktur. Diese sollen nun in ihrem möglichen Zusammenhang betrachtet werden.

2. Struktur, System, Gesamtzusammenhang.

Die konkrete Gesellschaft, so wie sie den Ethnologen interessiert, sieht dieser durch mehrere Systeme bzw. Modelle beschrieben, die wiederum jeweils von Strukturen bzw. Strukturgesetzmäßigkeiten bestimmt werden, die den in ihnen lebenden Menschen unbewußt bleiben.[22] Diese unbewußten bzw. unerkannten Strukturgesetze stellen, so Lévi-Strauss, Cassirers Kulturbegriff quasi paraphrasierend, "für die Forschung geeignete Ausdrucksformen" der Einheit einer empirischen Gesellschaft als einer Totalität von Beziehungen dar.[23] Gesellschaft wird von ihm folglich aufgefaßt als "eine Gesamtheit von Strukturen, die verschiedenen Ordnungstypen entsprechen", welche jeweils ein Mittel bieten, "die Individuen nach bestimmten Regeln zu ordnen."[24]

In einem ähnlichen Sinne spricht Cassirer im *Essay on Man*, wenn er die "form[s] of a communal human existence" erwähnt, derer der Mensch bedarf, um sein soziales und kulturelles Leben führen zu können, von "form[s] of social organization," die die Funktion haben, "to organize his feelings, desires, and thoughts," seine Taten und Handlungen zu systematisieren, zu ordnen und den jeweiligen Betätigungen des Menschen Ausdruck zu verleihen.[25] Für Lévi-Strauss wie für Cassirer besitzt jeder Ordnungstyp bzw. jedes soziale bzw. kulturelle

[20] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 322.

[21] Siehe dazu u.a. Christian Möckel: "Das Formproblem in Kulturwissenschaft und Biologie. Ernst Cassirer über methodologische Analogien," in Birgit Recki (Hrsg.), *Philosophie der Kultur – Kultur des Philosophierens. Ernst Cassirer im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert* (Cassirer-Forschungen Bd. 15) (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2012), 155-180.

[22] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 45.

[23] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 100.

[24] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 342.

[25] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 63.

System seine eigene Struktur, seine "Ordnungsstruktur"[26] bzw. seine "fundamental structure."[27] Die Systeme werden als Systeme von Beziehungen zwischen kulturellen Phänomenen aufgefaßt, wobei bei Lévi-Strauss die ihnen jeweils zugrunde liegende elementare Struktur auf mehreren Gliedern beruht, die in Gegensatzpaare integriert sind. Dabei hält Lévi-Strauss – in Anlehnung an den Linguisten Nikolaj Trubetzkoj und in Analogie zu Cassirers philosophischen Grundpositionen eines "relational thought" – aber die Beziehungen zwischen den Gliedern, nicht die Glieder selbst, für entscheidend, für primär.[28] Cassirer nennt die den Fakta oder Phänomenen logisch vorhergehenden Beziehungen – unter Bezug auf die zeitgenössische Gestaltpsychologie – "fundamental structural elements" bzw. "patterns or configurations."[29] Lévi-Strauss teilt folglich mit Cassirer das relationale oder Beziehungsdenken, das dieser zudem abhängig sieht von "a complex system of symbols" bzw. vom "symbolic thought."[30] Wenn beide Denker die Funktion der Strukturierung beschreiben, dann teilen sie nicht zuletzt auch den Gedanken Cuviers, wonach die Struktur bzw. die Form keineswegs zur Ordnung der empirischen Beobachtung gehört, sondern sich jenseits derselben in einer Art "verborgenen Realität" findet.[31]

Diejenigen Sinnordnungen oder Systeme, die bei Cassirer die symbolischen Formen der Kultur heißen, von denen er im *Essay on Man* bekanntermaßen "language, myth, religion, art, science, history" zur Darstellung bringt,[32] die figurieren bei Lévi-Strauss, so meine These, als die "symbolischen Systeme" der Kultur bzw. der Gesellschaft, die er auch die "Kommunikationssysteme" nennt,[33] von denen die Sprache – wie bei Cassirer – nur eines unter anderen, wenn auch ein ausgezeichnetes, ist.[34] Wie bereits angesprochen, bezieht Lévi-Strauss in den

[26] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 342.
[27] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 68.
[28] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 61f.
[29] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 38.
[30] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 38.
[31] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 28, 26.
[32] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 68.
[33] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 96.
[34] Symbolisierungsleistungen des Raumbewußtseins "without the preliminary step of human language … would not be possible." – Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 38. In einem 1927 in London gehaltenen Vortrag über das Verhältnis von Sprache, Denken und Wahrnehmung kommt Cassirer abschließend auf die Alternative zu sprechen, wonach entweder "sich eine gemeinsame Grundfunktion des Geistes auszeichnen [läßt – C.M.], die wir als die Symbolfunktion schlechthin bezeichnen können und von der die Sprache selbst nur eine besondere spezifische Ausprägung ist," oder daß "vielmehr alles symbolische Verhalten auf die Sprache als Urgrund, als 'Bedingung seiner Möglichkeit' zurückgeht." (Ernst Cassirer, "Über Sprache, Denken und

Kreis der von ihm beachteten und untersuchten Systeme – im Unterschied zu Cassirer – auch modellierte soziale, biologische und wirtschaftliche Beziehungen bzw. Systeme mit ein. Zu ihnen zählt er u.a. die "Bereiche der Mythen [oder der Mythologie – C.M.], der Rituale, der Verwandtschaft,"[35] an anderer Stelle die Systeme "Kunst, … Ritus, Religion."[36] In den Texten ist zudem die Rede von drei "Ebenen" der zu erforschenden Regeln: den Verwandtschafts- und Heiratsregeln, den ökonomische Regeln des Gütertauschs und den sprachliche Regeln des Nachrichtentausches.[37] Ebenso spricht Lévi-Strauss von den "Systeme[n] … der politischen Ideologie, … der Höflichkeitsformen und … der Küche."[38] Sich an Durkheim anlehnend nennt er "die Logik, die Sprache, das Recht, die Kunst, die Religion," die solche Systeme ausmachen, auch "Codes," von denen jeder – wiederum quasi Cassirersche Begrifflichkeiten nutzend – eine spezielle "Organisationsform" und "differentielle Funktion" besitze.[39]

Auch bei Cassirer besitzt, wie bereits angedeutet, jede kulturelle Sinnordnung bzw. jede sich objektivierende Tätigkeitsform eine eigene "fundamental structure" bzw. eine eigene "basic function." Der Grundfunktionen werden wir habhaft, indem wir "the structure of language, myth, religion, art and science" bzw. deren "general structural principles" beschreibend aufsuchen.[40] Jede Struktur bedeutet für Cassirer "a character of rationality" bzw. die eigentümliche "rationality of form."[41] Gleichzeitig bilden alle Ordnungen "an organic whole," werden alle durch "a common bond," die allgemeine symbolische Funktion, umfaßt.[42] Da den Sinnordnungen jeweils bestimmte Formen der Betätigung zugeordnet werden, bilden diese ein ganzheitliches "system of human activities," das "the circle of 'humanity'" bestimmt.[43] Auch für Lévi-Strauss bilden die Systeme, Ordnungen, Ebenen, Bereiche, Codes einen "Gesamtzusammenhang," von dem her erst ihre jeweilige Struktur bzw. Strukturgesetzlichkeit "bemerkbar"

Wahrnehmung," in ders., *Symbolische Prägnanz, Ausdrucksphänomen und 'Wiener Kreis,'* Hrsg. von Christian Möckel, in *Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, Hrsg. von Klaus Christian Köhnke, John M. Krois † und Oswald Schwemmer, Bd. 4 [Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2011], 310). Obwohl er an dieser Stelle die Frage nicht explizit beantwortet, dürfte eine Antwort wohl mehr die erste Variante, weniger die zweite favorisieren.

[35] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 96.

[36] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 98.

[37] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 97.

[38] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 100.

[39] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 14.

[40] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 68f.

[41] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 167.

[42] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 68.

[43] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 68.

und verständlich wird.[44] Zudem könne von einer wie auch immer gearteten Gleichförmigkeit der Systeme innerhalb ihres Gesamtzusammenhanges keine Rede sein, die 'primitiven' Gesellschaften, deren Sozialordnung, d.h. deren 'Basis,' von Ordnungen geprägt ist, die einem "transitiven und nicht-zyklischen Typus" angehören, würden – diesen Regeln gehorchend – auf der "Ebene der Politik, des Mythos oder der Religion," was sozusagen dem 'Überbau' entspricht, vielmehr "andere Ordnungstypen," d.h. "'mögliche' oder 'ideelle'" Systeme, die einen "intransitiven und zyklischen" Charakter tragen, entwerfen.[45] Cassirer läßt sich meines Wissens auf eine derartige konkrete, konträre Typisierung der einzelnen Sinnordnungen von kulturellem Tätigsein nicht ein. Obwohl er durchaus den Eigenheiten, den unterschiedlichen Proportionen bestimmter Grundfunktionen menschlichen Geistes in den symbolischen Formen nachgeht, erscheinen in seiner Kulturphilosophie die einzelnen systematischen Ordnungen wohl eher "as so many variations on a common theme," wobei er wiederum die allgemeine Symbolfunktion menschlichen Geistes im Auge hat.[46]

3. System, Zeichen und Symbol.

Was den Systembegriff bei Lévi-Strauss weiterhin kennzeichnet, ist, daß sich jedes System in "differentielle Elemente" zerlegen lasse, die sich in der Regel in "Gegensatzpaaren" organisieren,[47] von denen aber nur eine kleine Anzahl ausgewählt und wirksam wird.[48] Ähnlich erklärt Cassirer mit Blick auf Heinrich Wölfflin, die "a general structural scheme" bildenden Elemente "are not unlimited; as matter of fact they may be reduced to a small number."[49] Einige dieser Elemente bleiben, so heißt es wiederum bei Lévi-Strauss, "durch die verschiedensten [empirischen – C.M.] Kulturen hindurch die gleichen" und werden "in immer neuen Strukturen kombiniert,"[50] Die methodische Zerlegung der Systeme in Elemente führe selbst allerdings nicht auf die "allgemeinsten Strukturgesetze;" dies leistet wohl nur die vergleichende Analyse der Systeme und ihrer Elemente. Cassirer wiederum will die aufgefundenen Strukturen analysiert, zerlegt, aber ebenfalls ihre typischen Beziehungen freigelegt sehen.[51] Auch ist für

[44] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 61.
[45] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 342.
[46] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 71.
[47] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 48.
[48] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 54.
[49] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 71
[50] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 54.
[51] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 115.

Lévi-Strauss der Wirklichkeitsstatus der Elemente in den verschiedenen Systemen nicht derselbe; mal komme ihnen objektive Existenz zu, mal seien sie bloße Abstraktionen.[52] Die ihrem Inhalt nach unterscheidbaren Systeme gelten ihm je als Mittel zur Verwirklichung derjenigen Funktion, die die jeweilige Ordnung in der Kultur einer Gemeinschaft erfüllt.[53]

Wenn Lévi-Strauss die unterschiedlichsten Systeme – in Anlehnung an Ferdinand de Saussure – auch als "Zeichensysteme" auffaßt und folglich von "Bereichen der Semiologie" spricht,[54] dann stehen wir vor weiteren Parallelen mit der Philosophie Cassirers. Dies wird z.B. in dessen 'Einleitung und Problemstellung' in den 1. Band der *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen – Die Sprache* (1923) – deutlich, in der er zur Klärung des Begriffs 'symbolische Form' nicht nur vielfach auf die Begriffe Funktion, Struktur und System zurückgreift, sondern auch den Zeichencharakter der Symbole hervorhebt und von "Zeichensystemen"[55] handelt. Diese Parallelen resultieren nicht zuletzt aus der Tatsache, daß Lévi-Strauss den Zeichencharakter der Systeme und ihrer Elemente – wie Cassirer auch – an den Begriff der Bedeutung bindet. Er charakterisiert die Systeme u.a. "als eine Gesamtheit von signifikativen Entscheidungen."[56] Die Bedeutung, die alle relevanten kulturellen Phänomene – bzw. ihre sprachlichen Bezeichnungen – besitzen, wird ihnen allein durch ihre Eingliederung in entsprechende Systeme bzw. Ordnungen von Bedeutung gesichert;[57] ein Zusammenhang, den Cassirer bekanntlich symbolische Prägnanz nennt.[58] Auch die Aussagen zum Zusammenhang von Bedeutungs- und Strukturproblem finden sich bereits bei Cassirer, wenn er bei der Beschäftigung mit Sprache, Kunst und Mythos einräumt, daß "the problem of meaning takes precedence over the

[52] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 49.
[53] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 50.
[54] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 18.
[55] Ernst Cassirer, *Die Sprache*, in *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, Erster Teil (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 17.
[56] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 20.
[57] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 46.
[58] "Unter 'symbolischer Prägnanz' soll also die Art verstanden werden, in der ein Wahrnehmungserlebnis, als 'sinnliches' Erlebnis, zugleich einen bestimmten nicht-anschaulichen 'Sinn' in sich faßt und ihn zur unmittelbaren konkreten Darstellung bringt. … Diese ideelle Verwobenheit, diese Bezogenheit des einzelnen, hier und jetzt gegebenen Wahrnehmungsphänomens auf ein charakteristisches Sinn-Ganzes, soll den Ausdruck der 'Prägnanz' bezeichnen. … Die 'Teilhabe' an diesem Gefüge gibt der Erscheinung erst ihre objektive Wirklichkeit und ihr objektive Bedeutung." – Ernst Cassirer, "Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis," in *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, Dritter Teil (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 235, 237.

problem of historical development."[59] Deshalb, so Cassirer, "this structural view of culture must precede the merely historical view."[60] Jegliche Deutung von Fakten führe, so Cassirer weiter, auf "general structural problems belonging to a different type of knowledge,"[61] weshalb sie, die Deutung, wie bereits bemerkt, allgemeiner struktureller Schemata bedürfe.[62]

In Zusammenhang mit dem Zeichen- und Bedeutungsproblem hebt Lévi-Strauss auch die "symbolische Natur" der sozialen bzw. kulturellen Realität und ihrer sie modellierenden Systeme hervor. Kommunizieren die Menschen doch "mit Hilfe von Symbolen und Zeichen," weshalb "alles Symbol, und Zeichen, [ist,] das sich als Vermittler zwischen zwei Subjekte stellt."[63] Zeichen und Symbole spielten allerdings nur insofern eine Rolle, "als sie zu Systemen gehören, die unter inneren Gesetzen ... [der jeweiligen Struktur – C.M.] stehen."[64] Während Cassirer 1923 in *Die Sprache* Zeichen und Symbol auch noch weitgehend synonym gebraucht und die kulturellen Symbole als Weiterentwicklung natürlicher Symbole bzw. Zeichen deutet,[65] legt er später im *Essay on Man,* den nordamerikanischen Kontext des Zeichen- bzw. Symboldiskurses in Betracht ziehend, großen Wert darauf, daß "we must carefully distingish between 'signs' and 'symbols'," [66] indem er die einen nun dem tierischen, die anderen jedoch dem menschlichen Verhalten zuordnet. Die damit verbundenen Argumente sind bekannt, sie sollen hier nicht wiederholt werden.

Das Vokabular des Symbols bzw. des Symbolischen, das sich bei Lévi-Strauss findet, erinnert sehr stark an das Cassirersche. Das gilt auch für die Argumentation, daß, weil wir es bei den verschiedenen Ordnungen bzw. Systemen in Gesellschaft und Kultur mit "Systemen aus Symbolen" zu tun zu haben, beim Ethnologen ein "Symboldenken" gefordert sei, das jeglichen "Naturalismus" vermeidet.[67] Diese grundsätzliche Abgrenzung gegenüber dem Naturalismus findet sich nämlich ebenso bei Cassirer, dessen "Phenomenology of human culture"[68] es notwendig erscheinen läßt, neben der historischen Bedeutung

[59] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 69.
[60] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 69.
[61] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 119.
[62] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 69.
[63] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 20.
[64] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 28.
[65] Cassirer, *Die Sprache*, 42.
[66] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 31.
[67] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 67.
[68] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 52.

aller Phänomene auch ihre "hidden symbolic meaning" aufzudecken.[69] Leider bleibt bei der Lektüre der *Strukturalen Anthropologie* letztlich doch irgendwie unklar, was Lévi-Strauss genau unter "symbolisch" verstanden wissen will, auch Ausdrücke wie "symbolische Systeme," zu denen er u.a. die Systeme bzw. Bereiche der Sprache, der Mythen, der Rituale, der Verwandtschaft zählt,[70] oder "symbolische Funktion" der Sprache[71] müssen – mit Blick auf Cassirer, der analoge Ausdrücke gebraucht und nicht notwendigerweise, wohl aber möglicherweise ein analoges Symbolverständnis besitzt[72] – weiter aufgeklärt werden.

Faßlicher erscheint es, wenn Lévi-Strauss in einem recht traditionellen Sinne von Symbolen und Symbolik handelt. So z.B., wenn er den kulturellen Gebrauch von Naturprodukten auch davon abhängen sieht, welchen "Symbolwert" ihnen die Menschen zuweisen.[73] Ebenso zielt die Rede von der "Symbolsprache" bzw. einer Symbolbeziehung in der Regel auf das traditionelle Verständnis von – magischen – Symbolen und ihrem Gebrauch.[74] Beide Denker, Lévi-Strauss wie auch Cassirer, verweisen immer wieder auf das Verwobensein dieser Art magischer Symbolsprache mit sozialen Handlungen (Riten), was für ihre Funktion der "Manipulierung" von Sachverhalten unerläßlich sei. Cassirer z.B. sieht einen engen Zusammenhang zwischen den Mythen, als einer Weise der Symbolisierung, die eine bestimmte Objektivation von Gefühlen, Emotionen leistet, und den Riten als sozialen Handlungen, nach deren Bedeutung der Mensch in den Mythen frage, da ihm die Motive seines rituellen Handelns zunächst unbewußt seien.[75] Wenn Lévi-Strauss die Möglichkeit der "Wirkungskraft" dieser Symbolsprache auf "formal homologe Strukturen" in den unterschiedlichen

[69] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 53.

[70] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 96.

[71] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 104.

[72] "Die symbolischen Zeichen aber, die uns in der Sprache, im Mythos, in der Kunst entgegentreten, 'sind' nicht erst, um dann, über dieses Sein hinaus, noch eine bestimmte Bedeutung zu erlangen, sondern bei ihnen entspringt alles Sein erst aus der Bedeutung. Ihr Gehalt geht rein und vollständig in der Funktion des Bedeutens auf" (Cassirer, "Die Sprache," 42). Die kulturellen Ordnungen oder Systeme, sich konstituierend in symbolischen Zeichen und geformt durch gestaltende geistige Tätigkeit, werden als 'symbolische Formen' beschrieben, wobei "unter einer 'symbolischen Form' … jede Energie des Geistes verstanden werden [soll], durch welche ein geistiger Bedeutungsgehalt an ein konkretes sinnliches Zeichen geknüpft und diesem Zeichen innerlich zugeeignet wird." – Ernst Cassirer, *Wesen und Wirkung des Symbolbegriffs* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994), 175.

[73] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 110.

[74] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 217.

[75] Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), 45f.

Ordnungen der Wirklichkeit zurückführt,[76] weist dies auf seine Annahme "wirklich zeitloser" Strukturgesetze in ihnen hin.

4. Unbewußte Gesetze und Strukturen.

Die strukturierten Ordnungen einer Gesellschaft oder Kultur charakterisiert Lévi-Strauss auch als "Systeme von Vorstellungen,"[77] die, wie z.B. das Verwandtschaftssystem, als "willkürliche Systeme von Vorstellungen" – im Unterschied zu ihrer Struktur, ihren Strukturgesetzen – "nur im Bewußtsein der Menschen" existierten.[78] Dabei kämen in ihnen allerdings Bezüge zu den "unbewußten Bedingungen des sozialen Lebens" zum Tragen, was den "kollektiven Phänomenen" eine "unbewußte Natur" beilege.[79] Es seien nun die Strukturen dieser willkürlichen Systeme, die in mehreren konkreten Systemen derselben Ordnung vorkommen und deshalb "einen bezeichnenden Ausdruck der unbewußten Haltungen" der in Gemeinschaft lebenden Menschen vollzögen bzw. bildeten.[80] Dies meint u.a. die "unbewußte Strukturierung des Vokabulars" einer empirischen Sprache,[81] wobei grundsätzlich "zwischen vorgebildeten Möglichkeiten" gewählt wird bzw. gewählt werden muß,[82] weshalb für Lévi-Strauss – de Saussure folgend – empirische sprachliche Bedeutungen niemals bloße Konventionen sind.

In der Behauptung, daß die konkreten Systeme einer 'primitiven' Gesellschaft oder Kultur "durch den Geist auf der Stufe des unbewußten Denkens gebildet" werden, sich "aus dem Spiel allgemeiner, aber [den Beteiligten – C.M.] verborgener Gesetze"[83] – den "zeitlosen" Strukturgesetzen[84] – ergeben, besteht eine markante Eigentümlichkeit der in seinen Texten implizit präsenten Kulturphilosophie. Das "Unbewußte" wird als "Organ einer spezifischen Funktion" – des menschlichen 'Geistes' – aufgefaßt, die "unartikulierten Elementen" Struktur, Strukturierung auferlegt.[85] Das 'Unbewußte' werde aus der

[76] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 217.
[77] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 30f.
[78] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 66.
[79] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 32.
[80] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 102.
[81] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 109.
[82] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 106.
[83] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 46.
[84] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 223.
[85] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 223f. "… wir meinen, [daß] die unbewußte Tätigkeit des Geistes darin besteht, einem Inhalt Formen aufzuzwingen, … – wie die

"Gesamtheit dieser Strukturen" gebildet und ist als "symbolische Funktion" anzusehen bzw. bringt eine solche zum Ausdruck, "die zwar spezifisch menschlich ist, die sich aber bei allen Menschen nach denselben Gesetzen vollzieht" und die sich "auf die Gesamtheit dieser Gesetze zurückführen läßt."[86] Diese symbolische Funktion "erfüllt sich" durch die immer dieselbe bleibende Struktur.[87]

Auf den ersten Blick scheint sich die auf Franz Boas und Ferdinand de Saussure zurückgehende Lehre vom 'Unbewußten' nicht mit dem Cassirerschen Verständnis geistiger menschlicher Aktivität zu vertragen. Allerdings stellt Cassirer ebenfalls eine allgemeine Symbolfunktion in den Mittelpunkt seiner Lehre vom menschlichen Geist, und im Grunde erweist sich manches, was er von den diversen "Energien des Geistes" bzw. "geistigen Energien"[88] ausführt, die sich in eigenständigen und eigentümlichen symbolischen Formungen von bedeutsamen Gehalt, Ausformungen von Sinnordnungen verwirklichen, denen je eigene, für die gesamte Menschheit geltende "Prinzipien geistiger Gestaltung"[89] – Strukturprinzipien bzw. "Strukturgesetze"[90] – zugrunde liegen, schon nicht mehr durch Welten getrennt von der hier angeführten Lehre. Zudem können wir hinter Lévi-Strauss' Rede vom "unbewußten Denken, das sich in generellen Strukturen, Regeln, Gesetzen und symbolischen Funktionen betätigt,"[91] durchaus den Cassirerschen Gedanken objektiver Sinnstrukturen erahnen, die zwar nur durch die geistige Aktivität der Menschen Realität erlangen, dabei aber keineswegs von ihnen gewußt werden müssen oder gar ihrer Willkür unterliegen. Als "Musterbild" für dieses Funktionieren des 'unbewußten' Denkens gelten Lévi-Strauss die Sprachgesetze, die er ganz in diesem Sinne auffaßt als "Fungieren von Regeln, die wir [die Sprachbenutzer – C.M.] nicht gesetzt haben und nicht beherrschen und deren Zwängen doch all unser Reden, Denken und Tun unterworfen ist."[92]

Bei Cassirer, der ebenfalls die Vorgefundenheit der inneren Gesetze einer symbolischen Form, z.B. der Sprachform, betont, kommt allerdings noch der Gedanke hinzu, daß die Sprachbenutzer unwissentlich, allein durch ihr aktives Inanspruchnehmen, die konkrete empirische Sprache – und damit schließlich

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Untersuchung der symbolischen Funktion, wie sie in der Sprache zum Ausdruck kommt, überzeugend nachweist – …" – Ebd., 35.

[86] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 223.

[87] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 224.

[88] Cassirer, *Die Sprache*, 9, 11.

[89] Cassirer, *Die Sprache*, 10.

[90] Cassirer, *Die Sprache*, 40.

[91] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 223.

[92] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 34f.

auch die allgemeine Sprachform selbst – unmerklich verändern, gestalten, umformen. Ob er dabei auch das Strukturprinzip der Sprachform und ihre allgemeinen Gesetze, oder nur das empirische Sprachsystem und die Sprachform als Bedeutungssystem der Metamorphose unterzogen sehen will, soll hier offen gelassen werden. Cassirer betont aber ganz offensichtlich stärker als Lévi-Strauss den permanenten Veränderungsprozeß, dem auch die einzelnen Sinnordnungen, die einzelnen symbolischen Formen ausgesetzt sind, die dabei aber dennoch dieselben bleiben. Auch für ihn bleiben die in praktischer kultureller Tätigkeit zur Anwendung kommenden Regeln, Gesetze einer Struktur bzw. eines kulturellen Phänomens (Boas) solange 'unbewußt,' solange es keine Theorien, keine Wissenschaften von diesen Phänomenen gibt, die diese methodisch reflektierend analysieren, während die den Individuen bewußte Ebene sich so lange lediglich auf das Besondere, Spezielle beschränkt. In diesem Sinne sieht Lévi-Strauss den "Übergang vom Bewußten zum Unbewußten … neben einem Fortschritt vom Speziellen zum Allgemeinen her[laufen]."[93]

5. Statische oder bewegliche Strukturen

Im Grunde stellt sich hier die Frage, ob Lévi-Strauss die unbewußten Strukturen, die Struktur- und Ordnungsformen eher als universale, unbewegliche, statische oder doch als bewegliche, veränderliche, vielleicht sogar sich entwickelnde verstanden wissen will. Mit anderen Worten: findet in ihnen so etwas wie eine Metamorphose statt, die Cassirer – im Anschluß an Goethe, auf den Lévi-Strauss ja auch vielfach verweist – seinen Formen zuschreibt, weshalb er sie auch "lebendige" Formen nennt?[94] Im *Essay on Man* heißt es von den ästhetischen Formen ganz bestimmt: "These forms are no static elements."[95]

Kommen wir noch einmal auf eine Aussage von Lévi-Strauss zurück, auf die wir in der Anmerkung 85 bereits hingewiesen haben: in diesem Text führt er nicht nur aus, daß "die unbewußte Tätigkeit des Geistes darin besteht, einem Inhalt Formen aufzuzwingen," sondern auch, daß "diese Formen im Grunde für alle Geister, die alten und die modernen, die primitiven und die zivilisierten[,] dieselben sind," wie dies "die Untersuchung der symbolischen Funktion, wie sie in der Sprache zum Ausdruck kommt, überzeugend nachweist."[96] Deshalb, so seine

[93] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, S. 35.

[94] Siehe dazu Christian Möckel, "Formenschau, Formenwandel und Formenlehre. Zu Goethes Morphologie- und Metamorphosenlehre," in: *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 52 (Tokyo: Goethe-Gesellschaft in Japan, 2010), 45-73.

[95] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 169.

[96] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 35.

methodische Schlußfolgerung, sei es notwendig und ausreichend, "die unbewußte Struktur, die jeder Institution oder jedem Brauch zugrunde liegt, zu finden, um ein Interpretationsprinzip zu bekommen, das [ebenso – C.M.] für andere Institutionen und andere Bräuche gültig ist."[97] Diese Aussagen und Erläuterungen machen es dem Leser scheinbar schwer, Lévi-Strauss' Formen und Strukturen – im Gegensatz zu den immer dieselben bleibenden Gesetzen hinter den sich wandelnden Phänomenen – Beweglichkeit, Lebendigkeit und Entwicklung zuzuschreiben, da sie ihm als unbewußte "einheitliche Schema[ta]" gelten. Mehr noch, diese für alle Menschheitsgeister und "durch alle Schicksalswendungen hindurch" gleichbleibenden Formen bzw. formale Charaktere scheinen bei Lévi-Strauss auch für allen variablen – wirtschaftlichen, juristischen, religiösen oder kultischen – Inhalt dieselben zu sein.[98]

Andererseits zitiert er zustimmt die Einsicht Durkheims, wonach zwar "'die Phänomene, welche die Struktur betreffen, etwas Stabileres an sich [haben] als die funktionalen Phänomene'," zwischen "'beiden Ordnungen [jedoch] nur Gradunterschiede'" bestünden. Auch folgende "tiefsinnigen Bemerkungen Durkheims" aus dem Jahre 1900 könnten, so Lévi-Strauss 1960, heute geschrieben sein: "'Der Struktur selbst begegnet man im Werden … Sie entsteht und zerfällt ohne Unterlaß; sie ist das Leben**,** das einen bestimmten Grad an Konsolidierung erreicht hat; und sie vom Leben unterscheiden zu wollen, von dem sie sich herleitet, oder vom Leben, das sie determiniert, ist dasselbe, als wollte man Untrennbares trennen'."[99] Dies bezieht er ebenfalls auf die Zeichensysteme, deren Geschichte "logische Evolutionen" umfaßten.[100] Ohne aus den angeführten Aussagen bereits eine logisch- oder historisch-evolutionäre Auffassung der Begriffe System, Struktur und Form bei Lévi-Strauss ableiten zu wollen, scheint ihm diese Sichtweise doch nicht völlig fremd zu sein. Bei Cassirer dürfen wir eine logisch- und historisch-genetische Auffassung dieser Begriffe in der Weise voraussetzen, daß sie in ihren jeweiligen Ausprägungen Stadien oder Stufen des Aufbauens durchlaufen, die er u.a. den drei Grundfunktionen des Geistes – Ausdrucks-, Darstellungs- und Bedeutungsfunktion – zuordnet. Ob dies für ihre 'Lebensgesetze,' die Form- oder Strukturprinzipien auch gilt, muß an dieser Stelle offen gelassen werden.

[97] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 35.
[98] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 36f.
[99] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 27.
[100] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 27.

6. Beziehungen zwischen Systemen bzw. Strukturen.

Lévi-Strauss richtet sein Augenmerk auch, ebenso wie Cassirer, auf die "offensichtlichen Beziehungen," die zwischen den verschiedenen Systemen bzw. Formen bestehen und die vergleichend zu untersuchen seien.[101] Den Typus dieser Beziehungen will er weder als "strengen Parallelismus" noch als "Unabhängigkeit" der einzelnen "Ordnungen von einander" verstanden wissen, vielmehr seien sie als "funktionelle" "Wechselbeziehungen" zu charakterisieren.[102] Wie auch Cassirer betont er zudem, daß es sich hierbei um nichtkausale Beziehungen ("Homologien") handele. Die Wechselbeziehungen z.B. zwischen den "unbewußten Kategorien des Denkens" und den "sozialen Verhaltensweisen" der Menschen in 'primitiven' Gesellschaften, die eine gewisse Parallelität bzw. Korrelativität offenbaren, würden in "homologen Ausdrücken der Sprachstruktur und der sozialen Struktur" sichtbar.[103]

Diese Korrelativität komme u.a. darin zum Ausdruck, daß, wenn die "Systeme" eines Typs – wie die Verwandtschaftssysteme – sich von einer konkreten Gesellschaft zur anderen abwandeln, diesen Abwandlungen "Umwandlungen" z.B. in den Mythen dieser Gesellschaften entsprechen, wenn man verschiedene Versionen des gleichen Mythos vergleicht. So stelle sich der Mythos als "eine Gesamtheit [d.h. als ein System – C.M.] bipolarer Strukturen dar, die denen analog sind, die das Verwandtschaftssystem bilden."[104] Lévi-Strauss schlußfolgert daraus, daß, wenn Korrelationen selbst zwischen solch entfernten Systemen festzustellen sind, dann auch eine "Korrelation mit dem Sprachsystem bestehen" müsse.[105] Korrelative "Wechselbeziehungen" vermutet er auch zwischen den Typen einer 'gedachten' (Religion) und den Typen einer 'gelebten' Ordnung (Sozialstruktur).[106] Wobei "'gelebte' Ordnungen" von einer objektiven Wirklichkeit abhängen, während die "'gedachten' Ordnungen" auf den "Gebiet[n] des Mythos oder der Religion", aber auch dem der "politischen Ideologie der modernen Gesellschaften", unmittelbar keiner objektiven Wirklichkeit entsprechen.[107]

Das Freilegen solcher Korrelationen führt Lévi-Strauss auf die Einsicht, wonach die "magischen Glaubensinhalte" einer Gemeinschaft als "eine direkte

[101] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 97.
[102] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 52.
[103] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 85.
[104] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 89.
[105] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 89, 93.
[106] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 343.
[107] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 342f.

Funktion der Struktur der sozialen Gruppe" zu verstehen seien.[108] Er hält es deshalb für "möglich…, durch Umwandlungen von der ökonomischen Struktur oder der der sozialen Beziehungen zur Struktur des Rechts, der Kunst oder der Religion überzugehen,"[109] was möglicherweise dem Übergang zwischen den Strukturen der 'gelebten' und der 'gedachten' Ordnungen entspricht. Ein ähnlicher methodischer Gedanke findet sich bereits bei dem Biologen und Zeitgenossen Goethes, Cuvier, der die Wertschätzung Cassirers und Lévi-Strauss' genießt. Cassirer bringt 1945 in seinem Beitrag 'Structuralism in Modern Linguistics' zum Ausdruck, daß sich Cuviers biologische Termini, denen gemäß die Veränderung eines Teiles, einer Funktion, einer Beziehung des Systems die Veränderung der anderen nach sich zieht, weil sie sich wechselseitig wiedergeben, in linguistische Termini überführen ließen, was zur Konsequenz habe, daß "we should have, before our very eyes, the program of modern linguistic structuralism."[110] Cassirer selbst hatte bereits 1932 in seinem 'Vortrag: Symbolproblem' die "engen Beziehungen…, die zwischen der Struktur der Sprachwelt und der der Wahrnehmungswelt bestehen," thematisiert.[111] In dem Zusammenhang ist von "Strukturveränderungen" der "Wahrnehmungswelt durch die Sprache" und von "eine[r] ständige[n] Wechselbeziehung zwischen Sprachstruktur und Wahrnehmungsstruktur" die Rede.[112] Sowohl bei Lévi-Strauss als auch bei Cassirer sind diese Wechselbeziehungen als 'Korrelationen,' nicht aber als Kausalbeziehungen gemeint.

Wenn sich Lévi-Strauss also dermaßen zielstrebig für die Strukturanalogien zwischen Systemen, die eine Gesellschaft ausmachen, und zwischen analogen Systemen (der Verwandtschaft, der Mythen, der Sprache etc.) in verschiedenen Gesellschaften bzw. "Gesamtzusammenhängen," interessiert, dann führt auch dieses Interesse auf eine Parallele im Denken Cassirers. Erinnert diese Aufmerksamkeit für Strukturanalogien doch an ein quasi analoges Interesse des jungen Cassirer in den beiden ersten Bänden seines *Erkenntnisproblems* (1906/07), Bände, die im Grunde auch eine umfassende Kulturphilosophie enthalten. Zunächst finden wir in ihnen die methodisch verwirklichte Idee vor, daß wir es in jeder besonderen historischen Epoche mit kulturellen Totalitäten zu

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[108] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 344.

[109] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 359.

[110] Ernst Cassirer, "Structuralism in Modern Linguistics" (1945) in ders., *Gesammelte Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe*, Hrsg. von Birgit Recki, Bd. 24: *Aufsätze und kleine Schriften 1941-1946* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2007), 307.

[111] Ernst Cassirer, "Vortrag: Symbolproblem," in ders., *Symbolische Prägnanz, Ausdruckssphänomen und 'Wiener Kreis,'* 110.

[112] Cassirer, "Vortrag: Symbolproblem," 111f.

tun haben, bei denen je ein bestimmtes geistiges Grundprinzip alle Teilsysteme der Kultur wie Moral, Wissenschaft, Recht und auch Philosophie durchdringt und bestimmt. Wandlungen, die ein neues Grundprinzip – oder Denkprinzip, wie es Cassirer auch nennt – in einem der Teilsysteme auslöst, vollziehen sich demnach früher oder später korrelativ auch in den anderen Bereichen der Kultur, bis die gesamte kulturelle Lebensordnung umgewälzt ist. Am Ende bildet sich eine so genannte neue kulturelle 'Lebensordnung' aus, wobei Cassirer diesen Begriff vermutlich Dilthey entlehnt, den er u. a. auf die Lebensordnungen der Renaissancekultur und des Mittelalters anwendet.[113] D.h., auch Cassirer geht dem korrelativen Charakter der Abwandlungen von Teilsystemen einer konkreten historischen Totalität analytisch nach. Lévi-Strauss greift den Begriff der Lebensordnungen – ohne ihn explizit zu gebrauchen – im Grunde bei seinem Strukturvergleich des 'indo-europäischen' und des 'sino-tibetischen Systems' auf. Beide Systeme stehen für "zwei Typen sozialer Strukturen," denen zwei Typen von Sprachstrukturen korrelieren.[114]

In der späteren 'Philosophie der symbolischen Formen' scheint dieser methodische Gedanke allerdings etwas in den Hindergrund zu treten. Hier geht es Cassirer in erster Linie sowohl um die Tönung oder Prägung, die eine bestimmte Sinnordnung allen in sie eingeordneten Gehalten aufprägt, als auch um die logische und historische Entfaltung (Genese) einer jeden Sinnordnung, was u.a. bedeutet, daß sie die funktionalen Eigenheiten anderer symbolischen Formen quasi durchläuft. Doch selbst noch im *Essay on Man* unterstreicht Cassirer, daß jede symbolische Form als eine bestimmte Form des Lebens Bestandteil einer bestimmten 'Lebensordnung,' im Englischen wiedergegeben als "human order," ist.[115] Den Gedanken der Transformierbarkeit des einen Systems in ein anderes, von Lévi-Strauss zum "Wesen eines Zeichensystems" erklärt, gemäß dem es "übersetzbar in die Sprache eines anderen Systems mit Hilfe von Substitutionen" zu sein habe,[116] scheint Cassirer allerdings nicht unbesehen zu teilen; die berühmte Interpretation des Liniengleichnisses[117] läuft nicht auf

[113] Siehe dazu Christian Möckel, "Der Begriff der 'Lebensordnung' und die Philosophie der symbolischen Formen," in *DIALEKTIK. Zeitschrift für Kulturphilosophie*, Heft 2 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2001), 163-179.

[114] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, 90.

[115] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 225.

[116] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 28.

[117] "Analog können wir gewisse räumliche Formen, gewisse Komplexe von Linien und Figuren, in dem einen Fall als künstlerisches Ornament, in dem anderen als geometrisches Zeichen auffassen und kraft dieser Auffassung ein und demselben Material einen ganz verschiedenen Sinn verleihen. Die Einheit des Raumes, die wir uns im ästhetischen Schauen und Erzeugen …

Transformationen, sondern auf plurale Perspektiven und Sinndeutungen (Auffassungsweisen) hinaus.

7. Formbegriff und Strukturbegriff.

Abschließend soll die Frage nach dem Verhältnis, in welchem sich bei beiden Denkern Form- und Strukturbegriff befinden, zumindest gestellt werden. Zunächst einmal stehen bei ihnen beide Begriffe für das Beständige, Gesetzmäßige, Bestimmende hinter den wechselnden Erscheinungen, vielfältigen Phänomenen, auch wenn die beiden Begriffe selbst u.U. Veränderungen, Metamorphosen, Genesen durchmachen. Auch lehnen im Grunde beide die alte Auffassung ab, wonach "die Form … sich im Gegensatz zu einer Materie, die ihr fremd ist, [definiert – C.M.]."[118] Den Formalismus in der Linguistik im Blick habend erklärt Lévi-Strauss, und dies durchaus im Sinne Cassirers, daß die "offenkundige Antinomie zwischen der Konstanz der Form und der Variabilität des Inhalts,"[119] daß die "formalistische Dichotomie, die Form und Inhalt einander gegenüberstellt,"[120] eine scheinbare ist, die auf Irrtümern beruht. "Für den Strukturalismus," so Lévi-Strauss weiter ganz im Geiste Cassirers, "existiert dieser Gegensatz nicht: … Form und Inhalt sind gleicher Natur, sie unterstehen beide ein und derselben Analyse. Der Inhalt bezieht seine Realität aus der Struktur [weil die ihn gliedert und ihm Bedeutung verleiht – C.M.], und was man Form nennt, ist die 'Strukturierung' der lokalen Strukturen, aus welchen der Inhalt besteht."[121] Folglich habe "die Struktur … keinen von ihr unterschiedenen Inhalt: sie ist der Inhalt selbst, erfaßt in einer logischen Organisation, die als eine Eigenschaft des Realen gilt."[122] Die Zustimmung Cassirers zu diesen und ähnlichen Auffassungen bringen u.a. entsprechende Formulierungen im *Essay on Man*, auch hier mit Blick auf den Formalismus, zum Ausdruck: "The distinction between form and matter proves artificil and inadequate. Speech is an indissoluble unity which cannot be divided into two independent and isolated factors, form and matter."[123] Die Position der Strukturalisten, wonach "in the realm of language there is no

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aufbauen, gehört einer ganz anderen Stufe an, als diejenige, die sich in bestimmten geometrischen Lehrsätzen und in einer bestimmten Form der geometrischen Axiomatik darstellt." – Cassirer, *Die Sprache*, 30; siehe dazu auch ders., *Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis*, 232ff.

[118] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 135.

[119] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 148.

[120] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 153.

[121] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 153.

[122] Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 135.

[123] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 125.

opposition between what is 'formal' and what is merely 'factual'," weil es die Linguistik mit kohärenten Systemen zu tun hat, würdigt Cassirer auch noch einmal ausdrücklich in seiner letzten Veröffentlichung, im Aufsatz über den Strukturalismus in der Linguistik.[124]

Cassirer setzt die Begriffe Form und Struktur gelegentlich nahezu identisch, wie an folgender Formulierung deutlich wird: "Human culture derives its specific character and its intellectual and moral values, not from the material of which it consists, but from its form, its architectural structure."[125] Wie die Struktur ist auch die Form eine Weise der Rationalität, die unsere Auffassung von Erscheinungen ordnet.[126] Sie bilden beide jeweils eine 'bewegliche' Ordnung. Dennoch bleibt künftig zu klären, ob sowohl bei Cassirer als auch bei Lévi-Strauss dem Begriff der Form eine analoge Ordnungs- und Systematisierungsfunktion zugeschrieben wird wie dem der 'strukturierenden' Struktur. Ich bin unentschieden, ob bei Cassirer die symbolische Form durch ein eigenes Strukturgesetz bestimmt und konstituiert wird, oder ob sie selbst als strukturierendes Prinzip anzusehen ist, eine Sinn- und Bedeutungsordnung, ein System konstituierend.

Resümee.

Eine Antwort auf die im Titel gestellte suggestive Frage kann derzeit nur unter gewissen einschränkenden Bedingungen gegeben werden: die zahlreichen aufweisbaren Parallelen erlauben, bei Lévi-Strauss von einer impliziten 'Philosophie der symbolischen Strukturen,' vielleicht besser 'Philosophie der strukturgeprägten symbolischen Systeme,' zu sprechen, dies aber unter der Bedingung, daß sich künftig eine weitgehende Äquivalenz der Begriffe 'Form' und 'Struktur,' wie sie bei Lévi-Strauss und bei Cassirer verwendet werden, belegen läßt. Die Zielrichtung dieser impliziten Philosophie ist aber keine philosophisch-anthropologisch gestützte universale Kulturphilosophie, wie die Cassirers, sondern die einzelwissenschaftliche Erforschung konkreter 'primitiver' Gesellschaften samt ihrer empirischen Kulturen, die unbewußte, verborgene Gesetze des Geistes einen. Die Umrisse universaler Ordnungen des Handelns, Schaffens und Denkens,

[124] Cassirer, "Structuralism in Modern Linguistics," 304.
[125] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 36.
[126] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 167.

die diese Recherchen erahnen lassen, gelten Cassirer als frühgeschichtlich[127] und zukunftsbedrohend,[128] Lévi-Strauss dagegen als zukunftsweisend.[129]

[127] "The taboo system threatens to make the life of man a burden that in the end becomes unbearable. Man's whole existence, physical and moral, is smothered under the continual pressure of this system." – Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 108.

[128] "Our [modern – C.M.] science, our poetry, our art, and our religion are only the upper layer of a much older stratum that reaches down to a great depth. We must always be prepared for violent concussions that may shake our cultural world and our social order to its very foundations. … But once they begin to lose their strength chaos is come again. Mythical thought then starts to rise anew and to pervade the whole of man's cultural and social life." – Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, 297f.

[129] Lévi-Strauss erwartet vom Prototyp der "außerhalb und über der Geschichte stehend[en]" 'primitiven' Gesellschaft, daß sie "erneut jene regelmäßige und gleichsam kristalline Struktur gewinnen [könnte], die, wie die am besten erhaltenen Gesellschaften uns lehren, nicht im Widerspruch zur Menschheit steht." (Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturale Anthropologie* II, 41) In den "Lebens- und Denkformen" dieser Gesellschaften will er "eine dauernde Chance des Menschen" und den "lebendigen Beweis dessen" sehen, "was wir retten wollen." (Ebd., 41f.) Die 'primitiven' Gesellschaften hätten den Zivilisierten, so Lévi-Strauss, "die Mittel geliefert, den menschlichen Tatsachen ihre wahre Dimension zuzuweisen." – Ebd., 44.

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