

volume V • issue 4

2014

Logos &
Episteme

an international journal
of epistemology

**Romanian Academy
Iasi Branch**



**“Gheorghe Zane” Institute
for Economic and Social
Research**

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This journal was edited within “Innovation and Development in the Patterning and Representation of Knowledge Through PhD and Post-PhD Fellowships” Project, supported by the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU 159/1.5/S/133675.

The content of these materials does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union and the Romanian Government.

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ISSN 2069-053

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RESEARCH ARTICLES

INFERENCEAL, COHERENTIAL, AND FOUNDATIONAL WARRANT: AN ECLECTIC ACCOUNT OF THE SOURCES OF WARRANT

Mark J. BOONE

ABSTRACT: A warranted belief may derive *inferential warrant* from warranted beliefs which support it. It may possess what I call *coherential warrant* in virtue of being consistent with, or lacking improbability relative to, a large system of warranted beliefs. Finally, it may have *foundational warrant*, which does not derive from other beliefs at all. I define and distinguish these sources of warrant and explain why all three must be included in the true and complete account of the structure of knowledge, and why the first two sources are significant at all levels of knowledge. Only foundherentism and a weak version of foundationalism can satisfy this criterion. My analysis has significant, and happy, consequences for the epistemological tradition. The project of describing the structure of knowledge is nearly complete. Those who have pronounced the death of epistemology are partially correct, not because epistemology has failed, but because it has been so successful.

KEYWORDS: foundationalism, coherentism, foundherentism, warrant, externalism, internalism

The purposes of this article are to give a thorough and eclectic account of the sources of warrant, to articulate a criterion for the true and complete account of the structure of knowledge, and to apply that criterion to some major accounts of the structure of knowledge. The significance of my analysis, if it is correct, is that one major project of analytic epistemology has almost completely succeeded and that as a result a major chapter in the history of epistemology is all but closed.

In recent decades epistemologists have produced an astounding quantity of research investigating the structure of knowledge and analyzing the sources of warrant.¹ I shall not attempt to summarize this vast literature. But, within their

¹ Many of these epistemologists will use the term ‘justification’ instead of ‘warrant.’ The externalist tradition in epistemology does *not* identify warrant and justification. Alvin Plantinga, for example, defines warrant as that “quality or quantity enough of which, together with truth and belief, is sufficient for knowledge.” (Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), v) Justification, in his view, is warrant that comes in the form of evidence or some other form of rational support for a belief. Thus, justification is a *type* of warrant; all justification is warrant, but not vice versa. Similarly, Tyler Burge refers to what he calls ‘entitlement’ as a variety of ‘warrant’ which does not involve

salutary conversation, it is possible to discern three different sorts of warrant they have said a belief may have. Moreover, they are *correct* about all three. First, there is *inferential warrant*: warrant a belief derives from a small number of other beliefs which support it. Second, there is what I shall call *coherential warrant*: warrant a belief possesses in virtue of its consistency with a large system of warranted beliefs. Finally, there is *foundational warrant*, warrant which a belief does not derive from other beliefs at all – neither from small sets of other beliefs nor from its consistency with a larger system of beliefs. Foundational warrant does not come *from* a system of beliefs at all; it is that basic sort of warrant which goes *into* a system of beliefs.²

In what follows I shall define and distinguish these three sources of warrant with references to some of the major epistemologists who have touted their importance (Sections I-III). Then I shall explain why all three sources of warrant would be included in the true and complete account of the structure of knowledge (Section IV). Then I shall explain why this account must be a form of either *weak foundationalism* or *foundherentism* (Section V). I will conclude (Section VI) by explaining the significance of my analysis for the past work of epistemologists, and explaining what remains to complete the epistemological project of describing the structure of knowledge.

If my analysis is correct, it has significant, and happy, consequences for the recent epistemological tradition. The project of describing the structure of knowledge, one of the major goals of analytic epistemology, is more or less complete. Accordingly, those who have declared the death of traditional epistemology are to that extent correct. Yet they are not correct for the usually cited reason, that epistemology has failed; they are correct for the happier reason that it has *succeeded*, at least in its goal of describing the structure of knowledge.

rational understanding; he refers to another variety of warrant as ‘justification,’ meaning by this term much the same as Plantinga does (Tyler Burge, “Perceptual Entitlement,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 67, 3 (2003): 504-5). Obviously “warrant” is the more inclusive term, and so I shall adopt their terminology.

² The language of different varieties of warrant may be misleading. I am not performing a metaphysical analysis of what inferential, coherential, and foundational warrant fundamentally *are*, but an epistemological analysis of three ways a belief may have warrant – three relationships a warranted belief may bear to the overall structure of knowledge. A *metaphysical* analysis might find that a belief can have warrant in three different ways because there are three fundamentally different types of warrant-stuff; or it might find that there are only two; or only one.

I. Inferential Warrant

In this section I shall define the type of warrant I am calling *inferential* warrant, explain its importance to two traditions in epistemology, and explain its role in a system of warranted beliefs.

Inferential warrant is warrant that is passed to a belief from a small number of other beliefs.³ It is ‘inferential’ because the warrant transfer can be formulated in terms of an argument, although it does not have to be. For example, I believe that France once had a King Louis the XVI, and I believe that the titles of monarchs are numbered sequentially starting from one; so I believe that France once had a King Louis the VI (although at present I can remember nothing about him). My belief that France had a King Louis the VI is warranted because the beliefs on which I base it are warranted. Inferential warrant can be transferred to one belief from others for the very simple reason that some beliefs either *entail* others (in the way the premises of a valid argument do their conclusion), or merely *support* others (in the way the premises of a strong argument do their conclusion). Accordingly, when the supporting beliefs are warranted, at least some of that warrant is transferred to the belief they support.

Adherents to all of the major views on the structure of knowledge emphasize the importance of inferential warrant. For example, *foundationalism*, roughly, is the view that knowledge needs a foundation, and the impetus behind foundationalism is the notion that inferential warrant must have an origin in some foundational beliefs that are *not* inferentially warranted. But every belief that is *not* part of the foundation *is* warranted inferentially. Again, *coherentism*, roughly, is the view that inferential warrant does *not* begin with such foundational beliefs, but is passed from belief to belief (and perhaps also to each belief from the set of all beliefs), without ever really *beginning* anywhere. Accordingly, for both foundationalism and coherentism, inferential warrant is an important source of warrant for our beliefs.

Knowledge involves a system, an arrangement, of our beliefs that maximizes their warrant and thereby increases the probability that most of the things we believe are true. In the structure of warranted belief, inferential warrant is the most visible sort of warrant, for most (perhaps all) of our warranted beliefs are supported by other warranted beliefs. Inferential warrant is passed to each belief that has it from a set of warranted statements that provide a degree of support for it – a set not including the belief itself. The set of supporting statements may have

³ This sort of terminology is nothing new, of course; Laurence Bonjour, for example, refers to ‘inferential justification’ in “Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15, 1 (1978): 2.

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one member, just as an argument may have only one premise; or it may have many members, just as an argument may have many premises. There may be more than one set that provides a belief with inferential warrant, just as a statement may be supported by more than one argument. However, in order to have inferential warrant, a belief need only receive warrant from *one* set of beliefs which support it – a set corresponding to a potential argument to which the belief in question would be the conclusion.

II. Coherential Warrant

I use the term ‘coherential warrant’ to designate a variety of warrant which is distinct from inferential warrant and which also happens to be important in a coherentist theory of the structure of knowledge. I am *not* using the term to designate what coherentists generally refer to as ‘coherence,’ which may rather be a combination of inferential and coherential warrant, or even a description of the shape inferential warrant takes in the overall structure of knowledge.

In this section I shall define ‘coherential warrant’ and explain its role in a system of warranted beliefs; then I shall explain its relationship to inferential warrant; finally, I shall explain why an appeal to coherential warrant has been a key component of coherentist theories of the structure of knowledge.

A. What Coherential Warrant Is

Coherential warrant is the type of warrant a belief possesses in virtue of its consistency with a large system of warranted beliefs, or in virtue of its *lack of improbability* relative to a large system of warranted beliefs. If most of the beliefs in a large network of beliefs are true, a belief consistent with most or all of them is likelier to be true than one *not* consistent with most or all of them; all else being equal, it is more warranted. Moreover, a statement which is *not* improbable given a large set of warranted beliefs is likelier to be true than one that *is* improbable given the same set of warranted beliefs. Accordingly, coherential warrant for a belief depends on the warrant of the network of beliefs which respect to which that belief is warranted, and on the warrant of the members of that network of beliefs. Coherential warrant comes in degrees, varying in seven ways that I can see. Coherential warrant for a belief is higher when it is not only consistent with but also lacks improbability relative to the system of beliefs with which it coheres, when that system is larger, or when the system of beliefs itself contains a higher degree of warrant. A fourth way coherential warrant may vary in degree is this: When a belief is consistent with, or lacks improbability relative to, *most but not all of* a large system of warranted beliefs, then, although it may have *some*

coherential warrant, it has still *less* than a belief consistent with or lacking improbability relative to the *entire* system. A fifth way is this: The coherential warrant of a belief is increased by its ability to *explain* the body of beliefs, or a subsection thereof, with respect to which it has coherential warrant.

Another important feature of coherential warrant is a sixth way it varies: It is increased by the presence of terms common both to the belief that has it and to the belief system with respect to which that belief is warranted. A statement *P* which is not improbable given a large set of warranted beliefs, some of which concern the same things which *P* concerns, is likelier to be true than a statement *Q* which is not improbable given the same set of warranted beliefs but which does *not* concern any of the same things. For example, the statement “The DOW Jones will top 23,000 points in the next five years” and the statement “The shifting of tectonic plates is causing the Himalayas to grow taller” are equally consistent with my knowledge of economics; but the former derives much more coherential warrant from my economic knowledge than does the latter. Moreover, in a seventh way, coherential warrant for a belief is higher when the state of affairs it describes is similar to some of the states of affairs described in the set of beliefs with respect to which it is warranted.

Coherential warrant is very important, and beliefs generally require it if they are to be responsibly believed. But it is, by itself, a relatively weak sort of warrant, such that it is rarely, if ever, sufficient by itself to make a belief the kind that *should* be believed.⁴ The belief “I will die sometime in the next ten years” has a high degree of coherential warrant, but that does not mean I should believe it to be true; for its negation – “I will *not* die sometime in the next ten years” – also possesses a high degree of coherential warrant.

B. Coherential Warrant’s Relationship to Inferential Warrant

Coherential warrant is not the same thing as inferential warrant, but it is closely related to it. After describing some structural differences, I will explain why the two terms are not coextensive, and then I shall explain why they are nevertheless closely related.

Inferential warrant travels to one belief from a set, usually a very small one, of beliefs which support it. Coherential warrant is structurally different in two

⁴ If it is not yet clear to the reader, I am using the term ‘warrant’ to refer to the stuff that is necessary for true belief to be knowledge, a stuff which comes in degrees and a certain amount of which is necessary for knowledge. In this sense a belief could have some warrant, but not enough to be knowledge. (An alternative use of ‘warrant’ would denote the quantity of this stuff which is enough, excluding Gettier cases, for true belief to be knowledge.)

important ways. First, it involves a very *large* set of beliefs, a global system or network of beliefs. Second, a belief does not possess coherential warrant in virtue of being *supported* by those beliefs; they may or may not support it; what provides coherential warrant is merely the belief's *consistency* with them, or its lack of improbability relative to them. A belief with inferential warrant receives from the beliefs which support it a *positive* support; it is, at least to the degree it has inferential warrant, *good* (epistemically speaking) to hold that belief. A belief with *coherential* warrant receives a weaker form of support from the beliefs with respect to which it has coherential warrant, such that it is simply *not bad* (epistemically speaking) to hold it. Of course, it is possible, and desirable, for a belief with coherential warrant to also have inferential warrant. Beyond mere consistency with or lack of improbability given a large set of beliefs, a belief may also be *supported* by them, or a subset of them. For example, my belief that "Some real things exist independently of my perceptions of them" is highly probable given the various warranted beliefs I have about the things in the world, such as the beliefs that "There are crocodiles in the Nile River," "Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon," and "Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit*." In this case, a belief possesses *inferential* warrant from an unusually large set of warranted beliefs; but it also possesses *coherential* warrant because it lacks improbability given that same set of beliefs (and, in fact, a larger set including that set plus whatever other warranted beliefs are consistent with it). The belief is all the better warranted for having *both* varieties of warrant relative to a large set of warranted beliefs. Indeed, we rarely think of coherential warrant without thinking of inferential warrant.⁵

Most beliefs with good inferential support also possess a high degree of coherential warrant with one's overall system of belief, and commonly vice versa. But not always! A belief can have coherential warrant without having inferential warrant. The belief "I will die sometime in the next ten years" has a high degree of coherential warrant, although the set of beliefs with which it coheres does not provide inferential support for it. Furthermore, a belief may have inferential warrant without having coherential warrant. A new scientific theory may possess little or no coherential warrant with respect to other scientific theories, but may possess a high degree of inferential warrant with respect to whatever evidence inspired the theory.

⁵ In his earlier writings defending coherentism, for example, Laurence Bonjour refers to a *combination* of what I am calling inferential and coherential warrant by the name 'coherence.' Laurence Bonjour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), chapter 5.

Although they are not the same, coherential warrant is closely related to inferential warrant. The belief “I will live to the age of one hundred and fifty” does not have coherential warrant because it is improbable given quite a few of my warranted beliefs. To the contrary, the statement “I will *not* live to the age of one hundred and fifty” is inferentially warranted by the same beliefs on which the statement “I will live to the age of one hundred and fifty” is improbable. This suggests a new definition of coherential warrant: A belief has coherential warrant with respect to a set of warranted statements if and only if its negation does *not* have *inferential* warrant from the same set, or a subset of it. So, while coherential warrant is not the same as inferential warrant, it can be explained in terms of inferential warrant.

C. Coherential Warrant and Coherentism

Coherentism has emphasized this sort of warrant. Coherentism alleges that there are no beliefs from which inferential warrant, which is passed to one belief from other beliefs, begins. This opens up coherentism to the charge that it views warrant as a very complicated exercise in vicious circularity. Since our finite minds are only capable of holding to a finite number of beliefs at one time, we do not have an infinite number of beliefs; accordingly, on coherentism it is necessary that inferential warrant must loop back on itself. So the objection goes.

A coherentist can reply that not all warrant comes from the support of warranted beliefs. Inferential warrant is transferred among beliefs in this way, but not coherential warrant. Transferred warrant is warrant by support, but a belief has coherential warrant in virtue of its consistency with the overall arrangement of beliefs, *not* by being positively *supported* by them. So some warrant that *is* transferred comes from *non*-transferred warrant. So knowledge is not merely a complicated exercise in vicious circularity. Thus Laurence BonJour, in his classic articulation of coherentism, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (1985), speaks of a belief’s place within a holistic system of warranted belief.⁶ He explicitly links the property some beliefs have of being part of a holistic system of warranted beliefs to his claim that the transferring of warrant to one belief from others does not reach back into infinity.⁷ Moreover, it would seem that for any belief, it may have direct inferential support from some of the beliefs in the system; yet its overall warrant is increased by its being part of the system of belief. The difference between its direct inferential warrant and its overall warrant is what I am calling its coherential warrant.

⁶ BonJour, *The Structure*.

⁷ BonJour, *The Structure*, 91.

So the response to the objection goes, and in this way coherential warrant is an important part of the structure of knowledge for the coherentist. I myself do not think this response is ultimately successful, as I shall explain later.

The notion of a holistic system of belief is important, by the way, and brings out one of the major insights of coherentism: That we may speak not only of a *system of warranted beliefs*, but also of a *warranted system of beliefs*. A system of belief can be warranted in three ways that I can see: by being composed of warranted beliefs; by being composed of beliefs that provide mutual inferential warrant among themselves; and by being largely composed of consistent beliefs, at least some of which are warranted. This third way is the most interesting with respect to coherential warrant and, it seems to me, is a special case of coherential warrant: the warrant a large set of beliefs possesses in virtue of its being largely composed of mutually consistent beliefs, at least some of which are warranted. For a large set of beliefs which is consistent with a smaller subset of warranted beliefs is more likely to be true than one that is not thus consistent.⁸

III. Foundational Warrant

In this section I shall define the type of warrant I am calling *foundational*, discuss its importance in internalist and externalist epistemologies, and explain its role in a system of warranted beliefs.

Foundational warrant is essentially un-transferred warrant, warrant which is not derived from the warrant of other beliefs – warrant that does not depend on the warrant of other beliefs at all. Descartes found it in the belief “I exist,” a belief warranted no matter what other beliefs there are (or, in his case, are *not*) in a system of beliefs. Foundational warrant can begin the process of warrant transfer. It is *foundational* because it has no basis in a system of beliefs, and in fact *is* a basis for the warrant in a system of beliefs. This is the sort of warrant to which foundationalists call our attention. According to foundationalism, there are such things as *basic beliefs*, or beliefs warranted without reference to other beliefs, and with reference to which other beliefs may be warranted.⁹

Inferential and coherential warrant are functions of the relationship of a belief to other beliefs. Not so foundational warrant, which is a function of the

⁸ Much of BonJour’s discussion of what he calls ‘coherence’ in *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* concerns the warrant of belief systems, not individual beliefs. BonJour, *The Structure*, chapter 5.

⁹ For example, Plantinga says: “some of one’s beliefs may be *based upon* others; . . . Some of my beliefs, however, I accept but don’t accept on the basis of any other beliefs. Call these beliefs *basic*.” (Alvin Plantinga, “Is Belief in God Properly Basic?” *Noûs* 15, 1 (1981): 41)

relationship of a belief to the truth, or, we might say, to the realities about which our beliefs are. What exactly this relationship is and how it is brought about are topics well beyond the scope of my project; to answer these questions would no doubt require a long foray into various issues metaphysical and epistemological, including the mind-body problem. However, for a rough approximation, we can say that a belief has a degree of foundational warrant when it is likely to be true at least partly as a result of certain right reasons – namely, those right reasons which are independent of that belief's connection to other beliefs.

Foundationalists have generally given two different sorts of accounts of what these reasons are. The internalist foundationalist tradition argues for the importance of foundational warrant to which a knower has mental access, warrant which is available to him to inspect, so that in cases of real knowledge *he can see for himself* that he has knowledge.¹⁰ The externalist foundationalist tradition argues for the importance of foundational warrant to which a knower does *not* have access; the warrant for such a belief is *not* open for a knower to inspect; he cannot see it for himself. Thus Chisholm, representing internalist foundationalism, argues that access to the conditions for warrant is necessary if knowledge is to be any different from mere true belief,¹¹ which practically every epistemologist since Plato has recognized as a requirement for knowledge.¹² On the other hand, Alvin Plantinga, representing externalist foundationalism, argues that warrant is the quality of beliefs produced by reliable epistemic faculties aimed at the production of true belief and functioning properly in their proper environment, the environment in which they are designed to function;¹³ it is the activity of such properly functioning faculties which distinguishes knowledge from mere true belief, and thus knowledge does not require mental access to the conditions for warrant. Similarly, Tyler Burge says that a person's perceptual beliefs can have a variety of warrant he calls 'entitlement' even when the person does not understand the warrant for the belief.¹⁴ Another externalist foundationalist is Fred Dretske, who also uses the word 'entitlement' to refer to beliefs that are

¹⁰ Roderick Chisholm's definition of internalism: "The internalist assumes that, merely by reflecting upon his own conscious state, he can formulate a set of epistemic principles that will enable him to find out, with respect to any possible belief he has, whether he is justified in having that belief." (Roderick Chisholm, "The Indispensability of Internal Justification," *Synthese* 74, 3 (1988): 285-6)

¹¹ Chisholm, "The Indispensability," 285-296.

¹² Plato, *Meno*, 97a-98d.

¹³ Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, 46-47.

¹⁴ Tyler Burge, "Content Preservation," *Philosophical Review* 103 (1993): 457-88; Burge, "Perceptual Entitlement," 503-48.

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‘unjustified justifiers;’ Dretske treats foundationalism as necessarily externalist, evidently disagreeing with Chisholm on the possibility of mentally accessible foundational warrant.¹⁵ So the internalist foundationalist thinks beliefs which have foundational warrant have this sort of warrant because I can see for myself that they are true, without having to look at my other beliefs. The externalist foundationalist thinks my beliefs with foundational warrant have it for some other reason independent of my other beliefs – in Plantinga’s case, because they are produced by the faculties that give us knowledge.

Despite this interesting and important disagreement, internalist and externalist foundationalists agree on the necessary presence of foundational warrant in the structure of knowledge. In the system of beliefs, foundational warrant is basic; it does not come *from* a system of beliefs at all. It goes *into* it. Foundational warrant is a source for the other varieties of warrant.

IV. Why All Three Types of Warrant Matter

There are, then, three ways a belief might have warrant – three ways it might be related to the overall structure of knowledge. A belief has *inferential* warrant when it bears to other, warranted beliefs the relationship of being supported by them. A belief has *coherential* warrant when it bears to a wide body of warranted beliefs the relationship of consistency, or does *not* bear the relationship of *improbability*. And a belief has *foundational* warrant when it has warrant independently of these other relationships to the structure of knowledge.

Each of the three varieties of warrant I have described would feature in the true and complete account of the structure of knowledge. In this section I shall explain why this is so, beginning with coherential warrant; in the next section I shall describe the two general forms such an account of knowledge might have.

A. The Importance of Coherential Warrant

The importance of *Coherential* warrant must be acknowledged in the true and complete account of the structure of knowledge for all types of belief, *including at least some of our beliefs with foundational warrant*. Consider two beliefs that both have some amount of foundational warrant, using examples inspired by Plantinga’s view of warrant. Say some of my usually reliable epistemic faculties aimed at the production of true belief are functioning reasonably well in the right environment; they produce in me two beliefs: that “There is a woodpecker in the

¹⁵ Fred Dretske, “Entitlements: Epistemic Rights Without Epistemic Duties?” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 60, 3 (2000): 591.

front yard” and that “Three times three is twelve.” I voice my beliefs aloud to my wife. She accepts the first belief and laughs at the second. I know from experience that she usually laughs at me when I say something stupid, so her laughter is evidence against the second belief. My belief that “Three times three is twelve” is less probable, given my knowledge of my wife’s laughing habits, than the belief that “There is a woodpecker in the front yard.” So it has less coherential warrant, and less warrant overall. The lack of coherential warrant inspires me to reconsider my belief and learn that it is false.¹⁶ Since they were produced by usually reliable epistemic faculties aimed at the production of true belief and functioning reasonably well in the right environment, *both* beliefs have a degree of foundational warrant. But it is the presence of coherential warrant for my belief that “There is a woodpecker in the front yard” which gives that belief additional warrant, enough to make the difference between knowledge and mere true belief. Assuming that the belief is true (and that this is not a somehow a Gettier case), the belief is knowledge. My belief that “Three times three is twelve,” however, *lacked* coherential warrant and so did *not* have enough overall warrant. Even a *true* belief with exactly the same amount of foundational warrant would have a lower epistemic status, and could not really be *known*.

Similar cases could no doubt be constructed for beliefs which have a degree of inferential warrant but do not have the same degree of warrant overall because of a difference in coherential warrant. So coherential warrant is an important component of the structure of knowledge.¹⁷

B. The Importance of Inferential Warrant

Inferential warrant must be acknowledged in the true and complete account of the structure of knowledge for all types of belief, *including at least some of our beliefs*

¹⁶ This is based on a true story, by the way.

¹⁷ That Plantinga’s foundationalism is in need of a coherential element if it is to be a true and complete account of the structure of knowledge has been argued by John Zeis in two articles: “Plantinga’s Theory of Warrant,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 72, 1 (1998): 23-38, and “A Foundherentist Conception of the Justification of Religious Belief,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 58 (2005): 133-60. I have suggested a similar development of Plantingian epistemology myself in Mark J. Boone, “Proper Function and the Conditions for Warrant: What Plantinga’s Notion of Warrant Shows about Different Kinds of Knowledge,” *Philosophia Christi* 14, 2 (2012): 373-386. Burge’s understanding of warrant allows for inferential warrant “to supplement an entitlement,” i.e. a belief foundationally warranted, “or to counter a doubt” (Burge, “Perceptual Entitlement,” 529). Similarly, Dretske says “One may actually have a justification for accepting what one is entitled to accept, but the right does not depend on it.” (Dretske, “Entitlements,” 592)

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with foundational warrant. Inferential warrant must be acknowledged in the true and complete account of the structure of knowledge for at least two reasons. First, every, or nearly every, epistemologist acknowledges its importance for some cases of knowledge. Plantinga may appear to be an exception, but this is only because he emphasizes foundational warrant so strongly. He remains a foundationalist, and all foundationalists believe in the importance of inferential warrant for non-basic beliefs.

Second, and more importantly, inferential warrant simply *is* present in the structure of knowledge. There are cases of knowledge that possess it. For example, I know that there are roofs in Tokyo. This is not a *basic* belief for me. (I have never been to Tokyo, I have no epistemic faculties producing the belief by themselves, and the statement “There are roofs in Tokyo” is not obviously true in the way “Two and two make four” or “I exist” is obviously true.) It is not known simply because it is consistent with or not improbable relative to a large system of my beliefs. (Although it does have a degree of coherential warrant, so do many propositions that are *not* warranted enough to be known.) This belief is warranted primarily because it is supported inferentially by other beliefs, in particular the beliefs “Buildings have roofs” and “There are buildings in Tokyo.” (And this latter belief is warranted primarily because it is supported by the beliefs “Tokyo is a city” and “There are buildings in cities,” and so on.) So inferential warrant is an important part of the structure of knowledge.

Moreover, inferential warrant is important even for some beliefs possessing a degree of foundational warrant. Say my usually reliable epistemic faculties aimed at the production of true belief are functioning reasonably well in the right environment and they produce in me the beliefs that “There is a woodpecker in the front yard” and “Three times three is twelve.” Upon considering these beliefs, I remember that woodpeckers are often seen outside at this time of year, that my wife said she saw one yesterday, and that when I was a child I memorized the formula “Three times three is nine.” The beliefs I remember lend inferential support *for* one of my beliefs which possesses a degree of foundational warrant, and *against* the other. In this case, two beliefs with a comparable degree of foundational warrant have different degrees of overall warrant because of inferential warrant. So inferential warrant is important even for some beliefs that have a degree of foundational warrant.

C. The Importance of Foundational Warrant

Foundational warrant must be acknowledged in the true and complete account of the structure of knowledge for at least one very good reason: to avoid skepticism,

or, more precisely, to explain the fact that we have some knowledge of the world. An appeal to coherential warrant cannot distinguish an account of the structure of knowledge which only includes inferential and coherential warrant from a description of the beliefs of a madman. As BonJour learned, and most admirably informs us,¹⁸ a system of belief must have a foundational source of warrant if we are to have any genuine knowledge of the world. A madman, or a person deceived by Descartes' malicious demon, may have maximal coherential warrant for all of his beliefs, and may even be careful to have a very high degree of inferential warrant for them. But this system of belief does not track reality. Of course, such a person's beliefs are not *true*, but, as far as *knowledge* goes, if *we* only have the same sort of warrant *he* has, then we are no better off! If foundational warrant does not contribute to a system of belief anywhere, then it does not track reality and contains no knowledge of the world. But we do have knowledge of the world. Therefore, foundational warrant must contribute to our knowledge.

To elaborate: In order to have knowledge of the world, we must have connections not merely *among* our beliefs, but also *between* our beliefs *and reality*. What is the actual nature of these connections is outside the scope of my project, but the point is that those connections supply us with the warrant necessary for having knowledge of the world. And that warrant, not depending on the connections among our beliefs, is foundational rather than inferential or coherential.

The necessity of foundational warrant becomes clearer when we consider that the other two varieties of warrant are derivative; a belief with one of these varieties of warrant got that warrant from some other warrant. Inferential warrant is derivative by definition; it comes to a belief from other beliefs. Coherential warrant is not transferred in the same way, but it, too, is derivative, for it depends on the warrant of the system of beliefs with reference to which a belief is warranted. Even the coherential warrant of a holistic *system* of warranted belief is derivative, for it depends on the warrant of at least some of the beliefs in the system. Since inferential and coherential warrant are both derivative, coherential warrant cannot save any pure coherentism from the charge of vicious circularity after all. Foundational warrant is still necessary.

In short, inferential and coherential warrant come from somewhere. Things that come from somewhere must have somewhere to come from, and the only possibility is that they come from foundational warrant. So some foundational warrant is necessary for a belief system to have the other varieties of warrant. Inference and coherence spread warrant around in a system of belief (and perhaps

¹⁸ Laurence BonJour, "Haack on Justification and Experience," *Synthese* 112, 1 (1997): 13-15.

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it can be said that coherence increases the warrant present in a system of belief). But there must be some raw warrant in the system before it can be spread around or increased.

V. Foundherentism or Weak Foundationalism

So the correct and complete account of the structure of knowledge must recognize the importance of all three types of warrant, and must furthermore acknowledge the importance of inferential and coherential warrant even for at least some beliefs that have a degree of foundational warrant. I shall now describe what sorts of accounts could satisfy this criterion. There are two strategies available for describing how inferential, coherential, and foundational warrant combine to make our true beliefs into knowledge. These are foundherentism and foundationalism, when it is a *weak* foundationalism in a certain sense which I shall describe. Accordingly, the correct and complete account of the structure of knowledge must be a version of one of these.

First I shall discuss foundationalism, giving it a general definition, a specific but simple definition, and then some subtler definitions used by BonJour, Susan Haack, and myself. I shall discuss the different varieties, stronger and weaker, of foundationalism and explain why a weaker version, on both BonJour's and my definitions, can accommodate all three of the varieties of warrant. Next, I shall describe foundherentism and explain why such a view can accommodate all three of the varieties of warrant I have described. Next, I shall show that, since coherentism and stronger versions of foundationalism *cannot* accommodate all three of these varieties of warrant, the true and complete account of the definition of knowledge must be either foundherentism or a weak foundationalism. Finally, I shall explain why a minority view in epistemology, infinitism, does not provide a viable alternative.

A. Foundationalism and the Three Varieties of Warrant

Generally speaking, foundationalism is the view that knowledge must have a foundation. One more specific definition is this basic one: foundationalism is the view that some beliefs which lack inferential warrant can nonetheless be responsibly believed. This is a definition used by some epistemologists, such as Crispin Wright and Jon Altschul.¹⁹ This particular definition of foundationalism

¹⁹ Wright refers to such beliefs as lying "at the foundation of all our cognitive procedures." Altschul refers to "*foundationalism*, the view that there exist warranted beliefs which are not themselves warranted, or justified, by any further beliefs to which one could appeal." See Crispin Wright, "Warrant for Nothing (and Foundations for Free)?" *Aristotelian Society*

would allow us to treat as ‘foundational’ a belief which has coherential warrant, lacks foundational warrant, and does not lend inferential support to other beliefs. This, if I understand rightly, is Wright’s treatment of certain beliefs which he labels *cornerstone propositions* in his famous article “Warrant for Nothing (and Foundations for Free)?” Wright describes cornerstone propositions not in order to explain the structure of knowledge, but to avoid skepticism. Cornerstone propositions are those propositions which we must believe in order to have any knowledge of the world, such as “The world outside my mind exists” and “My senses convey information about the world outside the mind.” In order for me to have entitlement to a cornerstone proposition, it must have coherential warrant for me, for it must be consistent with the rest of my beliefs.²⁰ It need not have any foundational warrant either of the internalist²¹ or externalist variety.²² The major function of these beliefs is not to lend inferential support to other beliefs, but merely to make it possible for them to be warranted.

My own view is that this definition of foundationalism is much too simple, and that this account by itself should not be considered a form of foundationalism. It seems to me that the key concept of foundationalism is not the existence of beliefs warranted without inferential warrant. The key concepts in *foundationalism* are the presence of foundational warrant in some beliefs, and the possibility of those beliefs acting as foundations in the structure of knowledge.

Let us now move on to the subtler definitions of foundationalism, which I take it capture the relevant concepts somewhat better. At least three subtler definitions are possible. Foundationalism is the view that one of these things is the case:

1. Some beliefs have foundational warrant.
2. Some beliefs have foundational warrant and, moreover, the same beliefs do *not* have inferential or coherential warrant.
3. Some such beliefs have *enough* foundational warrant to be *known* without any additional warrant of the inferential or coherential variety.

The first definition is Laurence Bonjour’s and Peter Tramel’s understanding of foundationalism. According to this definition, foundationalism is simply the view that foundational warrant is part of the structure of knowledge; some beliefs

Supplementary Volume 78, 1 (2004): 167–212 and John Altschul, “Epistemic Entitlement,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2011), <http://www.iep.utm.edu/ep-en/>, Section 3.

²⁰ Wright, “Warrant for Nothing,” 181.

²¹ Wright, “Warrant for Nothing,” 174-5.

²² Wright, “Warrant for Nothing,” 209-10.

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have some degree of warrant that does not derive from other beliefs; inferential and coherential warrant must come *from* somewhere.²³

The second definition is Susan Haack's understanding of foundationalism: that inferential warrant is linear, not circular. On this definition, foundationalism is "the theory that posits basic beliefs justified exclusively by experience as the foundations of all justified belief."²⁴ Foundationalism is a view which *denies* "that justification goes up and back all the way down."²⁵

I favor the third definition of foundationalism: that some beliefs are properly basic in the sense that they can be known even without inferential or coherential warrant. Foundationalism is the view that foundational warrant is sufficient to make the difference between knowledge and mere true belief in some cases. In other words, not only is there such a thing as *warrant* which is not derived from other beliefs; there is also *knowledge* that does not depend on other beliefs; there are properly basic beliefs: beliefs which can lend inferential warrant to other beliefs and can be part of a large system of beliefs from which coherential warrant is derived, but do not themselves require warrant of these types in order to be really *known*.

Foundationalism comes in different varieties. There are questions which different foundationalists might answer differently, such as the question how many basic beliefs there are. But the question that concerns the different varieties of warrant most closely is this: How many beliefs with foundational warrant also have coherential or inferential warrant – all, many, few, or none of them? Generalizing somewhat, the *fewer* of these beliefs a version of foundationalism acknowledges, the *stronger* it is. According to Haack's definition of

²³ BonJour in 1978: "the central thesis of epistemological foundationalism as I shall understand it here, is the claim that certain empirical beliefs possess a degree of epistemic justification or warrant which does not depend, inferentially or otherwise, on the justification of other empirical beliefs, but is instead somehow immediate or intrinsic." (BonJour, "Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?", 1) Again, BonJour in 1997: "The more or less standard conception of weak foundationalism, after all, is one in which basic beliefs have some relatively weak initial degree of justification, which is then enhanced by something like coherence to a level sufficient for knowledge." (BonJour, "Haack on Justification," 16-17) Tramel argues that Susan Haack's foundherentism is a version of foundationalism because it avoids the problem of warrant regress through an appeal to foundational warrant. So he is using this same definition of 'foundationalism,' that it is a name for any view of the structure of knowledge which includes foundational warrant (Peter Tramel, "Haack's Foundherentism Is a Foundationalism," *Synthese* 160, 2 (2008): 215-228).

²⁴ Susan Haack, "Précis of *Evidence and Inquiry: Towards Reconstruction in Epistemology*," *Synthese* 112, 1 (1997): 10.

²⁵ Haack, "Précis," 8.

foundationalism, all genuine foundationalisms are strong in this sense. But, according to the other two subtle definitions, foundationalism can allow for many, perhaps even *all*, basic beliefs to have some support from other beliefs in the form of inferential or coherential warrant. On Bonjour's definition, foundationalism simply is the view that some beliefs have foundational warrant; they may or may not have the other varieties. On my definition, foundationalism is the view that some beliefs, the properly basic ones, have enough foundational warrant to be knowledge; but, even so, they could possibly receive *additional* warrant of the other varieties; and in any case some beliefs with foundational warrant may *not* have enough warrant to be *known*.²⁶ Accordingly, a foundationalism which is weak in this sense, although it does not require inferential or coherential warrant for *some* beliefs at a foundational level to be *known*, nevertheless can allow for the importance of inferential and coherential warrant at *all* levels, even the basic levels, of knowledge. This is so on my and Bonjour's definitions of foundationalism (but not on Haack's).

In short, since it is a criterion for the correct and complete account of the structure of knowledge that it recognize the importance of all three varieties of warrant, and the presence of inferential and coherential warrant for at least some beliefs possessing a degree of foundational warrant, and since a foundationalism which is weak in the sense I have described can do this, such a foundationalism could be a correct and complete account of knowledge – assuming either Bonjour's or my definition of foundationalism.

B. Foundherentism and the Three Varieties of Warrant

Foundherentism is aptly named by Susan Haack.²⁷ According to this view, both foundationalism and coherentism contain insights, but neither is fully correct, for each lacks the insights of the other. Specifically, foundationalism is correct that the structure of knowledge contains foundational warrant, but coherentism is right that warrant travels in all directions in the structure of knowledge – both from and *to* beliefs with foundational warrant. In her own words, foundherentism:

takes empirical justification to require experiential evidence; but, like coherentism, taking the pervasive interpenetration of our beliefs seriously, and

²⁶ For a closer look at this sort of foundationalism, see my "Proper Function and the Conditions for Warrant."

²⁷ She does not apologize for the neologism, and indeed she should not. Susan Haack, "Double-Aspect Foundherentism: A New Theory of Empirical Justification," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 53, 1 (1993): 113.

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acknowledging that justification goes up and back all the way down, it requires no distinction of basic and derived beliefs.²⁸

One significant difference between Haack's foundherentism and what I am calling weak foundationalism deserves special note. According to Haack, the sort of warrant I am calling foundational does not operate independently of the other varieties of warrant. A belief does not receive some degree of 'initial justification' from foundational warrant, which is then supplemented by coherential and inferential warrant. Foundational warrant only comes into effect when other types of warrant are present. It is not independent from other types of warrant; they and it are *interdependent*.²⁹

Whether Haack's view is really any different from foundationalism, of course, depends on the correct definition of foundationalism. On her preferred definition, her view is *not* foundationalist because beliefs with foundational warrant also have other warrant; warrant is transferred in many directions, not just one. Moreover, on the definition I prefer, her view is *not* a foundationalism because she denies that there are properly basic beliefs, beliefs with *enough* foundational warrant to be *known* without additional warrant of another variety. However, on Bonjour's and Tramel's definition, foundherentism *is* a foundationalism simply because it acknowledges the importance of foundational warrant.

At any rate, a view such as this one can acknowledge the importance of all three types of warrant. Explicitly, it acknowledges the importance of foundational warrant, although it does not operate independently of inferential warrant. Inferential warrant is explicitly important, and that at all levels of knowledge. (I am not aware that Haack emphasizes coherential warrant, but it could easily be integrated into her account of the structure of knowledge.) Since, therefore, it is a requirement of the correct view of the structure of knowledge that it recognize the importance of all three types of warrant, including the importance of inferential and coherential warrant even for beliefs with foundational warrant, and since foundherentism does this, it passes this criterion for being the correct view of the structure of knowledge.

²⁸ Haack, "Précis," 8.

²⁹ Susan Haack, "Reply to Bonjour," *Synthese* 112, 1 (1997): 28-9.

C. The True and Complete Account of the Structure of Knowledge Is a Version of Weak Foundationalism or Foundherentism

All *three* varieties of warrant are important components of the structure of knowledge, even for beliefs that have a degree of foundational warrant. So it is a criterion for the correct and complete account of the structure of knowledge that it recognize the importance of all three varieties, at every level of knowledge. Weak foundationalism, in the sense I have defined, as well as foundherentism, can do this. Coherentism, however, cannot be correct, for it does not take account of foundational warrant at all, although it can recognize the importance of the other varieties. Nor can strong foundationalism, as I have described it, be correct. All forms of foundationalism acknowledge the importance of foundational warrant and inferential warrant. Variations of strong foundationalism (as I, as well as Bonjour and Tramel, define foundationalism) might allow for the importance of coherential warrant to *non*-basic beliefs. Well and good. But coherential and inferential warrant are relevant even to the warranting of beliefs which have foundational warrant, and a strong foundationalism cannot acknowledge this. A foundationalism which is weak in the relevant sense can. So the correct and complete account of the structure of knowledge must be either a weak foundationalism or a foundherentism.

For my part, I think the correct view of the structure of knowledge is a weak foundationalism, not a foundherentism. While both views can recognize the importance of these three varieties of warrant, there is a key difference. Are there any beliefs with enough foundational warrant to qualify as knowledge without additional warrant of the inferential or coherential variety – are there any beliefs which can be *properly basic*? I happen to think that there are some, and so as long as I remain persuaded of this I suppose I shall remain a weak foundationalist. But I will not defend this view here.³⁰

In short, of the contenders I have considered – strong and weak foundationalism, coherentism, foundherentism – only a weak foundationalism or a foundherentism could meet the criterion of ascribing to the three varieties of warrant I have described their necessary roles. So the correct and complete account of the structure of knowledge must be a version of weak foundationalism, or foundherentism, or some other view which is not on the market – or at any rate which I have not heard of.

³⁰ On Haack's definition of foundationalism, it seems my view would more properly be designated a form of *foundherentism*, though not precisely the same as hers.

D. A Note on Infinitism

So far I have looked at strong and weak foundationalism, coherentism, and foundherentism. One additional view on the structure of knowledge calls for examination. Infinitism is a minority view.³¹ It occupies a position which I suppose it was inevitable some philosophers would occupy – one of the possible explanations of the source of inferential warrant. Inferential warrant is a sort of regress, a chain of reasons. If the question is asked what causes a belief to have inferential warrant, one philosopher will answer that it got its warrant from some other belief that did not get its warrant from any other source; another philosopher will answer that it got its belief from a myriad of beliefs, ultimately including itself; and a third philosopher will answer that it got its warrant from a never-ending chain of warranted beliefs. The first two answers are those of the foundationalist and coherentist, respectively.³² The last position is infinitism.³³ Infinitism, it should be understood, is not committed to the claim that, in order to have justification for one belief, a person must *have* an infinite number of supporting beliefs. Infinitism is simply the claim that, in order for my belief that *P* to be warranted, there must be an infinite number of reasons *available* to support my belief that *P* and that, furthermore, I believe a fair number of them. In short, every warranted belief must be supportable by further warranted beliefs, and this in a non-circular way; for, as Peter Klein and John Turri put it, it is *not* the case that “there is any reason which is immune to further legitimate challenge.”³⁴

Now it seems to me that one of two things must be true of infinitism: *either* that it does not entail any alternative view on the role of inferential, coherential, and foundational warrant in the structure of knowledge, *or* that it is simply mistaken. Either way, it does not constitute a viable alternative to foundherentism and weak foundationalism.

To explain: If infinitism is correct, one of two things must be the case. Either an infinite chain of reasons must be available for a belief to have *any warrant at all*, or an infinite chain of reasons must simply be available for a belief to *get more warrant*.

If the former, then infinitism excludes foundational warrant, making all warrant derivative from other beliefs, and accordingly it must be false for the same reason a pure coherentism must be false.

³¹ Peter D. Klein and John Turri, “Infinitism in Epistemology,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2013); <http://www.iep.utm.edu/inf-epis/>, Section 2.

³² Language redolent of cosmological arguments is easily used to describe foundational warrant in particular. Chisholm famously did so, comparing a basic belief to ‘a prime mover.’ (Chisholm, *The Foundations of Knowing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1982), 80)

³³ Klein and Turri, “Infinitism in Epistemology,” Section 1.

³⁴ Klein and Turri, “Infinitism in Epistemology,” Section 1.

But if the latter, then infinitism, thus far, presents no objection to my analysis, for it is simply the view that every belief, no matter how much foundational warrant it possesses, requires inferential warrant in order to have the maximal degree of warrant that is possible for it. But this claim is consistent with foundherentism, and even with weak foundationalism as I have articulated it here.

Moreover, infinitism either will or will not allow for inferential and coherential warrant to be important at all levels of knowledge. If it *does not*, then, again, it is simply mistaken, for, for reasons I have already articulated, these varieties of warrant are important at all levels of knowledge. But if it *does*, then it is, thus far, consistent with foundherentism and with weak foundationalism.

Now, accompanying his claim that every belief, no matter how well foundationally warranted, requires inferential warrant in order to have maximal warrant, the infinitist is likely to insist that no amount of foundational warrant is sufficient by itself to make the difference between knowledge and mere true belief.³⁵ Now this amounts to an objection to weak foundationalism; but it does not amount to an objection to my view that foundational warrant is a necessary component of the structure of knowledge, and in any case negotiating between foundherentism and weak foundationalism is outside the scope of this article.

In short, infinitism either is simply mistaken, and thus is not a viable alternative view of the structure of knowledge; or else it is simply an interesting view about the *increase* of warrant for a belief that already has some warrant; in this case it is compatible with my claim that all *three* types of warrant are necessary, and is compatible with foundherentism, and perhaps also with weak foundationalism as I have articulated it.

VI. Conclusion

In summary, there are three ways for a belief which is fitted into the structure of knowledge to be warranted: by having warrant that does not derive from elsewhere in the structure of knowledge, by receiving warrant from a small number of other warranted beliefs that support it, or simply by being consistent with or lacking improbability relative to a large number of warranted beliefs. In the structure of knowledge each of these three varieties of warrant is crucial, and the latter two are important at all levels of knowledge. Therefore, recognizing this is a criterion for the correct and complete account of the structure of knowledge. Pure coherentism does not acknowledge the importance of the first of these varieties of warrant, and strong foundationalism cannot acknowledge the importance of all three varieties of warrant

³⁵ Klein and Turri, "Infinitism in Epistemology," Sections 1 and 3.c.

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for beliefs that have the first variety. Both foundherentism and a foundationalism which is weak in the sense I have described can satisfy this criterion for the correct and complete account of the structure of knowledge. A version of infinitism may be viable, but it is not a viable alternative. Therefore the correct and complete account of the structure of knowledge must be a form either of weak foundationalism or foundherentism.

I do not pretend that there are any entirely original insights in this article. My contribution is both more modest and more ambitious than to give an account of the structure of knowledge. *More modest* because I am not presenting a new account of the structure of knowledge, but combining various components of the accounts of the structure of knowledge offered by other epistemologists, and arguing for the necessity of each of these components in the true and complete account of the structure of knowledge. This requirement may indeed be met by some views of the structure of knowledge offered by other epistemologists, and it is certainly consistent with several. Yet even this modest contribution is significant: Some epistemologists, such as Plantinga and perhaps Haack, neglect or underplay the significance of some of these components, particularly coherentist warrant's relevance at all levels of knowledge. Their accounts of knowledge would be stronger if supplemented by this insight.

Yet there is a sense in which my contribution is also much *more ambitious* than merely to submit an account of the structure of knowledge, for if my analysis is correct then so is the suggestion I must now make: that the epistemological project of describing the structure of knowledge has been successful, and is indeed on the verge of a successful *completion*. All that remains to this project is to determine for sure whether there are properly basic beliefs in the sense I have described above. If there are, then weak foundationalism is the correct view of the structure of knowledge; if there are not, foundherentism is.

For my part, I believe that there are some basic beliefs, and that most or all of them are among the category of common-sense principles such as Thomas Reid described: the existence of the self, of the world outside the mind, and of other minds; the general reliability of the senses and reason; etc. But explaining and defending this view would be opting for weak foundationalism over foundherentism, and that is a project for another article.³⁶

³⁶ I wish to thank the students of my Epistemology classes of Fall 2012 and Fall 2014 at Forman Christian College for all the rewarding conversations; my former student Hadeel Naeem is developing an epistemological view very similar to my own, and conversations with her have been particularly helpful. Most importantly, I wish to thank the great epistemologists whose writings have taught me how to think about these matters. If I have seen things clearly, it is only because I am standing on the shoulders of giants.

A DISPOSITIONAL INTERNALIST EVIDENTIALIST VIRTUE EPISTEMOLOGY

T. Ryan BYERLY

ABSTRACT: This paper articulates and defends a novel version of internalist evidentialism which employs dispositions to account for the relation of evidential support. In section one, I explain internalist evidentialist views generally, highlighting the way in which the relation of evidential support stands at the heart of these views. I then discuss two leading ways in which evidential support has been understood by evidentialists, and argue that an account of support which employs what I call epistemic dispositions remedies difficulties arguably faced by these two leading accounts. In sections two and three, I turn to advantages that my dispositionalist account of evidential support offers evidentialists beyond its remedying apparent difficulties with rival accounts of support. In section two, I show that the account is well-suited to help the evidentialist respond to the problem of forgotten evidence. And, in section three, I show that adopting my dispositional account makes possible an attractive and natural synthesis of evidentialism and virtue epistemology which is superior to the leading contemporary synthesis of these views.

KEYWORDS: dispositions, evidentialism, internalism, virtue epistemology

1. Internalist Evidentialism and Evidential Support

In this section, I articulate a dispositional account of evidential support and show that it remedies difficulties arguably faced by leading alternative accounts of evidential support available to internalist evidentialists. In 1.1, I explain what internalist evidentialism is and how it relies upon the relation of evidential support. In 1.2, I articulate my account of evidential support in terms of epistemic dispositions. And, in 1.3, I argue that this account escapes difficulties arguably faced by probabilistic and explanationist accounts of evidential support.

1.1 Internalist Evidentialism

Evidentialist views are a family of epistemological views which analyze normative epistemic properties in terms of evidence and evidential relations. When the relevant evidence is related appropriately to a proposition or an attitude toward that proposition, then and only then does that proposition or attitude have the normative epistemic property in question.

One well-known version of evidentialism is Earl Conee's and Richard Feldman's evidentialist account of epistemic justification.¹ They propose that an attitude *D* is epistemically justified for a subject *S* at a time *t* just in case *D* is the attitude which fits *S*'s evidence at *t*. Other evidentialist views are possible as well. One could be an evidentialist about warrant, or epistemic obligation, or epistemic permission, or rationality and so on, where these epistemic properties might be distinguished from the property of epistemic justification. What all such views will share in common is that they say that the normative epistemic property in question is instantiated for some subject just when that subject's evidence is related appropriately to whatever might have the property. Where we are concerned with whether a certain belief-type or its content has the relevant property, these views will say that the belief-type or content has the property if and only if the subject's evidence is related to that belief-type or content in a *favorable* way. Following Conee and Feldman,² this is what I am calling the relation of evidential support – it is the relation which obtains between a person's evidence and a belief-type or the content thereof just when, according to evidentialist theories, that belief-type or content has the property they are attempting to analyze.

Given this characterization of the evidential support relation, it is clear that this relation stands at the heart of evidentialist views. Accordingly, to better understand these views, we might ask: just when *does* a person's evidence support a belief or its content? I intend to take up this question at length in this section, arguing that a view which uses dispositions to explain evidential support remedies difficulties arguably faced by two leading rival views. But before doing so, I want to highlight two further features of the evidentialist views on which I am focusing.

The first feature concerns what these views say about the relation of the evidential support relation – that which does the supporting and that which is supported. While evidentialists have proposed a variety of accounts of what constitutes evidence including propositions,³ known propositions,⁴ true

¹ Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, "Evidentialism," *Philosophical Studies* 41, 8 (1985): 15-34 and Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, *Evidentialism: Essays in Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

² Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, "Evidence," in *Epistemology: New Essays*, ed. Quentin Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 83-104.

³ Trent Dougherty, "In Defense of a Propositional Theory of Evidence," in *Evidentialism and its Discontents*, ed. Trent Dougherty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 347-59.

⁴ Timothy Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

propositions,⁵ and mental states, a choice with respect to this matter will not affect the arguments I will offer in this paper. I shall for convenience follow Conee and Feldman in talking as if evidence consists in mental states.⁶ On the other side of the evidential support relation is what the evidence supports. Most evidentialists will prefer to think of what is supported by one's evidence as a belief-type or the propositional content thereof. For, only if this is so will the evidentialist be able to account for both the normative properties of type-attitudes when no token attitudes of their type is present *and* the normative properties of token attitudes.⁷ Choosing between whether what is supported is a belief-type or the propositional content thereof is less consequential. For, it is plausible that a belief-type has the relevant epistemic property just when its content does.⁸ For convenience I will talk as if what is supported by a person's evidence is a proposition.

The second feature of the evidentialist views I am focusing on is that they are all members of the dominant⁹ species of evidentialist views – *internalist* evidentialist views. According to internalist evidentialist views, whether a proposition is supported by a person S's evidence depends entirely on factors which are in a certain way *internal* to S. By contrast, externalist evidentialist views say that whether a proposition is supported by a person S's evidence depends at least in part on factors which are *not* internal to S in this way. There have been two broad approaches offered by internalists for explaining what it is for a factor to be internal to an agent – accessibilism and mentalism.¹⁰ According to accessibilism, a factor is internal to a person S just in case it is accessible to S.¹¹

⁵ Clayton Littlejohn, "Evidence and Knowledge," *Erkenntnis* 74, 2 (2011): 241-62.

⁶ Conee and Feldman, "Evidence."

⁷ For a defense of this claim, see Jonathan Kvanvig and Christopher Menzel, "The Basic Notion of Justification," *Philosophical Studies* 59, 3 (1990): 235-61. For a veritable who's who of epistemologists who have endorsed this judgment, see John Turri, "On the Relation Between Propositional and Doxastic Justification," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 80, 2 (2010): 312-26.

⁸ Kvanvig and Menzel, "The Basic Notion," advocates this view.

⁹ See John Greco, *Achieving Knowledge: A Virtue-Theoretic Account of Epistemic Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) for an explanation for why this species dominates.

¹⁰ For an overview of these alternatives, see George Pappas, "Internalist vs Externalist Conceptions of Epistemic Justification," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, last modified 2005, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justep-intext/>.

¹¹ See, e.g., Roderick Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge*, 2nd edition (Englewood: Prentice-Hall, 1977) and Carl Ginet, *Knowledge, Perception, and Memory* (Dordrecht: D. Riedel, 1975).

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According to mentalism, a factor is internal to a person S just in case it is mental.¹² For convenience, I will talk in the sequel using the language of mentalism.

To summarize, the species of evidentialist views in which I am interested in this paper are views according to which whether some proposition p has a normative epistemic property P for a person S depends entirely upon S's evidence and its relation to p, where the relation between S's evidence and p is one which depends entirely upon mental facts about S. Applied to such views, the question in which I am interested in this section – the question of the evidential support relation – is a question about whether we can clarify just when a person's mental states support a proposition p.

1.2 A Dispositional Internalist Evidentialism

I aim to defend a view of the internalist evidentialist species defined in 1.1 which explains the relation of evidential support using epistemic dispositions. I shall call the normative epistemic property with which my view is concerned epistemic justification. Following Feldman, I conceive of this property as a property of epistemic obligation.¹³ Thus, a proposition has the property of epistemic justification for a person just in case that person ought to believe it. The theory I offer explains epistemic justification partially in terms of the relation of evidential support. For any proposition p and any agent S, p has the property of epistemic justification for S (i.e., the belief-type *believing p* is justified for S) just in case S's evidence supports p. It follows from this that not-p has the property of epistemic justification for S (i.e., the belief-type *believing not-p* is justified for S) just in case S's evidence supports not-p. Accordingly, the evidential support relation plays a very important role on my theory.

I propose to define the evidential support relation using epistemic dispositions. Epistemic dispositions are dispositions to take doxastic attitudes. The evidential support relation, I propose, can be understood in terms of just one such epistemic disposition – the disposition to believe. In the case where p is supported by S's evidence, S has the disposition to believe p; whereas in the case where not-p is supported by S's evidence, S has the disposition to believe not-p.

Following the standard line on dispositions, I shall say that dispositions have realization conditions and constitutive manifestations.¹⁴ The realization

¹² See, e.g., Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, "Internalism Defended," in *Epistemology: Internalism and Externalism*, ed. Hilary Kornblith (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 231-60.

¹³ Richard Feldman, "The Ethics of Belief," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 60, 3 (2000): 667-95.

¹⁴ Robert Audi, "Dispositional Beliefs and Dispositions to Believe," *Nous* 28 (1994): 419-34.

conditions of the dispositions which figure into my theory are aggregates of evidence, while the constitutive manifestations are doxastic attitudes. Since, as I said above, I shall speak of items of evidence as mental states, it follows that the realization conditions of the dispositions on my theory are aggregates of mental states. I will typically say that when a person is disposed to believe p and when the realization conditions for this disposition are some mental states M_1 - M_n , she is disposed to believe p *in light of* M_1 - M_n .¹⁵ With one qualification to be discussed at the end of section two below, I offer the following dispositional account of evidential support:

(DispES) For all agents S and propositions p , S 's evidence supports p if and only if S is disposed to believe p in light of S 's total evidence.¹⁶

Straightforwardly, it follows from DispES that a person S 's evidence will support not- p if and only if S is disposed to believe not- p in light of S 's total evidence. Thus, given my claims above about the relationship between evidential support and epistemic justification and obligation, it follows from DispES that S ought to believe p just in case S is disposed to believe p in light of S 's total evidence and that S ought to believe not- p just in case S is disposed to believe not- p in light of S 's total evidence.

Now, whether or not a full theory of epistemic justification can be provided using my dispositionalist account of evidential support depends on whether there is a doxastic attitude of suspending judgment concerning p which is different from simply neither believing p nor believing not- p . If there is no such attitude, then DispES can provide a full theory of epistemic justification. According to this theory, the only attitudes which are justified are beliefs, since disbeliefs and suspensions of judgment reduce to beliefs. A person S will be justified in believing a proposition p just when S is disposed to believe p in light of S 's total evidence; a person S will be justified in believing not- p just when S is disposed to believe not- p in light of S 's total evidence; and, a person S will be justified in suspending judgment with respect to p just when S is neither disposed to believe p nor disposed to believe not- p in light of S 's total evidence.

Following Jane Friedman, I favor the view that there is a distinct doxastic attitude of suspending judgment concerning p which is different from simply

¹⁵ Note, then, that my usage of believing "in light of" a reason differs from that of some other authors, such as that employed in E. Jonathan Lowe, "The Will as a Rational Free Power," in *Powers and Capacities in Philosophy: The New Aristotelianism*, eds. Ruth Groff and John Greco (New York: Routledge, 2013).

¹⁶ I do not include a temporal qualifier here for space-saving reasons, though I do wish to offer a synchronic account of evidential support with most evidentialists. See fn.42.

neither believing p nor believing not- p .¹⁷ And, given that there is such an attitude, I think it is false to claim that a person S is justified in suspending judgment with respect to p just when S is neither disposed to believe p nor disposed to believe not- p . Thus, given such a conception of suspension of judgment, I think that DispES can be used only to partially define an evidentialist view and cannot fully define one. My reason for thinking that DispES can be used only to partially define an evidentialist view given this conception of suspension of judgment is that, given this conception of suspension of judgment, I do not think a person ought to suspend judgment about claims she has never encountered and does not or would not understand. Rather, I think she ought to take no attitude toward such claims. But, if I used DispES to define when suspending judgment is justified in the way proposed above, then I would have to claim that in such cases a person ought to suspend judgment regarding the unencountered claims. Of course, this is not an approach to suspending judgment unique to my view. Other evidentialists may take this approach as well, using the relation of evidential support only to partially define their evidentialist views. They too will do so because they are dubious that suspending judgment concerning every claim p has their favored normative epistemic property for a person S whenever S 's evidence neither supports p nor supports not- p . Unencountered claims will be such that neither they nor their negations are supported by a person's evidence, but suspending judgment concerning those claims do not have the relevant normative epistemic property for the person.

If my theory of evidential support cannot be used to fully define my evidentialist view, what else is needed? Simply an explanation of when suspension of judgment is justified. And, as it turns out, there is a theory of when suspension of judgment is justified which fits naturally with my above proposals for when belief and disbelief are justified. The theory is that suspending judgment concerning p is justified for a person S just when S 's evidence e is counterbalanced with respect to p , and that S 's evidence e is counterbalanced with respect to p just when S is disposed in light of e to suspend judgment concerning p . With this theory of justified suspension of judgment in hand, I can provide the following, unified dispositional evidentialist account of the justificatory status of any doxastic attitude whatsoever:

(DispEV) For all agents S and propositions p , doxastic attitude D toward p is justified for S if and only if S is disposed to take D toward p in light of S 's total evidence.

¹⁷ Jane Friedman, "Suspending Judgment," *Philosophical Studies* 162 (2013): 165-81.

From DispEV, it follows that the attitude of belief is justified when the subject is disposed in light of all of her evidence to believe, that the attitude of disbelief is justified when the subject is disposed in light of all of her evidence to disbelieve, and that the attitude of suspension of judgment is justified just when the subject is disposed in light of all of her evidence to suspend judgment. DispEV gives us a full evidentialist theory which employs epistemic dispositions right at its center.

Before moving on, I briefly mention a potentially valuable feature of an account of support which, like the present account, employs dispositions at its center – a feature which, in my own case, attracted me to the view at the outset. The feature is that, arguably, such an account reaches rock bottom metaphysically in terms of accounting for evidential support. This is true, for example, if the so-called Neo-Aristotelian view that dispositions are not analyzable in terms of non-dispositions is correct. The growing popularity of such Neo-Aristotelianism is one further reason a reader may find the present account worthy of further investigation.¹⁸

1.3 DispES and Alternative Leading Accounts of Evidential Support

In 1.1, I explained what internalist evidentialist theories are and in 1.2 I articulated my own dispositional internalist evidentialist theory. But why should an internalist evidentialist prefer this theory to others? In the course of this paper I offer three reasons. The first reason comes in this section. I argue that the theory of evidential support espoused by my version of internalist evidentialism escapes unscathed from the kinds of objections which arguably face leading rival theories of evidential support that an internalist evidentialist might adopt. In the remainder of this section, I will explore two leading accounts of evidential support that internalist evidentialists have adopted, explain the kinds of problems such views arguably face, and show how my dispositional internalist evidentialism escapes these problems. There are other accounts of support that internalist evidentialists either have adopted or might adopt, but I will not engage them in the text because they are either less promising than the proposals discussed in the text or they are less clearly distinct from DispES.¹⁹

¹⁸ See Greco and Gross, *The New Aristotelianism*.

¹⁹ Four such approaches are (i) to define evidential support in terms of epistemic principles (cf. Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge*), (ii) to define evidential support using subjunctive conditionals (cf. Fred Dretske, "Conclusive reasons," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 49, 1 (1971): 1-22), (iii) to define evidential support in terms of the supported claim's coherence with the subject's evidence (cf. C.I. Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (La Salle: Open

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First, DispES is unscathed by those objections which seem to face promising *explanationist* accounts of evidential support. Explanationist views propose that we define evidential support in terms of the explanatory relationship or lack thereof between the proposition *p* and the subject *S*'s evidence *e*. One simple proposal along these lines is as follows:

(ExpES) *S*'s evidence *e* supports *p* iff *p* is part of the best good explanation for *e* available to *S*.²⁰

Recently, a view like ExpES have been defended by Conee and Feldman²¹ and similar views have also been championed by Moser, Harman, Lycan, and McCain.²²

There are arguably two significant problems with such proposals – one with the necessity condition and one with the sufficiency condition. The problem with the necessity condition is that it conflicts with many cases in which a person's evidence supports a proposition about the future.²³ For example, I have argued

Court, 1946)) and (iv) to define support using causal or explanatory relations running from the subject's evidence to non-doxastic mental states (cf. Jonathan Mattheson and Jason Rogers, "Bergmann's Dilemma: Exit Strategies for Internalists," *Philosophical Studies* 152 (2011): 55-80). Approach (i) suffers from the problem that the principles themselves seem to cry out for a unified explanation (cf. John Pollock, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1986)); proponents of the accounts, including mine, discussed in the text typically hope to explain the true epistemic principles using their accounts. Approach (ii) is also less promising than the proposals in the text because the subjunctive conditionals employed in such theories are not necessarily true; but, given that they are not necessarily true, the accounts of support they would provide would conflict with internalism. Accounts of type (iii) tend to face a worry about circularity, as coherence is defined at least in part in terms of the support that components of a system give to other components (cf. Erik Olsson, "Coherentist Theories of Epistemic Justification," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, last modified 2012, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justep-coherence/>). And, accounts of type (iv) are less clearly distinct from DispES than the accounts discussed in the text. For example, talk of a person *S*'s evidence *e* explaining her seeming that *p* might be explained in terms of *S* being disposed in light of *E* to believe *p* (cf. T. Ryan Byerly, "It Seems like there aren't any Seemings," *Philosophia* 40, 4 (2012): 771-82).

²⁰ I add 'good' here because of the problem of the bad lot. Cf. Valeriano Iranzo, "Bad Lots, Good Explanations," *Crítica: Revista Hispanoamericana de Filosofía* 33, 98 (2001): 71-96.

²¹ Conee and Feldman, "Evidence."

²² See Paul Moser, *Knowledge and Evidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Gilbert Harman, *Change in View* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), William Lycan, *Judgment and Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), and Kevin McCain, "Explanationist Evidentialism," *Episteme* 10, 3 (2013): 283-97.

²³ Alvin Goldman, "Toward a Synthesis of Reliabilism and Evidentialism? Or: Evidentialism's Problems, Reliabilism's Rescue Package," in *Evidentialism and its Discontents*, ed. Trent

that a golfer can be justified in believing that the ball he has just putted will soon go in, even though the claim that the ball will go in does not explain why the golfer has the evidence he presently does.²⁴

The problem with the sufficiency condition of ExpES is that it conflicts with certain cases where, despite the fact that a person S's best available explanation of her evidence *e* is very good, she has good reason to believe that the correct explanation for *e* may well not be available. For example, a detective who is midway through her eight-step procedure for collecting evidence concerning a burglary may find that the best currently available explanation *E* of her evidence is a very good explanation of that evidence; but, it would be irresponsible of her to believe *E*, given that it has not been unusual in the past for relevant evidence to come up at later stages in her investigative procedure which was not explained by the best available explanations at this stage of inquiry. While *E* is the best available good explanation, believing *E* would be premature and so, arguably, *E* is not supported in the evidentialist's sense by *e*.

DispES does not conflict with these cases in the way that ExpES does. There is nothing strange in thinking that a golfer may be disposed in light of all of his evidence to believe a ball will roll in. Thus, DispES can account for a golfer's evidence supporting the proposition <this ball will roll in>. And, there is no reason to think that a good detective in the scenario described above would not be disposed to suspend judgment concerning the best available hypothesis, *E*. If so, then DispES will not imply that such a detective's evidence supports *E*.

Of course, one might worry that, despite the fact that DispES does not entail as ExpES does that one's best available good explanation is always supported, it will nonetheless have untoward consequences in cases very much *like* the detective case as described above. For, while a detective need not be disposed to believe the best available explanation *E* of his evidence when he is mid-way through his inquiry, he might be so disposed. In that case, DispES *will* imply that the detective's evidence supports *E* and so the detective ought to believe *E*. And one might think that this is not much better than the implication highlighted above for ExpES. I will address this kind of concern with DispES more

Dougherty, 393-426 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) urges a similar problem for introspectively justified beliefs, and Keith Lehrer, *Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974) offers a similar problem about mathematical beliefs. I think explanationist views are less vulnerable to these objections than to the one discussed in the text, but nonetheless DispES can straightforwardly account for them as well. Kevin McCain, "Explanationist Evidentialism," contains a reply to the examples from Lehrer and Goldman.

²⁴ T. Ryan Byerly, "Explanationism and Justified Beliefs about the Future," *Erkenntnis* 78, 1 (2013): 229-43.

fully in section three below. For now, let it suffice for me to foreshadow my response as follows. My view is not that a detective who is in fact so disposed ought not believe E, but rather that a detective who is so disposed has no business being a detective. This approach, as I will explain further below, is not unlike approaches leading evidentialists such as Feldman have offered in the face of similar objections to their views.²⁵

Move away then from explanationist accounts and instead consider *probabilistic* accounts of evidential support. Where *c* is the propositional content of a subject *S*'s evidence *e*, such accounts explain support as follows:

(PrES) *S*'s evidence *e* supports *p* iff $\Pr(p/c) > \Pr(p)$ & $\Pr(p/c) \geq n$.

PrES explains evidential support in terms of two probabilistic claims, each of which deserves comment. The second claim, $\Pr(p/c) \geq n$, claims that in order for *S*'s evidence *e* to support *p* the probability of *p* given the content of *S*'s evidence must meet or exceed a certain threshold. This condition allows PrES to imply that a proposition either is supported or is not supported by a subject's evidence. Such an implication is likely to be attractive for evidentialist theories which seek to partially explain the presence of normative epistemic properties partially in terms of support, since such theories are likely to claim that these properties (e.g., epistemic obligation) are either possessed or not possessed. The first claim, $\Pr(p/c) > \Pr(p)$ is important for handling cases where a proposition *p*'s probability is not raised by the content of a subject's evidence. In such cases, it isn't clear that a subject's evidence would support the proposition in question.

Much of the complication in understanding PrES derives from the question of how to understand the sort of probability represented by "Pr." There are two broad approaches to understanding "Pr." We can understand "Pr" in such a way that the probabilistic relations it represents are necessary or in such a way that these relations are not necessary.

First, consider views according to which the probabilistic relations are not necessary. According to such views, it is not the case that if $\Pr(p/c) = n$, then necessarily $\Pr(p/c) = n$. There are numerous, attractive interpretations of probability locutions according to which probabilistic relations are not necessary in precisely this way.²⁶ But, such an approach to understanding "Pr" in PrES will

²⁵ See Richard Feldman, "Respecting the Evidence," *Philosophical Perspectives* 19, 1 (2005): 95-119.

²⁶ This is so, e.g., of frequentist interpretations of probability (cf. John Venn, *The Logic of Chance*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1876)), propensity interpretations (e.g., R. N. Giere, "Objective Single-Case Probabilities and the Foundations of Statistics," in *Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science*, ed. Patrick Suppes et al (New York: North-Holland, 1973), 467-83

not be attractive to internalists. For, recall that internalists claim that evidential support supervenes entirely on factors internal to an agent. But, if “Pr” in PrES is not a necessary relation, then PrES permits there to be agents who are exactly alike internally but not exactly alike with respect to what their evidence supports.

Views according to which the probabilistic relations in PrES *are* necessary divide into two primary approaches which can be distinguished by the way they respond to a tempting objection to PrES. The objection is that PrES, when conjoined with evidentialist theses about normative epistemic properties, will imply that far more propositions have the normative epistemic properties in question than is in fact the case. In particular, they will imply that propositions have the relevant normative epistemic properties for a subject when the necessary probabilistic relation obtains *whether or not* the subject appreciates this probabilistic fact. But, as Conee and Feldman object, “Where this probabilistic relation is beyond the person’s understanding, the person may not be justified to any degree in believing a proposition made probable by the evidence.”²⁷ And the same may be said about other normative properties.

The first approach to responding to this objection to PrES appeals to epistemic bridge principles.²⁸ According to such an approach, the right-hand side of PrES does not provide an account of evidential support as it figures into evidentialist theories in epistemology. Rather, it provides an account of the confirmation relation – a necessary relation which is the object of study in inductive logic. What is needed to achieve an account of support is a bridge principle to complete the following formula: S’s evidence *e* with content *c* supports *p* iff $\text{Pr}(p/c) > \text{Pr}(p) \ \& \ \text{Pr}(p/c) \geq n \ \& \ \underline{\hspace{1cm}}$. The common approach to filling in this blank is to do so with some kind of epistemic relation between S and $\text{Pr}(p/c)$, such as S’s *believing* $\text{Pr}(p/c) > \text{Pr}(p) \ \& \ \text{Pr}(p/c) \geq n$ or *it’s seeming* to S that $\text{Pr}(p/c) > \text{Pr}(p) \ \& \ \text{Pr}(p/c) \geq n$ ²⁹ or S’s *being disposed to believe* $\text{Pr}(p/c) > \text{Pr}(p) \ \&$

and Karl Popper, “The Propensity Interpretation of the Calculus of Probability and the Quantum Theory,” in *Observation and Interpretation. The Colston Papers Vol. 9*, ed. Stephan Körner (London: Butterworths, 1957), 65–70), and nomological interpretations (cf. John Pollock, *Nomic Probability and the Foundations of Induction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990)).

²⁷ Conee and Feldman, “Evidence,” 94–5. Cf. also Richard Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Jason Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind: On Intellectual Virtues and Virtue Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

²⁸ For a very helpful overview of such approaches, see Branden Fitelson, “Logical Foundations of Evidential Support,” *Philosophy of Science* 73 (2007): 500–12.

²⁹ Cf. Chris Tucker, “Movin’ on Up: Higher-Level Requirements and Inferential Justification,” *Philosophical Studies* 157, 3 (2012): 323–40.

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$\Pr(p/c) \geq n^{30}$ or S 's *being directly aware of* $\Pr(p/c) > \Pr(p)$ & $\Pr(p/c) \geq n$.³¹ It is the addition of some such epistemic relation which helps to overcome the objection from Conee and Feldman.

Unfortunately, all such proposals arguably threaten to imply either that nobody's evidence ever supports a proposition or they threaten to imply that only the more sophisticated among us are such as to have evidence that supports a proposition. For example, the belief proposal and the seeming proposal each require that the subject conceptualize the probabilistic claims in PrES in order for her evidence to support a proposition. The dispositional proposal requires that in order for a person's evidence to support a proposition there must be a fact of the matter about how she is disposed to evaluate $\Pr(p/c)$. Arguably, though, these requirements are met only by the more sophisticated among us.³² The fourth proposal requires that for S 's evidence with content c to support p , S is aware of a relation between c and p . But, in order to be aware of such a relation, there must *be* such a relation; and this is dubious, given that the relational facts are necessary.³³ This sparseness of instances of support is unlikely to be attractive to evidentialists.

A second approach one might employ in order to defend PrES from the objection raised by Conee and Feldman is to explain "Pr" in PrES in terms of mental entities, such as the Bayesian's degrees of belief. On this Bayesian-inspired proposal, $\Pr(p)$ for S is S 's degree of belief in p , and $\Pr(p/c)$ for S is S 's *conditional* degree of belief in p given c . The Bayesian-inspired approach to understanding "Pr" in PrES escapes the difficulty for PrES highlighted by Conee and Feldman, because, given that the probabilistic locutions in PrES are explicable as S 's degree of belief, and given that agents are aware of their own mental lives, PrES will not imply that there will be propositions which have a positive normative status for agents where those agents have no appreciation of the probabilistic relation between their evidence and those propositions.

The concern I wish to raise for the foregoing Bayesian-inspired approach centers on the notion of degrees of belief.³⁴ One might think that talk of degrees of

³⁰ Cf. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*.

³¹ Cf. Richard Fumerton, *Metaepistemology and Skepticism* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995).

³² Note, for example, the common rejection of conditional excluded middle. See Jonathan Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³³ See John Heil, *The Universe as We Find It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³⁴ The traditional approach has been to analyze such using betting behavior, as in Bruno de Finetti, "La Prevision: ses lois logiques, se sources subjectives," translated and reprinted in *Studies in Subjective Probability*, eds. Henry Ely Kyburg and Howard Edward Smokler (Huntington,

belief is just a way of talking about epistemic dispositions. To say that S has a high degree of belief in p conditional on c is just to say that S is strongly disposed to believe p given that S has evidence with content c. If this is how we understand degrees of belief, then the Bayesian approach will hardly differ from DispES.

The likely thing to be said to distinguish the Bayesian-inspired approach from DispES is that the Bayesian-inspired approach requires that the rational agent's degrees of belief obey the axioms of probability calculus.³⁵ This has been a minimum requirement on Bayesian views historically.³⁶ But, if the Bayesian-inspired approach is to make this requirement, then it will arguably reserve normative epistemic properties for too few of us. For, it is well-documented that ordinary epistemic agents' degrees of belief appear to regularly violate the axioms of probability theory in remarkable ways.³⁷ Thus, to the extent that the Bayesian-inspired approach differs from DispES, it appears to offer a kind of support too sparse to be of interest to evidentialists.

DispES does not face the difficulties arguably faced by the probabilistic accounts of support surveyed above. As I will argue in further detail in section two, DispES does not conflict with internalism as do approaches to explaining PrES which interpret the probabilistic claims therein as contingent, because DispES does not permit subjects who are exactly alike mentally to differ with respect to what their evidence supports. Nor does DispES imply that at best only the more sophisticated among us can have evidence that supports a proposition, as the accounts above which appealed to epistemic bridge principles threatened to do. For, even the less sophisticated among us are disposed to believe claims in light of our total evidence. Finally, as we saw when discussing problems for explanationism, DispES is far from implying that only ideal agents can have normative epistemic properties; and so it will not face the difficulty arguably faced by Bayesian-inspired views.

A brief comparison of DispES to promising explanationist and probabilistic accounts of support suggests that DispES may well have significant advantages

NY: Krieger 1980), though there remains controversy about this. For an overview, see Franz Huber and Christoph Schmidt-Petri, *Degrees of Belief* (New York: Springer, 2010).

³⁵ This is the approach sometimes called *probabilism*. See Alan Hájek, "Arguments for – or Against – Probabilism?" *British Journal of the Philosophy of Science* 59 (2008): 793-819.

³⁶ See discussion in Alan Hájek, "Interpretations of Probability," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, last modified 2009, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/probability-interpret/>.

³⁷ See Daniel Kahneman, Paul Slovic, and Amos Tversky, eds., *Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

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over these accounts. This is one reason for an internalist evidentialist to be attracted to DispES. In the next two sections, I discuss two additional reasons.

2. Dispositional Evidentialism and the Problem of Forgotten Evidence

In this section, I aim to show that the dispositionalist account of evidential support I articulated in the previous section, DispES, has a second valuable feature to offer internalist evidentialists. It can help evidentialists respond to what is one of the most persistent and difficult objections to evidentialist views – the problem of forgotten evidence. I begin with an explanation of this problem, then discuss difficulties facing leading approaches to responding to the problem on behalf of evidentialists, then show that DispES can help the evidentialist respond to the problem without facing these difficulties.

While the problem of forgotten evidence can be presented as a challenge for an evidentialist theory of any normative epistemic property, I shall present it here as a problem for an evidentialist theory of epistemic justification. Briefly stated, the problem of forgotten evidence is the following. There appear to be cases where a person has a belief which we have both intuitive pull and theoretical reason to count as fully justified, but where the person who hosts this belief has lost all of her evidence concerning this belief. Such beliefs, if they exist, make trouble for internalist evidentialist theories. For, these theories say that whether a belief is justified is determined by the evidence the subject has. But if there are such beliefs then they represent cases where a belief is justified but this justification is not determined by the evidence the subject has, since the subject has no evidence for this belief.

A concrete example will help. All of us have stored dispositional beliefs about our social security numbers. These are beliefs we have to which we attend every so often when necessary.³⁸ For most of us, we formed these beliefs long ago on the basis of some evidence which we have long since forgotten. Imagine that Joe formed a belief long ago that his social security number is 890-23-5762 and that he doesn't remember how he learned this anymore. Moreover, imagine that he hasn't looked at his social security card anytime recently and so has no memories of having seen this number on his card. It would be tempting to say that Joe doesn't currently have any evidence for his belief that his social security number is 890-23-5762. Of course, if Joe doesn't have any evidence for this belief, then according to evidentialism he will not be justified in holding this belief.

³⁸ I mean to follow Audi, "Dispositional Beliefs," and others in distinguishing between dispositional beliefs and dispositions to believe. Dispositional beliefs are beliefs, while dispositions to believe are dispositions, not beliefs.

But, unfortunately for the evidentialist, there is both intuitive and theoretical pressure to accept that Joe's social security belief is justified. The intuitive pressure will be especially powerful for someone who is strongly inclined to deny skepticism about justification. People who are inclined to think we do have quite many justified beliefs are likely to think that Joe's social security belief is among them. Theoretical pressure to accept that Joe's social security belief is justified can be applied by appealing to the principle of inferential justification. This principle says that only justified beliefs can contribute to the justificatory status of other beliefs.³⁹ Given this principle, if Joe's social security belief is not justified, then it cannot contribute to the justificatory status of other justified beliefs of his. But, it seems clear that Joe's social security belief *can* contribute to the justificatory status of others of his beliefs. For instance, if someone (say his banker) asked Joe, "What are the middle two digits of your social security number?" Joe might form a belief about this by inference from his belief about his total security number. He might think to himself in response to the question: "Well, my social security number is 890-23 ... Oh, it's 23!" It is quite plausible to think that Joe's belief about the middle two digits of his social security number is a justified belief the justification of which is partly explained by his belief about his full social security number. But, given the principle of inferential justification, it follows that his belief about his full social security number must be justified as well.

So there is intuitive and theoretical pressure to accept the conclusion that Joe's social security belief is justified. But it is difficult to see how an evidentialist could maintain that it is. Below, I will discuss three common approaches evidentialists have used to respond to the problem of forgotten evidence. I argue that each approach faces a significant difficulty, but that the evidentialist who adopts DispES can respond to the problem of forgotten evidence without her view facing these difficulties.

The first response is to advocate a strategy discussed by Matthew McGrath according to which significant occurrent phenomenology has been overlooked in the presentation of cases of forgotten evidence, and that this phenomenology is the evidence the subjects in those cases have for their beliefs.⁴⁰ For instance, in our example with Joe, the evidentialist may suggest that the belief is justified only if it comes to him as something he knows or remembers. Or, the evidentialist might ask whether it seems to Joe that his social security number is 890-23-5762, or whether he seems to remember this. Such seemings, the evidentialist may argue,

³⁹ See Fumerton, *Metaepistemology*.

⁴⁰ Matthew McGrath, "Memory and Epistemic Conservatism," *Synthese* 151, 1 (2007): 1-24.

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are distinct from Joe's social security belief itself,⁴¹ and they are the sort of evidence which could support this belief.

As McGrath points out, the central difficulty facing this defense of evidentialism is that it simply is not plausible that in all cases where there is intuitive and theoretical reason to consider a belief for which a subject has forgotten her evidence justified she has the kind of occurrent phenomenology discussed here. It is of course true that *sometimes* when someone continues holding a memorial belief about her social security number it also seems to her that this belief is true, or one of the other kinds of phenomena above accompanies this belief. This may be especially so where the memorial belief is occurrently held or attended to. But it is extremely implausible that in every such case there is such accompanying phenomenology. Especially in cases where the belief does *not* play a role in an instance of reasoning, where it remains in the background unattended to by the subject, such phenomenology is unlikely to be present.

A second approach is for the evidentialist to appeal to epistemic conservatism. According to epistemic conservatism, a subject's believing a proposition *p* confers some positive epistemic status on the proposition *p* for her.⁴² One version of epistemic conservatism would say the following: if believing *p* coheres with a subject *S*'s other evidence, and *S* in fact does believe *p*, then *p* is justified. An evidentialist might make use of epistemic conservatism by arguing that the reason believing *p* contributes to the epistemic status of the proposition *p* is that believing *p* is evidence for *p*. This evidentialist could then use this fact to respond to the problem of forgotten evidence. It isn't some *other* evidence that subjects in such cases have which justifies the beliefs for which they have forgotten their evidence; rather, it is these beliefs themselves. The evidence Joe has which justifies his believing that his social security number is 890-23-5762 is Joe's belief that this is his number.

The primary difficulty I will highlight for this response to the problem of forgotten evidence is that the kind of epistemic conservatism required here is simply too strong. This is especially clear if we conceive of epistemic justification

⁴¹ For arguments that seemings are not just beliefs, see Michael Huemer, *Skepticism and the Veil of Perception* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001) and Matheson and Rogers, "Bergmann's Dilemma."

⁴² Jonathan Kvanvig, "Conservatism and its Virtues," *Synthese* 71, 1 (1989): 143-63, Hamid Vahid, "Varieties of Epistemic Conservatism," *Synthese* 141, 1 (2004): 97-122, and Kevin McCain, "The Virtues of Epistemic Conservatism," *Synthese* 164, 2 (2008): 185-200 each defend such a version of conservatism. McGrath, "Memory," defends a diachronic version of conservatism. But, I will not consider it in the text because the evidentialists with whom I hope to dialogue are interested in offering *synchronic* analyses of normative epistemic properties.

in the way I proposed above as equivalent to epistemic obligation. For, it isn't the case that when one believes a proposition which coheres with her other evidence she *ought* to have done this. Think for instance about whether believing a theory, where others cohere equally well with one's data, is obligatory.⁴³ This may help to explain why those who have defended epistemic conservatism have typically defended it for some property falling short of epistemic justification.⁴⁴ Retreating to the position that the Joe's social security belief has only some lesser epistemic status falling short of epistemic justification is an option for the evidentialist, but it is not an attractive one. For, it would seem that the typical agent is about as well-positioned epistemically with respect to her social security number as she is with respect to any claim. Adopting the epistemic conservatism approach to responding to the problem forgotten evidence, then, threatens to saddle the evidentialist with a strong skepticism about justification.

Consider one final proposal, recently advocated by Conee and Feldman.⁴⁵ The proposal is similar to the first proposal in that it appeals to phenomenology which is typically overlooked in cases such as that of Joe's social security belief. However, instead of proposing that Joe has an occurrent seeming that his social security number is 890-23-5762 or that this belief occurrently comes to Joe as something he knows, the proposal is instead that Joe is *disposed* to have this phenomenology. Joe is disposed to have a seeming that his social security number is 890-23-5762 or Joe is disposed for his belief that his social security number is 890-23-5762 to come to him as something he knows. And these dispositional states constitute Joe's evidence which supports the claim that his social security number is 890-23-5762.

One concern with such a proposal is whether it is consistent with internalism. After all, dispositions to take doxastic attitudes have typically figured into externalist theories in epistemology, rather than internalist ones.⁴⁶ But, I agree with Conee and Feldman that an internalist can help herself to these states. For, such states do seem to make a contribution to what a subject is like mentally. If Alice has an experience as of seeing smoke rising over a mountain but no disposition in the presence of such experiences to believe that there is a fire, and

⁴³ Vahid, "Varieties" develops this example.

⁴⁴ Of those cited in footnote 42, only McGrath would appear to prefer a stronger version.

⁴⁵ Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, "Ad Goldman," in *Evidentialism and its Discontents*, ed. Trent Dougherty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 463-9.

⁴⁶ For example, Greco, *Achieving Knowledge* and Ernest Sosa, *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) each have dispositions play a key role in their theories, and they are paradigmatic externalists.

John has both an experience as of seeing smoke rising over a mountain as well as a disposition in the presence of such experiences to believe that there is a fire, then it is plausible that Alice and John are not exactly alike mentally.

But I do wish to urge a dilemma against the present proposal nonetheless. Suppose that the proposed disposition which justifies Joe's belief is a disposition to have a seeming that Joe's social security number is 890-23-5762. Either the realization conditions of this disposition include Joe's total evidence or they don't. But, if they do include his total evidence, then one wonders why he wouldn't have an occurrent seeming that his social security number is 890-23-5762, something we supposed previously that he might not have. To be clear, I am not claiming that, necessarily, if S has a disposition to take some doxastic attitude D and the realization conditions of this disposition are satisfied, then S takes D. For, following E. Jonathan Lowe, I think it is possible for a person to exercise an executive will to refrain from believing when she is consciously attending to her evidence and dispositions.⁴⁷ But, of course, here we are imagining a case where Joe is *not* consciously attending to his disposition to seem that his social security number is 890-23-5762. Thus, if the advocate of the present solution is to maintain that Joe's disposition *does* include among its realization conditions Joe's total evidence, she owes us an explanation for why Joe does not occurrently have a seeming that his social security number is 890-23-5762. And it is quite difficult to see what sort of explanation she can offer.

Things are no better on the other horn of the dilemma. For, suppose that Joe's total evidence is *not* among the realization conditions of his disposition to have a seeming that his social security number is 890-23-5762. In that case, one wonders how his having *this* disposition could show that his *total* evidence supports the claim that his social security number is 890-23-5762. After all, when one is disposed to believe a claim in light of only part of one's evidence but not all of one's evidence, it seems implausible to claim that one's total evidence supports the claim in question. Similarly, it is implausible to claim that when one is disposed to have a seeming that p in light of merely part of one's evidence one's *total* evidence thereby supports this claim.

If the foregoing responses were the only responses available to evidentialists in the face of the problem of forgotten evidence, then their view would be precarious indeed. Fortunately, DispES provides evidentialists with an alternative response to the problem which faces none of the difficulties faced by the foregoing proposals. For, the advocate of DispES can propose that in those cases used to present the problem of forgotten evidence, the subjects are disposed to believe the

⁴⁷ Lowe, "The Will as a Rational Free Power."

claims in question in light of their total evidence. For example, she can propose that Joe is disposed to believe that his social security number is 890-23-5762 in light of all his evidence. This claim is indeed quite plausible, since it helps to explain why Joe maintains his belief that his social security number is 890-23-5762 under a wide variety of circumstances. But, so long as Joe is disposed to believe that his social security number is 890-23-5762 in light of all of his evidence, DispES implies that Joe's evidence supports this belief. And, so, DispES can be used by an advocate of an evidentialist theory of epistemic justification to argue that Joe's belief that his social security number is 890-23-5762 is justified.

Let me briefly explain why this response does not face the difficulties of the three foregoing responses. First, it does not face the difficulty of the response invoking neglected occurrent phenomenology because it does not invoke such phenomenology. Second, the response based on DispES does not face the difficulty faced by the last response above invoking dispositions to have phenomenology like that proposed by the first strategy. It is true that the strategy invoking DispES appeals to a disposition whose realization conditions include all of Joe's evidence, as would be true on the third strategy above if it took the first horn of the dilemma I proposed. But, the advocate of the strategy invoking DispES needn't explain why the manifestation of the disposition she cites is absent. For, the manifestation of that disposition is *present!*

The comparison between DispES and epistemic conservatism is the most delicate. At first glance, it may seem that DispES will imply, just as much as epistemic conservatism does, that when a proposition *p* coheres with a person *S*'s evidence and *S* believes *p*, *S* is justified in believing *p*. For, plausibly, *S* will not believe *p* without being at least somewhat disposed to believe *p* in light of *S*'s total evidence. Thus, insofar as it is a worry for epistemic conservatism to imply that subjects in such cases are justified in believing as they do, the same worry will threaten DispES. But it is worth noting that the advocate of DispES has an option of responding to this worry that the advocate of epistemic conservatism does not appear to have. For, she can propose a slight modification to DispES which requires that the believer not simply be disposed to some extent to believe *p* for her evidence to support *p*, but that she be disposed *with a degree of strength meeting at least a certain threshold* to believe *p* for her evidence to support *p*. Accordingly, we can propose the following *strong* dispositional account of evidential support:

(Strong DispES) For all agents *S* and propositions *p*, *S*'s evidence supports *p* if and only if *S* is sufficiently strongly disposed to believe *p* in light of *S*'s total evidence.

Strong DispES will have the consequence that where a person is faced with multiple theories which cohere with her evidence and she believes one, she will not *thereby* be justified in believing the one she believes. For, a person can be in such a position without it being the case that she is *strongly* disposed to believe the proposition in question. Thus, epistemic conservatism implies, while Strong DispES does not, that if a proposition *p* coheres with a person *S*'s evidence and *S* believes *p*, then *S* is justified in believing *p*.

In addition to allowing the dispositional evidentialist to maintain this advantage over epistemic conservatism, there are at least two further motivations favoring a move from DispES to Strong DispES. The move, in other words, is not *ad hoc*. First, moving to Strong DispES will provide the dispositional evidentialist with resources with which she can mimic what probabilistic accounts of support are able to do in terms of offering a *graded* account of support. For, like such accounts, she can provide an account of degrees of support, including an account of that degree of support required for justification. Whereas probabilistic accounts do this with a numeric measure, the advocate of Strong DispES does it with a measure of dispositional strength. The second motivation for moving from DispES to Strong DispES is that doing so offers the dispositional evidentialist resources for accounting for certain apparent counterexamples to her view, such as cases of persistent cognitive illusions and persistent cognitive biases. These will be cases where a subject's disposition to believe some claim *p* persists even after she has become convinced that not-*p*. For example, it is arguably the case that in the Muller-Lyer example the subject retains a disposition to believe the lines unequal even after becoming firmly convinced they are equal. One way to account for such examples is to claim that while the subject may have some disposition to believe that the lines are unequal, she is more strongly disposed to believe them equal.⁴⁸ Indeed, treating these cases in this way significantly parallels what others have said about varying strengths of dispositions in other contexts. Consider, for example, Stephen Mumford's discussion of why soap bubbles don't roll:

If we take the shape of being spherical, we can see that any object bearing the property will... be disposed to roll in a straight line down an inclined plane... Some have offered counterexamples... Lowe, for instance, has said (in discussion) that a soap bubble is spherical but will not roll down an inclined plane... Lowe's case fails for another reason. The spherical soap bubble is indeed disposed to roll

⁴⁸ Another approach to cases of persistent cognitive illusions would be to claim that in such cases the subject is only disposed to believe the unsupported claim in light of some proper subpart of her evidence and not in light of all of it.

but it doesn't do so because it also possesses a countervailing power of stickiness. The stickiness is stronger than the power to roll.⁴⁹

Just as the soap bubble can have a disposition to roll but an even stronger disposition to not roll, a person can have a disposition to believe a claim *p* but an even stronger disposition to believe not-*p*; and, an advocate of Strong DispES can appeal to this fact in order to account for cases of persistent cognitive illusions and biases.

As Strong DispES retains the advantages of DispES over both rival accounts of support discussed in 1.1 and as it holds advantages over rival solutions to the problem of forgotten evidence discussed here, I conclude that there are now two significant reasons for an internalist evidentialist to be attracted to Strong DispES.

3. Dispositional Evidentialism and Evidentialist Virtue Epistemology

In the previous two sections, I have argued that Strong DispES has two attractive features from the perspective of internalist evidentialism. It provides an account of evidential support which escapes problems faced by leading competing accounts of support, and it makes available a response to the problem of forgotten evidence which escapes difficulties faced by alternative responses available to evidentialists. Nonetheless, I must address the question of whether DispES escapes the difficulties of these other views only at far too high a cost. Specifically, I must address the concern briefly alluded to in section one about whether DispES escapes these difficulties only by making evidential support far too easy to come by. That concern, again, was that Strong DispES implies that just any sufficiently strong disposition in light of total evidence to believe a proposition, no matter how funky, can account for the presence of epistemic justification. For example, if a detective who had completed half of his regular steps through an investigation was sufficiently strongly disposed in light of his total evidence to believe that the best current suspect committed the crime, then Strong DispES implies that this detective's evidence supports the proposition that this suspect did it. Similarly, in a case where multiple theories cohere equally well with a subject's evidence, if this subject is strongly disposed to believe one of these theories Strong DispES will imply that her evidence supports believing that theory.

In this section, I aim to propose a synthesis of Strong DispES and Virtue Epistemology which is at once a response to the foregoing concern and a third positive reason to favor Strong DispES over its rivals. The synthesis constitutes a

⁴⁹ Stephen Mumford, "The Power of Power," in *Powers and Capacities in Philosophy*, eds. Grego and Groff, 14.

response to the foregoing concern because it explains away the appearance of a worrisome consequence for Strong DispES. The synthesis constitutes a positive reason to prefer Strong DispES to its rivals because as Baehr has argued, a synthesis of evidentialism and virtue epistemology is desirable in itself;⁵⁰ and, Strong DispES makes possible a synthesis which improves upon the leading synthesis of these views proposed to date.

I'll start with my own proposal. The synthesis I propose is embedded within what I will call an Aristotelian theory of epistemic value. According to this theory, what is epistemically valuable can be explained by a believer's performing her proper function and doing so with excellence. Following Feldman, I propose that the epistemic 'ought' of epistemic justification is a role-ought.⁵¹ In other words, it specifies what it is for a believer to perform her proper function *as a believer*. It is precisely such a sense of 'ought' that I believe Strong DispES helps the evidentialist to clarify. For the role of a believer is to form beliefs in response to her environment. And, she does this by believing what she is strongly disposed to believe in light of her total evidence. This is what believers do that non-believers don't do.

But fulfilling one's proper function is not all there is to living well as an epistemic agent. For it is one thing to fulfill one's proper function, and another thing to fulfill that function *with excellence*. It matters not to whether one fulfills one's function as a believer precisely what one's epistemic dispositions are; but, it matters much to whether one fulfills one's function as a believer *with excellence* what those epistemic dispositions are. A believer who believes in accordance with funky epistemic dispositions may believe precisely what she ought to believe, given that she *has* those dispositions; but, she is still missing out on something valuable epistemically precisely because she has those dispositions rather than others.

I propose that we synthesize the proposed evidentialist account of epistemic justification from part one with a virtue theory of flourishing as an epistemic agent. We can do so in the following way. Using the resources of the proposal in part one above, we can provide a full theory of what it is to fulfill one's function as a believer – to take all and only those attitudes one ought to take. That theory is Strong DispPF:

(Strong DispPF) A person S fulfills her proper function as a believer to the extent that she takes all and only those doxastic attitudes which she is sufficiently strongly disposed to take in light of all of her evidence.

⁵⁰ Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind*.

⁵¹ Feldman, "The Ethics of Belief."

This theory can be complemented by a virtue-based account of what it is for a believer to fulfill her proper function as a believer *with excellence*. That account is VirtPFE:

(VirtPFE) A person S fulfills her proper function as a believer with excellence to the extent that she takes all and only those doxastic attitudes which she is sufficiently strongly disposed to take *by virtuous dispositions* in light of all of her evidence.

Both the person who merely fulfills her proper function as a believer and the person who fulfills that function with excellence take all and only those attitudes they ought to take given the way that they are; but, the person who fulfills his proper function with excellence is a better way than the person who merely fulfills his proper function. The difference lies in the value of the dispositions in accordance with which each forms his attitudes.

Certainly more deserves to be said about the proposed synthesis. For example, the notion of virtuous dispositions needs to be spelled out carefully. While I will not defend any particular theory of virtuous dispositions here, I do briefly note that there is an important constraint that must be met by such a theory if it is to be attractive from the perspective of an advocate of the Aristotelian synthesis above. Namely, the theory must explain what it is that makes the virtuous dispositions virtuous without simply claiming that they are virtuous because they guide the believer toward believing what her evidence supports. This is an important constraint because, given Strong DispPF and VirtPFE, an explanation of the virtuousness of virtuous dispositions that violates it will yield the result that there is no difference between fulfilling one's proper function as a believer and fulfilling that function with excellence – something an advocate of the Aristotelian synthesis will not want to accept. Thankfully, there are available explanations of the virtuousness of virtuous dispositions which do not appeal to evidential support in this way, including explanations that are available to internalists.⁵² Such theories, or theories inspired by them, might be profitably pursued by an advocate of the proposed synthesis.

While there is undoubtedly more to say about the details of the Aristotelian synthesis above, including the notion of virtuous dispositions, I propose that enough has been said to accomplish my two central aims in this section. Those aims were to show that, given the proposed synthesis, Strong DispES can escape from the problem of funky dispositions and to show that the proposed synthesis is superior to the leading proposed synthesis of its kind currently on offer.

⁵² See, e.g., Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind* and James Montmarquet, "Epistemic Virtue," *Mind* 96 (1987): 482-97.

First, let me explain how the proposed synthesis enables the advocate of Strong DispES to account for cases involving funky dispositions. These are cases where a person with funky dispositions believes in accordance with them. DispES predicts that what she believes is what she ought to believe. But, we are inclined to believe that this prediction is mistaken, because there is obviously *something* amiss about her believing as she does. Given the proposed synthesis, there *is* something amiss about her believing as she does. But what is amiss is not that she has believed what she ought not believe. Rather, what is amiss is that she has believed in accordance with non-virtuous, perhaps even vicious, dispositions. In the detective example, for instance, I claim that the detective who is in fact strongly disposed to believe that the best current suspect committed the crime ought to believe this. This is what Strong DispES implies. But I claim that such a person is a no-good detective. He fails to fulfill his proper function as a believer, and as a detective, with excellence.

This response is actually rather similar to a response commonly offered by evidentialists against a similar problem raised against their views. Baehr argues against Conee's and Feldman's evidentialist view of epistemic justification, for example, that it implies that persons who inquire irresponsibly can have justified beliefs, since they may very well believe in accordance with what the evidence which they have irresponsibly gathered supports.⁵³ In response to such examples, evidentialists such as Feldman have typically dug in their heels, insisting that, given that a person *has* inquired in this way, he very well ought to believe what his evidence supports.⁵⁴ It may be that there is something negative we should say about such a person's character, but not about his beliefs. My proposed synthesis of evidentialism and virtue epistemology responds in like manner to the problem of funky dispositions. I propose that, given that a person *has* such dispositions, there is a sense – a sense captured by Strong DispPF – in which what she ought to do is believe in accordance with them. But, at the same time, I propose that there is some kind of epistemic value that she lacks. This value is accounted for by VirtPF.

I'm not claiming here that the response I offer to the case of funky dispositions is on its own just as plausible as the response of Feldman to cases of irresponsible evidence gathering or even that it is clearly satisfactory. Rather, I am noting that there is a significant parallel between the responses and that, given the attractiveness of Strong DispES displayed already in this paper, retaining it and responding in this way to the problem of funky dispositions may be the best

⁵³ Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind*.

⁵⁴ Feldman, "Respecting the Evidence."

available option for the evidentialist. Moreover, since, as we saw in section two, evidentialists such as Conee and Feldman are already prepared to grant that epistemic dispositions may serve as unjustified justifiers, if they wish to resist my proposal and claim that funky dispositions cannot serve as such, they need an explanation for why they cannot which coheres well with their general epistemology. I propose, though, that such an explanation will be difficult to come by, as these evidentialists certainly do not treat other unjustified justifiers, such as experiences, in this way – dividing them between the funky and non-funky and claiming only the non-funky contribute to epistemic justification. Accordingly, even if the present response to the problem of funky dispositions is not on its own as plausible as Feldman's response to the objection from irresponsible evidence gathering, and even if is not clearly satisfactory, I conclude that evidentialists should nonetheless take it very seriously because it is arguably the best option they have.

Let me turn, then, to my second contention: that the availability of the present synthesis of evidentialism and virtue epistemology is in fact one last positive reason to favor Strong DispES. To see this, begin with the observation that it is the presence of examples just like those I have been discussing which has led Baehr, and apparently Conee and Feldman,⁵⁵ to prefer some sort of synthesis of evidentialism and virtue epistemology. Such a synthesis is attractive precisely because it helps to address these kinds of examples. But, what I want to argue here is that the Aristotelian synthesis I have proposed is superior to the leading current proposal for such a synthesis – a proposal offered by Baehr. Thus, not only does this Aristotelian synthesis provide the resources for the advocate of Strong DispES to respond to the problem of funky dispositions; but, it offers a third positive reason to favor Strong DispES to its rivals. For, Strong DispES is easily incorporated into a synthesis of evidentialism and virtue epistemology which is preferable to the leading current synthesis of these views; and some sort of synthesis of these views is amply motivated.

Consider the proposed synthesis of evidentialism and virtue epistemology offered by Baehr:

(Baehr Justification) S is justified in believing p at t if and only if S's evidence at t appears to S to support p, *provided that* if S's agency makes a salient contribution to S's evidential situation with respect to p, S functions, qua agent and relative to that contribution, in a manner consistent with intellectual virtue.

⁵⁵ Conee and Feldman, *Evidentialism*, 99-101.

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Clearly, Baehr Justification is a mouthful. This may be one reason to be suspicious of it. At bottom, it provides a disjunctive account of justification. A proposition is justified just in case *either* certain constraints are met and the believer's agency doesn't make a salient contribution of a certain kind C *or* certain different constraints are met and the believer's agency *does* make a salient contribution of kind C. Disjunctive accounts should be viewed with suspicion because of their complexity.

And there is a more powerful reason to be suspicious of Baehr Justification. It is that Baehr Justification fails to account for what *is* valuable in the cases of those who manifest intellectual vice while believing what their evidence supports. It fails to account for the fact that there is some sense in which the subjects in such examples *ought* to believe what they do. That there is some sort of value achieved by these subjects is a point Baehr himself appears to appreciate in a footnote from his chapter on these issues where he claims that the subjects from examples involving defective inquiry *do* have justification of 'the standard deontological variety.' But, if they do, Baehr Justification certainly does not tell us so. Thus, at the very best, Baehr justification offers us a disjointed thesis about only one dimension of epistemic evaluation.

But the Aristotelian synthesis above promises more. It accounts for what is valuable in the cases of defective inquiry or funky dispositions, as well as what is disvaluable in these cases. Because it does, and because Strong DispES is used to construct this synthesis, we have a third reason for an internalist evidentialist to prefer Strong DispES to its rivals.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have articulated a novel account of when a person's evidence supports a proposition and argued that this account is attractive from the perspective of internalist evidentialist views in epistemology. I defended three reasons in favor of the account. First, the account avoids problems arguably faced by rival accounts of evidential support. Second, it provides the evidentialist with an approach to responding to the problem of forgotten evidence which avoids problems of alternative approaches. And, third, it is easily employable in an attractive synthesis of evidentialism and virtue epistemology.

ON THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL DOXASTIC ATTITUDES

Tjerk GAUDERIS

ABSTRACT: In the literature on doxastic attitudes, the notion 'belief' is used in both a coarse-grained and a fine-grained manner. While the coarse-grained notion of 'belief,' as the doxastic attitude that expresses any form of assent to its content, is a useful technical concept, the fine-grained notion, which tries to capture the folk notion of 'belief' in contrast with other doxastic concepts such as 'acceptance' or 'degrees of confidence,' is utterly ambiguous. In order to dispel this ambiguity, I introduce first a new framework for describing doxastic attitudes that does not rely on a specific fine-grained primitive notion of 'belief.' This framework distinguishes two different doxastic attitudes, i.e. the theoretical and the practical, and explains how various doxastic concepts such as 'accepting,' 'having a degree of confidence' and the folk notion of 'belief' all describe a particular interpretation of one or both of the distinguished doxastic attitudes. Next, by focusing on ongoing debates over the difference between 'acceptance' and 'belief' on the one hand and between 'degrees of confidence' and '(plain) belief' on the other, I argue that much precision can be gained in philosophical analysis by taking a reductionist stance concerning any specific fine-grained and primitive notion of 'belief.'

KEYWORDS: doxastic attitudes, belief, acceptance, degrees of confidence,
degrees of belief

1. The Notion 'Doxastic Attitude'

The notion of a *doxastic attitude* entered the general epistemology literature in the late 1970s, especially via the works of Goldman,¹ who used it to describe in a generic way the propositional attitude of either *belief* or *disbelief*. Since the 1980s, the notion has become more widely used for this purpose, though one generally now adds a third option of *withholding belief* or *suspending judgment*.² In this way, doxastic attitudes have come to be understood as the three possible attitudes

¹ See e.g. Alvin Goldman, "Epistemics: the Regulative Theory of Cognition," *The Journal of Philosophy* 75, 10 (1978): 515; Alvin Goldman, "Epistemology and the Psychology of Belief," *The Monist* 61, 4 (1978): 525; Alvin Goldman, "Varieties of Cognitive Appraisal," *Noûs* 13, 1 (1979): 23.

² See e.g. Richard Feldman and Earl Conee, "Evidentialism," *Philosophical Studies* 48, 1 (1985): 15; Ernest Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 126; Matthias Steup, "Doxastic Freedom," *Synthese* 161, 3 (2008): 375.

an agent can intellectually adopt towards a proposition after considering it, a view which has also been called *Triad*.³

As the notion 'doxastic attitude' gained currency, several authors started to also use it to describe a broader class of belief-like attitudes similar but not identical to the attitude of belief. From his Bayesian stance, Kaplan started this evolution by calling *degrees of confidence* – also often referred to as *degrees of belief* – doxastic attitudes.⁴ The attitude of *acceptance*, which was introduced in the literature by Van Fraassen,⁵ also generally came to be regarded as a doxastic attitude.⁶ Kapitan called the attitudes of *presuming*, *feeling* and *taking for granted* lower-level doxastic attitudes: unlike 'belief,' these notions do not imply the agent's ability to articulate their content explicitly.⁷ Williams even extended the idea further by calling *hypothesizing* and *suspecting* doxastic attitudes.⁸

Already in 1983, Searle argued for the need to consider these belief-like attitudes, for some purposes, as a single category, and grouped them under the label BEL, in contrast with desire-like attitudes, which he called DES.⁹ Williams made the same distinction, but named his groups 'doxastic attitudes' and 'orectic attitudes'.¹⁰ Leaving aside the question of whether all propositional attitudes can be reduced to (a combination of) elements of these two groups, it is commonly accepted in contemporary epistemology that 'belief' and 'desire' are two basic exemplars, each of them representative of and (for many purposes) interchangeable with a large group of similar propositional attitudes.¹¹ It is also common practice to call the group of belief-like attitudes 'doxastic attitudes'.¹²

³ John Turri, "A Puzzle about Withholding," *Philosophical Quarterly* 62, 247 (2012): 355.

⁴ Mark Kaplan, "A Bayesian Theory of Rational Acceptance", *The Journal of Philosophy* 78, 6 (1981): 310.

⁵ Bas Van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 4.

⁶ Ruth Weintraub, "Decision-Theoretic Epistemology," *Synthese* 83, 1 (1990): 165.

⁷ Tomis Kapitan, "Deliberation and the Presumption of Open Alternatives," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 36, 143 (1986): 235.

⁸ S.G. Williams, "Belief, Desire and the Praxis of Reasoning," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 90 (1989): 124.

⁹ John Searle, *Intentionality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 29-36.

¹⁰ Williams, "Belief, Desire and the Praxis of Reasoning," 124.

¹¹ Graham Oppy, "Propositional Attitudes," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Craig. (London: Routledge, 1998), <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/V028SECT1>. Accessed July 14, 2014.

¹² Pascal Engel, "Trust and the Doxastic Family," *Philosophical Studies* 161, 1 (2012): 17; Alvin Goldman, "Why Social Epistemology is Real Epistemology", in *Social Epistemology*, eds. Adrian Haddock, Allan Millar, and Duncan Pritchard (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010): 2, 26.

As we can observe, the notion ‘belief’ has been used in two different ways in the literature on doxastic attitudes. On the one hand, ‘belief’ is used as a *coarse-grained technical concept* designating any doxastic attitude that has an affirmative stance towards its content. This is the case, for instance, in the Triad position, mentioned above, according to which an agent chooses to take an attitude of assent, dissent or neutrality towards a given proposition.¹³ If one chooses an attitude of assent, it is called ‘belief,’ irrespective of the intensity, degree, purpose or circumstances of this assent. For many analytical purposes, this abstraction from situational details can safely be made.

On the other hand, in the exploration of the various doxastic attitudes or belief-like attitudes, ‘belief’ is also employed as a *fine-grained concept* designating a specific doxastic attitude intuitively assumed to be more or less equivalent to a folk psychological notion of belief. This is clearly not the same use of ‘belief’ as in its coarse-grained meaning, as this fine-grained meaning is used to explain the other doxastic attitudes and contrast them with ‘belief’ precisely in terms of differences in intensity, degree, purpose or circumstances. Furthermore, as a general taxonomy of doxastic attitudes is lacking,¹⁴ the other belief-like attitudes are often defined in terms of or with respect to such a specific fine-grained notion of belief, which is then regarded as a primitive and the most central doxastic attitude.¹⁵

While this double meaning of ‘belief’ should not itself, if properly conceived, pose a genuine problem, a tendency to conflate these two distinct uses in the literature has obscured the fact that the fine-grained notion of ‘belief’ is, unlike the rather precise and technical coarse-grained notion, utterly ambiguous and its specific distinctiveness in relation to other fine-grained doxastic attitudes is far from clear. As I will show, the example uses of the notion ‘belief’ in, for instance, the literature on ‘acceptance’ and in the literature on ‘degrees of belief,’ seem to point to two different fine-grained notions.

I address these problems by proposing a taxonomy for specific doxastic attitudes that is not dependent on any specific fine-grained notion of ‘belief.’ I base this taxonomy on the idea that each agent actually has two quite distinct doxastic attitudes towards a given proposition, a *theoretical* and a *practical* one, corresponding respectively to her credence in the proposition and her policy on

¹³ According to the explanation of this position in Turri, “A Puzzle about Withholding,” 361.

¹⁴ Although a first attempt, from a somewhat different angle, can be found in Engel, “Trust and the Doxastic Family,” 17-26.

¹⁵ An exception to this is the literature on ‘degrees of belief,’ which often takes the latter as the central notion, and defines the notion ‘belief’ in terms of it (see Section 6).

accepting it. This framework, in which the primitive doxastic concepts are ‘degrees of belief’ and ‘acceptance,’ enables me to analyze other specific fine-grained doxastic concepts in terms of these two, including the intended meaning of a fine-grained notion of ‘belief,’ i.e. a meaning that tries to capture the folk notion of belief. It will turn out that the folk notion of belief is a complex notion that specifies to a certain degree both an agent’s theoretical and her practical doxastic attitude towards that proposition. The observed ambiguity in the use of a fine-grained notion of belief can therefore be attributed to the tendency of different authors to stress one or the other part of this dual meaning of ‘belief.’

After defining and explaining this doxastic framework in Sections 2 and 3, and using it to structure the various doxastic concepts in Section 4, I will use this framework in the final sections to re-assess two important debates in the literature on doxastic attitudes: namely the distinction between ‘belief’ and ‘acceptance’ (Section 5) and the distinction between ‘(plain) belief’ and ‘degrees of belief’ (Section 6).

This elaboration will allow me to defend my reductionist stance to keep the notion of ‘belief’ philosophically only in its coarse-grained technical sense (as exemplified in the Triad view), while reducing it to an appropriate expression in terms of ‘degrees of belief’ and ‘acceptance’ in cases that require analysis of a particular and more specific notion of belief.

2. Doxastic Attitudes and Doxastic Concepts

I will start by addressing a minor conceptual issue to prevent confusion later on. In the literature, the notion ‘doxastic attitude’ is actually used in two senses. On the one hand, one can speak of the doxastic attitude of an agent towards p : although it gives us no further information about the nature of this attitude, because it is generic, it refers to the agent’s attitude itself. On the other hand, one can speak of, for example, ‘assuming’ as a doxastic attitude. In this case, it refers to the type of an agent’s doxastic attitude. I will avoid this confusion by using the notion ‘*doxastic concept*’ for the different types, and, henceforth, ‘*doxastic attitude*’ only for the generic attitude itself. In these terms, we can say, for example, that the nature of an agent’s doxastic attitude towards p can be specified by choosing an appropriate doxastic concept such as ‘accepting,’ ‘assuming,’ ‘being certain’ etc.¹⁶ Moreover, I will restrict my use of the term ‘*concept*’ to this technical sense and use the term ‘*notion*’ for general purposes.

¹⁶ It has been suggested to me that the type-token distinction could be used to capture this difference, but I am afraid that this might cause confusion here: on the one hand, a ‘doxastic concept’ is a specific interpretation of a generic ‘doxastic attitude’ (hinting that ‘doxastic

To evade reference to the notion of belief, let me define doxastic attitudes in terms of the notion of *direction of fit*. This notion, first applied in the context of propositional attitudes by Searle,¹⁷ is a commonly acknowledged way to distinguish doxastic attitudes from other propositional attitudes, because the direction of fit is regarded as the main difference between ‘belief’ and ‘desire,’ the two basic (coarse-grained) exemplars of propositional attitudes.¹⁸

In adopting a propositional attitude with a *mind-to-world direction of fit* (for instance, an attitude of belief), an agent aims to match the content of her attitude to the external world. In case of a mismatch, it is the content of the attitude that should be adapted. Accordingly, these attitudes can be judged to be true or false. In adopting a propositional attitude with a *world-to-mind direction of fit* (for instance, an attitude of desire), the agent aspires to match the world to the content of her attitude. In case of a mismatch, this cannot be remedied by changing the content of the attitude; it is, in a sense, the world that should be different. Accordingly, these attitudes can only be judged to be fulfilled or unfulfilled.

I define *doxastic attitudes* (and, hence, *doxastic concepts*) to be propositional attitudes (or concepts) that satisfy the following criteria:

- (a) they have a mind-to-world direction of fit;
- (b) they have no world-to-mind direction of fit;
- (c) they are defined only in terms of criteria that are internal with respect to the agent holding the attitude.

I have added conditions (2) and (3) to the colloquial definition of a doxastic attitude in terms of ‘direction of fit’ in order to exclude both propositional attitudes with a double direction of fit (e.g. ‘fearing that p ,’ which involves both thinking that p is credible (mind-to-world) and wanting that $\sim p$ is the case (world-to-mind)) as well as attitudes that depend somehow on external criteria such as ‘knowing that p ’ (for which it is commonly accepted that this implies, at least, that p is true; a criterion that is independent of the agent).

concepts’ are tokens of the type ‘doxastic attitude’); on the other hand, ‘doxastic concepts’ are still abstract types of attitudes, while the generic notion ‘doxastic attitude’ is often used to refer to the (unspecified) token attitude of a particular agent.

¹⁷ Searle, *Intentionality*, 7.

¹⁸ Williams, “Belief, Desire and the Praxis of Reasoning,” 124; Oppy, “Propositional attitudes.”

3. The Theoretical and the Practical Doxastic Attitude

By considering the various doxastic concepts, one can observe that in fact they specify two different doxastic attitudes. This has already been noted by scholars working on the notion of acceptance.¹⁹ Given a proposition p and an agent S , I define these two attitudes as follows:

(TDA) the *theoretical doxastic attitude*: the credence S gives to p or the confidence S has in the truth of p .

The nature of an agent's theoretical doxastic attitude towards p can be found out by asking her: "How likely is it, do you think, that p is true?" Her response can vary from the expression of a gut feeling to a fully reasoned answer. In any case, the agent's attitude will be the result of an assessment of the truth of p , based on what she regards as relevant evidence for it, and its expression can range gradually from an absolute disbelief in p to a total conviction concerning p 's truth.

(PDA) the *practical doxastic attitude*: the policy S has on trusting p and relying on its content.

The nature of an agent's practical doxastic attitude can be found out by asking her: "In which type of circumstances would you let your reasoning and actions depend on this proposition, and in which not?" Her response can vary from a vague reference to some archetypical contexts to a precise demarcation criterion in terms of a specific property of the circumstances. Accordingly, S 's attitude will be the result of an assessment by her of the practical consequences of relying on the truth of p , and can range from a willingness to assume p only in hypothetical arguments to accepting p under any circumstances.

In the event that the particular circumstances or context are given, let us call them C , the practical doxastic attitude reduces to the following derivative attitude:

(PDAC) the *practical doxastic attitude in a context*: the policy S has on trusting p in the particular context C , i.e. whether or not she relies on p in the context C .

This time, an agent's attitude will be the result of a yes-or-no decision as to whether she is willing to let her reasoning and actions depend on p in some given particular situation. As such, the premises for practical reasoning are constituted by the agent's practical doxastic attitudes in the context at hand.

¹⁹ See e.g. Engel, "Trust and the Doxastic Family," 20-21.

Let me add five further clarifications. Where confusion might arise concerning which variant of the doxastic attitudes is intended, I will add the relevant acronym, namely TDA, PDA or PDAC.

First, it is clear that given any proposition and any agent, one can construct an answer to both of the questions stated in the explanations of (TDA) and (PDA) above. Although these answers may be expressed at different levels of detail, it is possible to speak both of an agent's theoretical and of her practical doxastic attitude towards a particular proposition. These descriptions are clearly not the same thing: the judgment of a proposition's truth (TDA) can be a very balanced report, which is quite independent of the circumstances one finds oneself in at that moment. On the other hand, whether one lets one's reasoning depend on that proposition in a particular context (PDAC), is a yes-or-no decision which may well turn out differently in different types of circumstances or for different types of possible actions. As such, a very subtle policy (PDA) can be generated.

Second, the demarcation between contexts in which the agent relies on a proposition and those in which she does not (PDA) is determined at least by the positive consequences the agent foresees in case she is right and the negative ones she is willing to accept in case she is mistaken. These consequences, which are considered only from the agent's perspective (in other words, irrespective of the actual consequences), can vary a great deal and are often hard to compare. In accordance with Bayesian decision theory, the weighted sum of the relevant consequences can be called the *expected utility* for the agent of relying on a certain proposition in a certain context. But as it is not needed for our purposes that agents actually make such calculations, it suffices to assume that agents can compare the consequences they foresee qualitatively.

Third, the attitudes are defined descriptively without reference to rational behavior or to any normative theory. For rational agents, theoretical and practical doxastic attitudes are of course related: propositions of which one is fairly confident that they are true will be relied on in a wide variety of circumstances, while propositions that one suspects of being false will be relied on only in contexts in which the penalty of being mistaken is rather low.

In fact, Bayesian decision theory provides a method for calculating the most rational practical doxastic attitude in a certain context (PDAC) given an agent's degrees of belief towards the relevant propositions (a quantitative description of her TDA) and (quantified) expected utilities of relying on those propositions in that context. However, agents are clearly not always able to perform these quantifications and calculations effectively. This explains why in everyday circumstances, even if an agent intends to be rational, her theoretical and practical

attitudes will sometimes appear to be at odds. Also, even rational agents differ in their perceptions of the utilities: two agents having the same degree of confidence in a proposition might rely on it differently in similar circumstances. This explains why the various folk notions describing doxastic attitudes allow for independent descriptions of an agent's theoretical and practical doxastic attitude towards a certain proposition (see Section 4).

Fourth, the theoretical doxastic attitude resembles what classical epistemologists typically have in mind when talking about doxastic attitudes (as it reports the agent's perception of the truth of a proposition). To them, the practical doxastic attitude may seem an awkward addition. Yet it is a genuine doxastic attitude. For recall the three requirements stipulated in the definition of doxastic attitudes. First, the theoretical doxastic attitude clearly has a mind-to-world direction of fit: an agent adopts a policy to trust p depending on how she perceives the world and what might happen in it, and therefore her policy reflects her perception of the world.²⁰ Secondly, there is no world-to-mind direction of fit with respect to p : in purely specifying the circumstances in which she trusts p , an agent does not express any desire that the world should confirm to the content of p . Thirdly, the attitude is defined solely in terms of the agent's internal perception of the circumstances, the consequences she herself foresees and her assessment of the trustworthiness of the proposition, all of which are criteria internal to her.

Fifth, it is common to define the philosophical notion of 'degrees of belief' technically in terms of dispositions to bet, which would reduce the theoretical doxastic attitude (TDA) to a mere variation of the practical doxastic attitude (PDA). Such an operationalist view, which has proven to be an excellent starting point for rational decision theory, is, however, not a problem for the framework I am proposing here. My goal is to distinguish two qualitatively distinct human modes of assessing a proposition, resulting in two doxastic attitudes, which can be independently described in a qualitative way, a distinction that is reflected in the various doxastic folk notions (see Section 4). I accept that, for the theoretical attitude, it may be possible that humans can only make qualitative comparisons, and that, if the attitude needs to be operationalized quantitatively (for use in a

²⁰ To clarify this point, consider the following example: an agent S decides to accept the proposition p , having no specified theoretical attitude towards it, for a certain *research context* (a context in which the consequences of being mistaken are negligible). Suppose that during this research, S gathers evidence that p is very unlikely. Apart from specifying S 's theoretical doxastic attitude towards p , this evidence will also lead S to adapt her practical doxastic attitude: S will now accept p in hardly any context (where before she was willing to trust it for research contexts). In other words, the agent aims to match her policy (her attitude) to the perceived external world.

normative theory of decision making), this can probably be done only by equating theoretical attitudes (TDA) with practical doxastic attitudes for certain artificial and purified contexts (PDAC) such as ‘no strings attached’ bets.²¹ Yet though it can be argued that the quantitative operationalization of the notion ‘degrees of belief’ is, in a technical sense, an (artificial) practical doxastic attitude, the notion can still be used qualitatively as a primitive doxastic concept to describe the theoretical doxastic attitude, as this operationalization is not required for describing various folk notions of doxastic attitudes.

In summary, then, and taking the agent’s evidence to be fixed at a certain moment, the theoretical doxastic attitude (TDA) is a context-insensitive doxastic attitude that allows for a range of degrees of confidence in the truth of p , while the practical doxastic attitude (PDA) is a context-sensitive attitude that reduces to a yes-or-no decision in each context (PDAC) depending on the expected utility of the two options in that context. For rational agents, these two attitudes towards a certain proposition are related, but the nature of this relation depends on how each particular agent balances her theoretical appraisal with expected utility.

4. Three Categories of Doxastic Concepts

The many known doxastic concepts, such as ‘doubting,’ ‘accepting,’ ‘assuming,’ ‘having some confidence,’ ‘suspending judgment,’ ‘hypothesizing,’ ‘being certain of,’ ‘suspecting’ and ‘believing’ (in its specific and intuitive folk psychological meaning) may all be regarded as (partial) descriptions of the nature of either one or both of the two doxastic attitudes I have distinguished.

Of these doxastic concepts, some, such as ‘having a particular degree of confidence in (the truth of) p ,’ ‘giving p some credit’ or ‘being (un)certain of p ’ give a clear description of the nature of the theoretical doxastic attitude of the agent towards the proposition. They specify up to a certain level of detail how the agent judges the truth of p , but give hardly any information about when the agent intends to let her reasoning depend on p . For instance, suppose that an agent acknowledges that her chances of recovering from a disease are fifty-fifty (TDA). In other words, her degree of confidence in the truth of either possibility, of recovering or not, is equally large. This information tells us nothing about her practical doxastic attitudes (PDA). An optimistic person might base all her practical reasoning and actions on the premise that she will recover, while a

²¹ In real life, winning or losing a bet has not only monetary consequences, but also psychological and social ones in the form of joy, sadness, self-confidence boosts or dips, gain or loss of social prestige, etc. Therefore, it is hard to call the bet contexts used to define ‘degrees of belief’ actual real-life contexts.

pessimist might do the opposite. As concepts of this type describe only the theoretical doxastic attitude of an agent towards p , they can be called, in short, *theoretical doxastic concepts*. Of these, 'having a *particular degree* of confidence in the truth of p ' can be regarded as the basic or primitive notion, because it allows for a description of any theoretical doxastic attitude by specifying 'a particular degree' qualitatively. For example, 'being certain' means having full confidence, while 'giving some credit' means that one takes 'a particular degree' to mean a substantial amount, but generally less than the amount of confidence in the other option.

Other doxastic concepts, such as 'accepting that p is the case,' 'suspending judgment as to whether p is the case,' 'taking p to be a relevant possibility' are examples of *practical doxastic concepts*. They indicate the type of circumstances or contexts in which the agent will let her reasoning depend on p (or not) (PDA), while giving hardly any further information about exactly how much confidence the agent has in the truth of p (TDA). For instance, in most circumstances, people accept that in general their partner will not lie to them (PDA), but if asked how certain they are about this (TDA), some would answer that they have some doubts whether this is really the case, while others would be fully confident.

Similarly, if an agent suspends judgment as to whether p is the case, and thus does not rely on p in any context (PDA), one does not know whether, theoretically, p or $\sim p$ seems more plausible to her (TDA). Of the practical doxastic concepts, 'accepting' can be considered the primitive notion, because it allows for a description of any practical doxastic attitude (PDA) by specifying in which contexts the agent accepts the proposition (PDAC).

Finally, some doxastic concepts, such as 'believing that p ', 'doubting whether p ,' 'being ignorant about p ' have both a theoretical and a practical meaning, or, in other words, describe to some degree the nature of both the agent's theoretical and practical doxastic attitude towards p . For instance, when an agent believes p (in its intuitive folk meaning), we certainly know that she has a high degree of confidence in the truth of p (TDA), but we also know (because people state their beliefs when prompted to give reasons for their actions) that she will be willing to base her practical reasoning on p as a premise in a large range of circumstances (PDA). The ambiguity of this notion arises from the fact that one can emphasize one part or the other, the theoretical or the practical, as we will see in the following sections.

The remainder of this paper will examine how to understand this dual nature, both theoretical and practical, of the folk notion of 'belief.' This will be done by applying the conceptual framework presented thus far in order to reassess

two important debates in epistemology: namely concerning the difference between ‘belief’ and ‘acceptance’ and the difference between ‘(plain) beliefs’ and ‘degrees of belief.’

The main goal of this analysis will be to show that ‘belief’ cannot be retained as a specific fine-grained primitive doxastic concept (apart from its technical coarse-grained meaning). If one tries to capture the intuitive sense of the folk notion of belief, one obtains a complex and, hence, secondary notion, reducible to a suitable expression of ‘degrees of confidence’ and ‘acceptances.’ I will argue that these two concepts are far better suited than ‘belief’ to be considered as primitive doxastic concepts, because each of them specifies only one of the two doxastic attitudes. Still, precisely because of this dual nature of the folk notion of belief, the notion of ‘belief’ can be retained in its coarse-grained philosophical sense, as denoting any doxastic attitude (either practically or theoretically) that assents to its content, as long as one takes care to specify the attitude more precisely in detailed philosophical analysis.

5. Belief and Acceptance

The notion ‘acceptance’ was introduced by Van Fraassen to describe the attitude of scientists towards their most empirically adequate theories.²² According to him, acceptance of a theory does not necessarily entail that one believes it,²³ yet at the same time encompasses more than belief, because the attitude of acceptance has the pragmatic dimension of commitment to a theory, which is a question not of truth but of usefulness.²⁴

Given the importance of the notion of acceptance in general and its difference from belief, it soon became a research topic for epistemology. The most influential epistemological account to date has been given by Cohen, who defines *acceptance* of p as having or adopting

[...] a policy of deeming, positing or postulating that p – i.e. of including that proposition or rule among one’s premises for deciding what to do or think in a particular context, whether or not one feels it to be true that p .²⁵

Cohen further states that acceptance, unlike belief, is more or less under an agent’s voluntary control²⁶ and acknowledges implicitly that acceptance is a

²² Van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image*, 4.

²³ Van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image*, 9, 46.

²⁴ Van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image*, 88.

²⁵ Jonathan Cohen, *An Essay on Belief and Acceptance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 4.

context-dependent notion.²⁷ These two characteristics are also stressed by other authors such as Bratman²⁸ and Engel.²⁹ Engel further holds that, while truth is the criterion for evaluating beliefs, utility is the criterion for acceptances.³⁰ A final explanation of the distinction between these two notions is given by Lehrer, who approaches the topic from a somewhat different point of view. According to him, belief is a first-order doxastic state, while acceptance is a second-order 'metamental' state based on a reflective evaluation of one's first-order beliefs.³¹ Yet I am tempted here to follow Engel, who notes that Lehrer's account neglects the important pragmatic aspect of acceptance as well as the idea of trust, which is inherent in the notion.³² Therefore, I do regard acceptance as a first-order attitude having propositions as its content, not beliefs. Yet this does not prevent one from regarding beliefs, in the spirit of Lehrer's view, as constitutive in the formation of one's acceptances. If the acceptance towards a proposition is consciously formed (by e.g. applying a kind of decision theory), this decision will clearly have taken into account beliefs about this proposition and related ones, such as the foreseen consequences of particular actions.

Using the framework introduced in this paper, it seems at first sight possible to describe the distinction between these two notions as the difference between a theoretical doxastic concept ('belief') and a practical one ('acceptance'). Of the four contrasting features between beliefs and acceptances that are pointed out in the literature, the context-sensitivity of acceptances (and practical doxastic attitudes in general) and utility as their evaluation criterion have already been discussed in previous sections. The other two contrasting features relate to the fact that an agent's practical doxastic attitude (PDAC) can be the result of a decision. Given that such a decision takes into account the agent's theoretical doxastic attitude (TDA), among other things such as an assessment of the circumstances, it can be understood why acceptances are more under an agent's voluntary control and influenced by her theoretical doxastic attitudes.

²⁶ Cohen, *An Essay on Belief and Acceptance*, 20.

²⁷ Cohen, *An Essay on Belief and Acceptance*, 14.

²⁸ Michael E. Bratman, "Practical Reasoning and Acceptance in a Context," *Mind* 101, 401 (1992): 5.

²⁹ Pascal Engel, "Believing, Holding True, and Accepting," *Philosophical Explorations* 1, 2 (1998): 145-48.

³⁰ Engel, "Believing, Holding True," 146-48.

³¹ Keith Lehrer, "Acceptance and Belief Revisited," in *Believing and Accepting*, ed. Pascal Engel (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000): 209.

³² Engel, "Trust and the Doxastic Family," 17.

Notwithstanding the *prima facie* plausibility of this first analysis of the distinction between ‘belief’ and ‘acceptance,’ Frankish argues convincingly that distinguishing these attitudes as such – in our framework, considering belief as a theoretical doxastic concept and acceptance as a practical one – is problematic, because it “suggests that acceptance is not a form of belief at all, but a wholly different attitude.”³³ He agrees that there are acceptances that are not beliefs, but maintains that “it would be perverse to claim that none of them are.”³⁴ In other words, people do believe some (if not most) of the states present in their conscious practical reasoning.

Frankish’s concern is a genuine one. It may be pointed out in response that regarding beliefs and acceptances as distinct attitudes does not imply that an agent could not hold both of them towards a single proposition. But the fact that beliefs can serve as premises even if no form of decision theory or other form of conscious consideration is applied suggests that the adoption of a new belief must in itself directly imply the acceptance of this newly believed proposition for certain circumstances. In other words, acceptance for certain circumstances is part of the meaning of the attitude of believing, such that the folk notion of ‘belief’ cannot be a purely theoretical doxastic concept.

Frankish explains this problem by classifying plain beliefs as a subspecies of acceptances, i.e. those that are “epistemically motivated and unrestricted as to context.”³⁵ His explanation, however, seems at least a little awkward, because context-dependency is an inherent feature of Cohen’s definition of acceptance, which Frankish himself embraces. Frankish’s idea of unrestrictedness as to context implies that a belief can serve as a premise for practical reasoning in any context. But if a believed proposition may be considered a true premise in any context, this is the same, it seems, as adopting a policy of trusting the belief in any context: for there is no longer any demarcation between contexts in which one can trust the belief and those in which one cannot. This view is hugely problematic. Kaplan, who calls it the *act view*, argues that it is fallacious³⁶ – a fact of which Frankish is aware³⁷ – because agents are not certain of their beliefs. Hence, they will, for example, not bet on the truth of their beliefs if the stakes are too high, even if they

³³ Keith Frankish, *Mind and Supermind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 86.

³⁴ Frankish, *Mind and Supermind*, 87.

³⁵ Keith Frankish, “Partial Belief and Flat-Out Belief,” in *Degrees of Belief*, Synthese Library Vol. 342, ed. Franz Huber and Christoph Schmidt-Petri (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 86.

³⁶ Mark Kaplan, *Decision Theory as Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 104.

³⁷ Frankish, “Partial Belief and Flat-Out Belief,” 82.

are fully convinced. The act view would instruct them to always trust their belief and accept any bet.

The initial explanation of the distinction between ‘belief’ and ‘acceptance,’ outlined above, can be modified as follows in order to cope with Frankish’s concern. ‘Acceptance’ is, as noted, a purely practical doxastic concept, but the folk notion of ‘belief’ actually has both a theoretical and a practical meaning. On the one hand, it means that an agent has *at least* a rather high degree of confidence in the truth of the proposition. Exactly how high need not be numerically expressible, but a decent amount that is clearly larger than the amount of confidence in the opposite proposition is always minimally implied. On the other hand, it also means that the agent is willing to base her practical reasoning on this proposition in *at least* all contexts where the negative consequences in case she is mistaken seem acceptable to her.³⁸ This includes contexts where she cannot or does not assess these consequences, but where she has no reason to think that much depends on whether she trusts this proposition or not.

Keeping this in mind, one can identify the well-known examples in the literature on ‘acceptance,’ in which an agent does not act or reason on her beliefs, as contexts where these negative consequences are unacceptable for the agent. Consider the following example, often cited and originally developed by Cohen:³⁹ an attorney accepts that her client is innocent in the context of a particular trial, even though her own belief is that he is guilty. She does not accept her own belief in the context of the trial because the negative consequences of acting on that belief are unacceptable in this context, not only for her personal career but also, and more importantly, for the social institution of the judicial system. In contexts where the negative consequences of accepting her own belief are not so prominent, for example when she talks about the case with her husband/wife, the attorney might express and reason upon her own belief.

In conclusion, the folk notion of ‘belief’ describes the nature of both the theoretical and the practical attitude of an agent towards a certain proposition, and should therefore be handled with care. This double meaning – on the one hand, having a sufficiently high degree of confidence in the proposition’s truth (TDA), and on the other, being willing to rely on it in at least all contexts where

³⁸ Of course, holding a belief might entail that one accepts it in many more contexts. For instance, if I come to believe that there are no cars coming down the road by having a look in both directions, I will accept this proposition in the present context in which I have to decide whether I will cross the road, even though the consequences of being mistaken – being hit by a car – are not at all acceptable to me.

³⁹ Cohen, *An Essay on Belief and Acceptance*, 25.

the consequences of being mistaken seem to be acceptable (PDA) – also explains the diverging views one finds in the debate about ‘belief’ and ‘acceptance,’ because it is possible to lay the emphasis more on the theoretical or on the practical aspect of belief. When Van Fraassen, Cohen and others try to identify the differences between acceptances and beliefs, they appeal to intuitions about the theoretical meaning of ‘belief,’ a meaning which ‘acceptance’ lacks. But when Frankish rightly points out that some acceptances actually are beliefs, he appeals to existing intuitions about the practical meaning of ‘belief.’

6. Belief, Degrees of Belief and the Bayesian Challenge

The conceptual framework of this paper and the double meaning of the folk notion of belief can also help explain the distinction between the concepts ‘*plain belief*’ and ‘*partial belief*,’ the attitude of having a particular *degree of confidence* or *degree of belief* in a proposition, as well as the requirement put on any explication of this distinction by the Bayesian Challenge. This is the name given by Kaplan⁴⁰ to a problem that has been formulated in various ways by different authors; see for example Jeffrey⁴¹ for an early formulation and Frankish⁴² for a fairly recent one. Let us consider Frankish’s formulation here. As he writes:

Bayesian decision theory teaches us that the rational way to make decisions is to assign degrees of probability and desirability to the various possible outcomes of candidate actions and then choose the one that offers the best trade-off of desirability and likely success. [...] How can flat-out belief and desire have the psychological importance they seem to have, given their apparent irrelevance to rational action?⁴³

It is my own view, and the view of the authors who have formulated the Bayesian Challenge, that any account of the relation between plain belief and degrees of belief must also give a satisfying answer to this challenge. Generally speaking, three strategies to specify the relation between ‘plain belief’ and ‘partial belief’ are discernible in the literature.

A first strategy, and the one that has been most extensively explored, is what Foley has called the Lockean Thesis:

⁴⁰ Kaplan, *Decision Theory as Philosophy*, 89-101.

⁴¹ Richard C. Jeffrey, “Dracula meets Wolfman: Acceptance versus Partial Belief,” in *Induction, Acceptance and Rational Belief*, Synthese Library Vol. 26, ed. Marshall Swain (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1970): 158-61.

⁴² Frankish, “Partial Belief and Flat-out Belief,” 76.

⁴³ Frankish, “Partial Belief and Flat-out Belief,” 76

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To say that we believe a proposition is just to say that we are sufficiently confident of its truth for our attitude to be one of belief.⁴⁴

Yet this strategy, which, in our framework, identifies ‘believing that p ’ as a theoretical doxastic concept and defines it in terms of a threshold for the degree of belief in p , faces two severe threats.

First, this strategy has to cope with the famous lottery⁴⁵ and preface⁴⁶ paradoxes, which show that the Lockean thesis can yield inconsistent beliefs when combined with the aggregation principle for beliefs (which states that the conjunction of two beliefs is also a belief). These paradoxes are typically met by softening or qualifying the aggregation principle,⁴⁷ but this is generally done by introducing some context-sensitivity, which is hard to bring into accordance with the idea that degrees of belief (to which beliefs can, according to the Lockean thesis, be reduced) are, like all theoretical doxastic concepts, defined independent of context.⁴⁸

Second, this strategy also fails to meet the Bayesian Challenge, given that this challenge to explain the psychological importance of plain beliefs appeals particularly to intuitions of ‘belief’ as a practical doxastic concept. Theoretically, there may be a very minimal difference between an acquired belief and a proposition that falls just short of the threshold for belief, as degrees of belief are considered to be on a continuous scale. The Bayesian view perfectly explains how even a small difference in this regard can lead to widely divergent decisions based on this belief. It cannot explain, however, why agents, once they have acquired a belief, tend to take it into account in the most diverse situations, even situations to which the acquired belief is only marginally significant. This behavior can only be understood if we assume that an agent does not run a full Bayesian analysis for any

⁴⁴ Richard Foley, “The Epistemology of Belief and the Epistemology of Degrees of Belief,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 29, 2 (1992): 111.

⁴⁵ Henry Kyburg, *Probability and the Logic of Rational Belief* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 197.

⁴⁶ David C. Makinson, “The Paradox of the Preface,” *Analysis* 25 (1965): 205-207.

⁴⁷ For some alternative approaches, see Igor Douven, “A New Solution to the Paradoxes of Rational Acceptability,” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 53, 3 (2002): 391-410; Igor Douven, “The Lottery Paradox and our Epistemic Goal,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 89, 2 (2008): 204-225.

⁴⁸ It might be argued that if degrees of belief are defined in terms of betting behavior, they are in fact context-dependent. But the artificial context of a “no strings attached” bet, which is created to operationalize the idea of degrees of belief and has no real occurrence, should not be confused with the context in which a real agent is situated and in which she needs to take a decision. Her degree of belief in a proposition is independent of this actual context.

decision but simply adopts a policy to start relying on a belief in a large set of contexts once she has acquired it.

A second common strategy to specify the relation between '(plain) belief' and 'partial belief' is to regard 'plain belief' as a kind of behavioral disposition arising from an agent's partial beliefs, e.g. a disposition to assert the belief as a proposition⁴⁹ or to accept it.⁵⁰ These strategies identify belief solely as a practical doxastic concept. However, while this identification may meet the Bayesian Challenge, it fails to accord with our common (theoretical) intuitions about the context-insensitivity of beliefs. As long as there are no changes in the evidence an agent perceives, she will likely suppose that her beliefs hold in any context she may find herself in, while a characterization of 'belief' as a practical doxastic concept requires – to avoid the pitfall of the aforementioned act view – that one limits the set of circumstances in which the belief holds.

Finally, some authors, such as Bratman⁵¹ and Jeffrey,⁵² seem implicitly to deny the existence of plain beliefs and reduce them in every case either to a degree of belief or to an acceptance in certain contexts.

To implement this third strategy explicitly seems to me the best proposal. The intuitive folk notion of belief entails both, theoretically, that the agent has a sufficiently high context-insensitive degree of confidence in the truth of the proposition and, practically, that the agent has adopted a policy of relying on this proposition in at least all circumstances where the consequences of being mistaken seem acceptable to her.

This duality in the meaning of the notion can give rise to ambiguity, hence making it unfit for the philosophical analysis of doxastic concepts. Consider again some of the examples described above, which pop up in the literature. Take the attorney who believes that her client is actually guilty: does this mean that, although the attorney is quite confident about her client's guilt (TDA), she practically bases all her reasoning on his innocence (PDA)? Or does it mean that, except for her public appearances in court, she reasons on the basis of his guilt to determine her strategy (PDA)? Or consider another example, of a woman who believes that her husband/wife is not cheating on her. Does this just mean that she takes this to be the case without questioning it (PDA), although she has to admit that she cannot be fully certain (TDA)? Or does it mean that she is also

⁴⁹ Kaplan, *Decision Theory as Philosophy*, 109.

⁵⁰ Frankish, "Partial Belief and Flat-Out Belief," 86.

⁵¹ Bratman, "Practical Reasoning and Acceptance," 1-16.

⁵² Jeffrey, "Dracula meets Wolfman," 157-85.

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wholeheartedly confident about it (TDA)? Clearly, the notion of 'belief' is not precise enough to describe the particular attitudes in these examples.

In light of these considerations, it seems clear that we can gain precision in our analyses of doxastic concepts by replacing any fine-grained specific concept of 'belief' with the more precise and primitive concepts of 'degrees of confidence' and 'acceptance,' for using the latter concepts makes it possible to clarify whether the theoretical, the practical or both attitudes are meant. Still, when agents report on their doxastic attitudes towards p , the attitudes of 'having a high degree of confidence in p ' and 'being willing to rely on p if the negative consequences seem acceptable' are often present together. Therefore, I see no problem in retaining the folk notion of 'belief' as a somewhat ambiguous but sufficiently clear shorthand to denote both attitudes in daily life. Also, precisely because of its rather broad meaning, 'belief' in a coarse-grained sense can be retained as a technical concept referring to any doxastic concept that expresses an attitude of assent to its content. In detailed philosophical analysis, however, much precision can be gained by eliminating altogether the idea that there exists a specific and unambiguous fine-grained doxastic notion of 'belief.'

7. Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that, in the literature on 'doxastic attitudes', the notion of 'belief' is used both in a coarse-grained sense to indicate any doxastic attitude that indicates assent towards a proposition, and in a more specific, fine-grained sense to be contrasted with other doxastic concepts such as 'acceptance' or 'having a specific degree of belief.' I have argued that, while the coarse-grained meaning of 'belief' is technically sound and useful for philosophical analysis, the fine-grained meaning, which draws on the intuitive folk notion of belief, is utterly ambiguous.

In order to dispel this ambiguity, I have presented a new framework for describing fine-grained doxastic attitudes which is not reliant on a specific and intuitively clear fine-grained concept of 'belief.' In this framework, I distinguish between an agent's theoretical doxastic attitude (her credence in p) and her practical doxastic attitude (her policy on trusting p to be used as a premise for her practical reasoning). Given this distinction, all well-known doxastic concepts can be placed into one of three categories: theoretical doxastic concepts (of which 'having a certain degree of confidence' is the primitive notion), practical doxastic concepts (of which 'acceptance' is the primitive notion) and doxastic concepts that describe both attitudes, such as the folk notion of 'belief.'

After introducing this framework, I have argued for a reductionist stance concerning the idea of an unambiguous and specific fine-grained notion of 'belief' and showed that much precision can be gained in philosophical analysis by using a suitable combination of 'degrees of belief' and 'acceptances' whenever the folk notion of 'belief' is intended.

The applications of this new framework need not, and should not, be restricted to the analysis of 'belief'. An interesting question for further research is whether this framework can provide us with insights into the specific nature of other important doxastic concepts, such as 'entertaining a hypothesis,' 'suspending judgment' or various forms of ignorance. Furthermore, it needs to be investigated whether this reductionist stance on a specific fine-grained notion of belief might also give us more precision in other epistemological debates that rely heavily on the notion of belief, such as debates about rationality, justification and the theory of knowledge.

MOORE'S PARADOX AND EPISTEMIC NORMS

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ABSTRACT: Why does it strike us as absurd to believe that it is raining and that one doesn't believe that it is raining? Some argue that it strikes us as absurd because belief is normative. The beliefs that it is raining and that one doesn't believe that it is are, it is suggested, self-falsifying. But, so it is argued, it is essential to belief that beliefs *ought* not, among other things, be self-falsifying. That is why the beliefs strike us as absurd. I argue that while the absurdity may consist in and be explained by self-falsification, we have no reasons to accept the further claim that self-falsifying beliefs are absurd because violating norms.

KEYWORDS: Moore's paradox, epistemic norms, normative explanation, absurdity

1. Moorean Absurdity

G.E. Moore¹ said that there's something 'absurd' with asserting, "It is raining but I don't believe that it is raining." Moore also found believing "He has gone out, but he hasn't" absurd. He found it paradoxical that the absurdity persists despite the possible truth of the proposition asserted or believed.² There are circumstances in which it is true both that it is raining and that I do not believe that it is raining. However, it appears absurd to assert, or believe, that it is raining and that I don't believe it. That, in a nutshell, is Moore's paradox.

Moore's paradox displays two faces: a linguistic and a psychological.³ The linguistic paradox is that it might be true both that it is raining and that I don't believe it although it would be strange of me to *assert* both. The psychological paradox is that it might be true both that it is raining and that I don't believe that

¹ G.E. Moore, "A Reply to My Critics," in *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, ed. P.A. Schlipp (New York: Tudor Publishing, 1942), 533-677. See also G.E. Moore, "Russell's Theory of Descriptions," in *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, ed. P.A. Schlipp (New York: Tudor Publishing, 1944), 175-225.

² Thomas Baldwin, *G. E. Moore: Selected Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993). This point has also been made in D.M. Rosenthal, "Self-Knowledge and Moore's Paradox," *Philosophical Studies* 77 (1995): 195-209.

³ Jordi Fernández, "Self-Knowledge, Rationality and Moore's Paradox," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 71, 3 (2005): 533-556; Sydney Shoemaker, "Moore's Paradox and Self-Knowledge," *Philosophical Studies* 77 (1995): 211-228.

it is, although it would be strange for me to *believe* both.⁴ I will focus on the psychological version of the paradox.

Both faces of Moore's paradox display two profiles. We may distinguish between believing that

(1) p & I don't believe that p,

and,

(2) p & I believe that not-p.⁵

If you believe (1), you believe that p and that you don't believe that p. If you believe (2), you believe that p and that you believe that not-p. Both (1) and (2) thus involves a first-order belief, that is the first conjunct, and a second-order belief about the first-order belief, that is the second conjunct. In (1) the second-order belief is the belief that you lack belief in the first conjunct. Let us call this the *omissive* version of the paradox. In (2), in contrast, the second-order belief is the belief that you believe the negation of the first-order belief. Let us call this the *commissive* version of the paradox.⁶

I will assume, what is widely agreed, that belief distributes over conjunction.⁷ According to the distribution principle, if I believe that it is raining and that water consists of H₂O, I believe that it is raining and I believe that water consists of H₂O.

Distribution Principle: If I believe (p & q), then I believe that p and I believe that q.

From the Distribution Principle we may infer that if I believe the omissive (1), then

(3) I believe that p & I believe that I don't believe that p.

From the Distribution Principle we may also infer that if I believe the commissive (2), then

⁴ Rodrigo Borges, "How to Moore a Gettier: Notes on the Dark Side of Knowledge," *Logos & Episteme* V, 2 (2014): 133-140.

⁵ Mitchell S. Green and John N. Williams, "Moore's Paradox, Truth and Accuracy," *Acta Analytica* 26 (2011): 243-255; John N. Williams, "Moore's Paradox, Evan's Principle and Self-Knowledge," *Analysis* 64, 4 (2004): 348-353; John N. Williams, "Moore's Paradox and the Priority of Belief Thesis," *Philosophical Studies* 165 (2013): 1117-1138.

⁶ Green and Williams, "Moore's Paradox, Truth and Accuracy."

⁷ John N. Williams, "Moore's Paradox in Belief and Desire," *Acta Analytica* 29 (2014): 1-23; John N. Williams, "Wittgenstein, Moorean Absurdity and its Disappearance from Speech," *Synthese* 149, 1 (2006): 225-254.

(4) I believe that p & I believe that I believe that not-p.

Both (3) and (4) conserve the initial intuition that Moore-paradoxical beliefs are not first-order contradictions. In (3), since I have a first-order belief that p but not a second-order belief that I believe that p, the second-order belief that I believe that I don't believe that p does not contradict my first-order belief that p. Similarly, in (4), since I have a first-order belief that p but no second-order belief that I believe that p, the second-order belief that I believe that not-p does not contradict my first-order belief that p.

Hence, contradiction arises only by introduction of commutability of a double-belief principle, also known as the principle of Introspective Infallibility,⁸ namely:

Introspective Infallibility: If I believe that I (do not) believe that (not-) p then I (do not) believe that (not-) p.

By the principle of Introspective Infallibility we may infer that (3) is self-contradictory. The reason for this is that, under introspective infallibility, the second conjunct's second-order belief (the belief that I don't believe that p) collapses into a first-order omission of belief that p. But this, given the distribution principle, contradicts the first conjunct's first-order belief that p.

We may also infer that (4) is self-falsifying. The reason for this is that, under introspective infallibility, the second conjunct's second-order belief (the belief that I believe that not-p) collapses into a first-order belief that not-p. But this, given the distribution principle, falsifies the first conjunct's first-order belief that p.

The absurdity of Moore-paradoxical beliefs is now clear. The *contents* of the relevant beliefs have unproblematic truth-conditions. But *believing* that one has the beliefs is problematic. If one believes that one's Moore-paradoxical beliefs are true, then, by the Distribution Principle and the principle of Introspective Infallibility, either one has self-contradictory or self-falsifying beliefs. Hence we may conclude with Green and Williams that,

(6) The absurdity of Moore-paradoxical beliefs consists in either self-contradiction or self-falsification.

Note that what constitutes absurdity is not that the beliefs are necessarily false. (1) and (2), for all that (6) says, may be true. It is just that *if* one believes that one's belief in (1) or (2) is true, one's beliefs are either self-contradictory or self-falsifying.

⁸ Williams, "Moore's Paradox in Belief and Desire," 5.

Perhaps one disagrees with (6) on the basis that belief distribution or introspective infallibility is false. I will not attempt such an attack here. I will be concerned with suggested *explanations* of the absurdity, rather than with questioning the suggested *constitution* claims. The specific explanation I will argue against is the normative explanation that one *ought* or *may* not have the relevant beliefs. To that end I will grant proponents of such an explanation the premises needed to arrive at (6) – namely both the Distribution Principle and the principle of Introspective Infallibility. Let us grant, then, that the absurdity of Moore-paradoxical beliefs *consists in* self-contradiction or self-falsification, pending whether it is the omissive or commissive form that is at issue.

2. Beliefs and Norms

It has been suggested that what explains the absurdity of Moore-paradoxical belief is epistemic norms. Epistemic norms impinge oughts on doxastic states in general. There are many proposals about precisely what is normative about doxastic states.⁹ To understand what about epistemic normativity could possibly account for Moorean absurdity we have first to disambiguate the sweeping claim that belief is normative. That is what I turn to in this section.

Norms are usually supposed to be *imperatives*. For instance, the norm not to cheat has the imperative form: you *ought not* cheat. Some norms may be *conditional* imperatives. For instance, there may be a fairness norm to share with those who have less. This norm has the conditional imperative form: *if* S has less than you, *then* you ought to share with S. The deontic force of the imperative characteristic of norms is not necessarily obligatory though.¹⁰ Instead of impinging *oughts*, a norm may have the force of a *may*; instead of having obligatory deontic force norms may have permissible deontic force.¹¹ The fairness norm with obligatory deontic force would make it normatively incorrect to not share with those who have less. In contrast, if the same norm had permissibility-force it would not be normatively incorrect to not share with those who have less, since in that case the norm states that you *may* share with those who have less, not that you *ought* to. Not sharing in that case is to not do what you're permitted to.

Epistemic norms likewise impinge imperatives on doxastic states. The deontic force of epistemic norms may be conditional or not, and they may apply to

⁹ Clayton Littlejohn, "Are Epistemic Reasons Ever Reasons to Promote?" *Logos & Episteme* IV, 3 (2013): 353-360.

¹⁰ Pascal Engel, "Sosa on the Normativity of Belief," *Philosophical Studies* 166 (2013): 617-624.

¹¹ Clayton Littlejohn, "Moore's Paradox and Epistemic Norms," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 88, 1 (2010): 79-100.

doxastic states as obligations or permissions.¹² But apart from their formal deontic properties, there's also an important difference between the *contents* of epistemic norms. The content of epistemic norms depends on what aspect of doxastic states they are supposed to govern; truth-value, evidential support, justification, etc. These distinctions open up a logical space for a fauna of epistemic norms. The first to be considered among epistemic norms is the truth norm in obligatory form:¹³ namely,

Obligatory truth norm: You ought to believe that p only if p.

This norm obliges one to believe only what is true – even if not *all* truths, since it does not have the form ‘if p you ought to believe that p.’¹⁴ The obligatory truth norm can be translated into permissive form,¹⁵ thus:

Permissive truth norm: You may believe that p only if p.

The difference between the obligatory and permissive force of these norms may be brought out by substitution of the positive obligatory with obligatory negative form. In that case the obligatory imperative ‘ought’ translates into the conditional imperative ‘ought *not* believe that p *unless* p.’ This negative form is imperatively equivalent in force to the positive permissive. According to the latter, you are permitted to believe that p only if p, which is equivalent to being obliged not to believe that p unless p.

A second epistemic norm to consider is the evidence norm,¹⁶ namely:

Obligatory evidence norm: You ought to believe that p only if you have sufficient evidence that p.

The ‘sufficient evidence’ criterion may be cashed out in a variety of manners depending on one’s analysis of ‘evidence.’¹⁷ Suppose I believe that it is raining in Reykjavik. One way for my belief to be in accord with the obligatory evidence norm is if I observe the rain myself, if I hear meteorological reports that it is raining in Reykjavik, etc. We may accept that some state or proposition *e*

¹² Anthony Booth and Rik Peels, “Epistemic Justification, Rights, and Permissibility,” *Logos & Episteme* III, 3 (2012): 405-411.

¹³ Paul A. Boghossian, “The Normativity of Content,” *Philosophical Issues* 13 (2003): 31-45.

¹⁴ Nishi Shaw and J. David Velleman, “Doxastic Deliberation,” *The Philosophical Review* 114, 4 (2005): 497-534; Pascal Engel, “Belief and Normativity,” *Disputatio* 2, 23 (2007): 179-203.

¹⁵ Littlejohn, “Moore’s Paradox and Epistemic Norms.”

¹⁶ Timothy Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); cf. Claudio de Almeida, “What Moore’s Paradox Is About,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 62, 1 (2001): 33-58.

¹⁷ Engel, “Belief and Normativity,” 185.

qualifies as evidence that p only if it raises the probability that p above some threshold integer, or only if it raises the probability of p above the probability of p in the absence of e .¹⁸ Either way the idea is that you ought to believe that p only if the probability of p given e meets the relevant qualifier for e . The corresponding permissive force of the evidence norm is,

Permissive evidence norm: You may believe that p only if you have sufficient evidence that p .

This norm differs from the former obligatory in that if you do *not* believe that p given e you're not normatively incorrect, since in this case you're simply not exerting permission. In the former obligatory form this would be incorrect though. For in that case you do not just not utilize permission but violate an obligation.¹⁹

It may, thirdly, be suggested that *knowledge* is an epistemic norm for doxastic states.²⁰ The knowledge norm with obligatory deontic force reads:

Obligatory knowledge norm: You ought to believe that p only if you know that p .

The imperatival force of this norm is that your belief that p is as it ought to be just in case you know that p is true. The knowledge-norm thus differs from the truth-norm in there being circumstances in which your belief that p is in accord with the latter but in violation of the former. There are circumstances in which your belief that p is true but you don't know it.²¹ Translating the knowledge norm into its permissive counterpart, we get:

Permissive knowledge norm: You may believe that p only if you know that p .

It should be clear by now in what the difference between the obligatory and permissive force of the relevant norm consists. In the former obligatory you are wrong in not believing that p if you know that p whereas, in the latter permissive, you are not wrong if you don't believe that p when you know that p since it says that you *may* believe that p only if you know that p . The permissive knowledge norm and the permissive truth norm differ in a similar manner to how their

¹⁸ Franck Lihoreau, "Are Reasons Evidence of Oughts?" *Logos & Episteme* III, 1 (2012): 153-160.

¹⁹ Conor McHugh, "Beliefs and Aims," *Philosophical Studies* 160 (2012): 425-439.

²⁰ Littlejohn, "Are Epistemic Reasons Ever Reasons to Promote?"; Declan Smithies, "The Normative Role of Knowledge," *Noûs* 46, 2 (2012): 265-288; Michael Huemer, "Moore's Paradox and the Norm of Belief," in *Themes from G. E. Moore: New Essays in Epistemology and Ethics*, eds. Susana Nuccetelli and Gary Seay (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 142-158.

²¹ David Owens, *Reasons Without Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2000); David Owens, "Does Belief Have an Aim?" *Philosophical Studies* 115 (2003): 283-305.

obligatory versions differ. That is, there are circumstances in which a belief that *p* is permitted courtesy *p* being true whereas, if *p* is not known, believing *p* in those circumstances violates the permissive truth norm.²²

Note that the above kinds of norms may support each other in various ways.²³ Endorsement of either version of the knowledge norm naturally supports endorsement of the conjunction of the corresponding version of the truth and evidence norms. The reason for that is that if you accept that it is correct to believe that *p* only if one knows that *p*, then, on most accounts of knowledge, *p* must be true and the belief that *p* enjoy some kind of support.²⁴ This norm-conglomeration is not necessary though. You may endorse either version of the evidence norm, for instance, yet deny both versions of the truth norm on the grounds that given accord with the former your belief is permitted even if false.²⁵ Then again, you may argue that there's no *absolute* norm of belief but that beliefs may be correct or incorrect in many different respects simultaneously.²⁶ In some circumstances the normative correctness of doxastic states may be adjudicated by their truth-value while, in others, it may be adjudicated by evidential support.

We have now distinguished epistemic norms according to their *contents* – whether the aspect of doxastic states that the norms are about is truth-value, evidential support, or knowledge – and according to *deontic force* – whether the norms take obligatory and permissive form. We have also considered the possibility of combining these in various respects. But epistemic norms may be distinguished along a further, third axis, namely, according to in what relation doxastic states are supposed to stand to the different imperatives. Irrespective of a norm's content and force we may ask how the norm applies to doxastic states to begin with. Suppose, for instance, that I believe that water has the chemical composition CH₄. Then you tell me that I ought not have that belief because it is false. I might then wonder what the nature of the purported relation between my belief and the norm is. There are basically two alternative understandings of how imperatives attach to doxastic states.

One proposal is that the nature of the relation between beliefs and norms is conceptual.²⁷ On this account, it is analytically true that a belief is correct only if it is in accord with the relevant norm.

²² Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits*.

²³ Littlejohn, "Moore's Paradox and Epistemic Norms."

²⁴ Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits*.

²⁵ Boghossian, "The Normativity of Content."

²⁶ José L. Zalabardo, "Why Believe the Truth? Shah and Velleman on the Aim of Belief," *Philosophical Explorations* 13, 1 (2010): 1-21.

²⁷ Engel, "Sosa on the Normativity of Belief," 621.

Patrizio Lo Presti

Conceptual claim: The concept of belief is such that the belief-norm applies to all beliefs.

Suppose, e.g., that the norm under consideration is the truth norm in obligatory form. According to the conceptual claim²⁸ the norm would read:

Conceptual obligatory truth norm: The concept of belief is such that, for all beliefs, you ought to believe that p only if p .

My belief that water is CH_4 would then be incorrect according to our understanding of the concept 'belief.' We cannot understand something as a belief, the suggestion is, without understanding it as something one is obliged to if true, thus as incorrect if false. By believing that water is CH_4 I violate an obligation to believe only truths – an obligation attached to belief by definition. Consider in contrast the truth norm with permissive force.²⁹ From the conceptual claim we then get,

Conceptual permissive truth norm: The concept of belief is such that, for all beliefs, you may believe that p only if p .

In this case my belief that water is CH_4 is, again, incorrect according to how we conceptualize belief, because I am not permitted to that belief given that water is not CH_4 . However, *were* water CH_4 but I did not believe it, the omission of belief would not be incorrect, since I would then merely have not utilized a permission to believe.

The evidence and knowledge norms are easily translatable into the conceptual claim. All we have to do is to substitute them for 'the belief-norm' in the conceptual claim. I will not waste space making them explicit here. All that is required is to insert 'the concept of belief is such that...' before the imperative 'ought' or 'may' in the relevant norm above. This would yield the norm that, for instance, the concept of belief is such that you may believe that water is CH_4 only if there is some proposition e such that the probability that water is CH_4 given e is higher than water not being CH_4 .

The other answer to our inquiry into the nature of the relation between alleged epistemic norms and doxastic states is that the relation is metaphysical. It is claimed that the *nature* of the psychological state that is belief is such that it is normatively regulated.³⁰ This metaphysical connection is often spelled out in term

²⁸ Shah and Velleman, "Doxastic Deliberation," 252; David Velleman, *The Possibility of Practical Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 277-278.

²⁹ Littlejohn, "Moore's Paradox and Epistemic Norms."

³⁰ Ralph Wedgwood, "The Aim of Belief," *Philosophical Perspectives* 16 (2002): 267-297.

of the 'aim of belief.'³¹ The aim of cognitive mechanisms responsible for belief production are such that, as the familiar slogan has it, their aim is the production of a state whose representational content fits the world.³² If the produced state's contents don't fit the world it is incorrect. Another slogan that quite pinpoints the idea is of normative principles 'built into' our cognitive apparatuses.³³ We may formulate the relevant connection thus:

Metaphysical claim: The nature of belief is such that the belief-norm applies to all beliefs.

The procedure of disambiguation of various contents and force of metaphysical belief-norms should be clear by now. Substituting the truth-, evidence- or knowledge norm in either obligatory or permissive form for 'the belief-norm' in the metaphysical claim yield the corresponding specification. For example, introducing the truth norm with obligatory deontic force gives,

Metaphysical obligatory truth norm: The nature of belief is such that, for all beliefs, you ought to believe that p only if p,

and so on for the other norms and deontic forces. To avoid tedious repetitions I'll avoid spelling out their exact formulations here. If necessary we may do so at any point in the argument.

The difference between the conceptual and metaphysical construal of the relation between epistemic norms and doxastic states is this. The conceptual claim entails that possession of the concept of belief is sufficient for a subject to recognize that, were his belief that p to violate the relevant norm, then his belief would be normatively incorrect.³⁴ What explains incorrectness in this case is the norm analytic to the concept of belief. On the metaphysical construal, in contrast, insofar one has, say, a representation-dedicated cognitive module with the aim of supplying truth-valued representations,³⁵ then satisfaction of that aim suffices for the output cognitive states to be in accord with the relevant norm. Here it is the

³¹ Benjamin W. Jarvis, "Norms of Intentionality: Norms that don't Guide," *Philosophical Studies* 157 (2012): 1-25.

³² Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Asbjorn Steglich-Petersen, "No Norm Needed: On the Aim of Belief," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 56, 225 (2006): 499-516; Asbjorn Steglich-Petersen, "Weighing the Aim of Belief," *Philosophical Studies* 145 (2009): 395-405.

³³ Ralph Wedgwood, "The A Priori Rules of Rationality," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 59, 1 (1999): 113-131.

³⁴ Pascal Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" in *Interpreting Davidson*, eds. Petr Kotátka, Peter Pagin, and Gabriel Segal (Stanford: CSLI Press, 2001), 37-51.

³⁵ Wedgwood, "The A Priori Rules of Rationality," 130.

nature of the state that determines its correctness conditions, or vice versa, depending on the order of metaphysical determination alleged to obtain between epistemic norms and doxastic states.³⁶ It may be suggested that norms determine the nature of the state, or, the other way round, that the nature of the state determines what norms apply. Either way, when it comes to the analyticity of norms of belief suggested by the *conceptual claim*, the *nature* of the state as such is secondary to the application of the norm, while it is the other way round for the *metaphysical claim*. According to the latter, whatever *definition* we use to distinguish beliefs from other psychological states beliefs are different ultimately with reference to the 'aim' or 'goal' that govern their production.

To conclude this section, we find that the claim that belief is normative admits of a multitude of specifications. Normativity claims, unless properly disambiguated, are quite sweeping. I have tried to provide some specifications here. According to the specifications provided, there are three kinds of norms, each with an obligatory and a permissive form that might be understood as conceptually or metaphysically related to doxastic states. This basically yields twelve versions of belief-normativism (if we abstract from combinations of kinds of norms, such as the knowledge- and truth-norms). We're now in a position to home in on and criticise various claims that the reason why Moore-paradoxical beliefs are absurd is that they violate epistemic norms.

3. First Attempted Normative Explanation of Absurdity

Green and Williams³⁷ suggest that the absurdity of Moore-paradoxical belief consists in severe violations of belief-norms: "Do not form – or continue to have – a specific belief that you can reasonably expect to be false" and "Do not form – or continue to have – a specific belief that you can be reasonably expected to see is self-falsifying."³⁸ These are norms that any "epistemically rational" believer "certainly would endorse."³⁹ Epistemic rationality is to be understood as "that property of one's acquiring or continuing to have it [the belief] that turns it, if true and not Gettierized, into knowledge."⁴⁰

Commissive Moore-paradoxical beliefs are suggested to violate the norm not to form or continue to have self-falsifying beliefs. Therefore, this account has

³⁶ Kathrin Glüer and Åsa Wikforss, "Against Content Normativity," *Mind* 118, 469 (2009): 31-70.

³⁷ Green and Williams, "Moore's Paradox, Truth and Accuracy," 249.

³⁸ Williams, "Moore's Paradox and Priority of Belief Thesis," 14.

³⁹ Williams, "Moore's Paradox and Priority of Belief Thesis," 14.

⁴⁰ Williams, "Moore's Paradox in Belief and Desire," 2.

it, Moore-paradoxical beliefs are absurd. Moore-paradoxical beliefs are not necessarily irrational, though. One will not always be "in a position to see" that one's beliefs are in violation of the relevant norms.⁴¹ So absurdity is a violation of belief-norms but it isn't surface-level self-falsification. This seems right. It preserves the conclusion arrived at in the first section, that Moorean absurdity is a property of conjugated second- and first-order beliefs that falsify or contradict each other under distribution and introspective infallibility.⁴² I agree with Green and Williams up to (6). We agree that if I form or continue to have the commissive Moore-paradoxical belief,

(2) p & I believe that not-p,

then, by introducing the Distribution Principle,

(DP 2) I believe that p & I believe that I believe that not-p,

which, given the principle of Introspective Infallibility, yields:

(7) I believe that p & I believe that not-p.⁴³

The conjuncts of the belief falsify one another. To arrive at this conclusion we've granted Green and Williams the auxiliary principles of distribution and infallibility they need. In other words, we are in agreement that what *constitutes* absurdity is that the beliefs are self-falsifying. But Green and Williams makes a further claim. The further claim is that what *explains* the absurdity is violations of belief-norms.⁴⁴ Here I find reason to disagree.

The relevant norm is that one ought not form or continue to have beliefs that are self-falsifying.⁴⁵ Given that commissive Moore-paradoxical beliefs are self-falsifying they violate the relevant norm. That is why, Green and Williams argue, the beliefs are absurd. Green and Williams's normative account should be rejected for the reason that one might accept that the beliefs are absurd because self-falsifying while rejecting that self-falsifying beliefs are norm-violations. We may agree that what *constitutes* the absurdity of commissive Moore-paradoxical beliefs is that their contents are in tension, granted the agreed upon premises. And so we may answer the question *why* a commissive Moore-paradoxical belief is absurd by pointing out that forming or continuing to have it is to form or continue to have a

⁴¹ Green and Williams, "Moore's Paradox, Truth and Accuracy," 250.

⁴² Williams, "Moore's Paradox in Belief and Desire," 5.

⁴³ Williams, "Moore's Paradox in Belief and Desire," 6.

⁴⁴ Green and Williams, "Moore's Paradox, Truth and Accuracy," 249-250; Williams, "Moore's Paradox and the Priority of Belief Thesis," 15-16.

⁴⁵ Williams, "Moore's Paradox in Belief and Desire," 6-7.

belief whose conjuncts falsify each other. The absurdity is then *explained* by the fact that *believing* that p and that one believes that not-p, collapses, given the Distribution Principle and the principle of Introspective Infallibility, on which we agree for the sake of argument, into a self-falsifying belief. But that there is an *additional* reason why the beliefs are absurd, namely because an epistemic *norm* not to form or continue to have the relevant beliefs is violated, finds no support in the argument.

To illustrate, consider the beliefs that, say, it is raining and that it is not raining. Suppose I form or continue to have both. I then have self-falsifying beliefs. If I believe one then the other must be false. Now, my *reasons* for forming or continuing to have both beliefs or, indeed, my reasons for not forming both or for abandoning either, might be a range of reasons none of which necessarily is the reason that I *ought* or *ought not* to form or continue to have both. What constitutes the absurdity appears to be that the beliefs are self-falsifying. That is all well and good. But in order for it to be true that what *explains* the absurdity is a violation of epistemic norms it is necessary that at least part of what does the explanatory work is my having a reason that I *ought* or *ought not* to form or continue to have the beliefs. I do not violate or conform to a norm if, by chance, I *happen* to be wrong or right. It should rather be the case that, if we're interested in *normative* explanation, I form or continue to have the beliefs in question because I recognize that I *ought not* or *ought* to form or continue to have them.

As far as Green and Williams's argument is concerned, and I see no reason to disagree, nothing suggests that part of anyone's reasons for forming or continuing to have Moore-paradoxical beliefs is that they *ought* or *ought not* to. Admittedly, Green and Williams suggest that it is only if one recognizes that one's beliefs would be self-falsifying that they are absurd. But, surely, one might recognize that one has absurd beliefs in the sense of their being self-falsifying without it *also* being the case that one has the beliefs even partly for the reason that one *ought* or *ought not* to. Hence, Green and Williams might be entirely right that the absurdity of Moore-paradoxical belief consists in self-falsification, yet not thereby having provided any reason for accepting that the absurdity is explained by violations of epistemic norms.

It may be objected, by those of normativist persuasion, that belief, the psychological state as such, still 'aims at truth,' or is 'directed to fit' the world.⁴⁶ And, in that sense of 'normative,' beliefs that fail to meet this aim or that don't fit the world, as is the case of Moore-paradoxical beliefs *if* believed to be true by the

⁴⁶ Cf. Daniel Whiting, "Does Belief Aim (Only) at the Truth?" *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 93, 2 (2012): 279-300.

believer, would be wrong no matter for what reasons the believer form or continue to have them. More generally, the point may be the metaphysical normative claim that if a psychological state does not have the relevant aim, is not governed by the relevant direction of fit, then it is not a belief. And, if it fails to meet its aim, or fails to 'fit,' then it is normatively incorrect no matter what the reasons are for which the believer forms or continues to have the relevant beliefs. To this I respond that we may accept that beliefs necessarily 'aim at truth' or 'aim to fit the world,' and that any epistemically rational believer would accept this.⁴⁷ Beliefs that fail to meet this aim would be, let us say, incorrect or wrong. However, if 'incorrect' and 'wrong' in this context is not to be understood in relation to the believer's normative reasons, then 'wrong' and 'incorrect' can be made perfect sense of as *descriptive* terms. Straightforwardly, false beliefs are 'incorrect' precisely because false.⁴⁸ It would be untoward to speak of false beliefs that aim at truth, but not necessarily for any subjective normative reason, as incorrect or wrong because they *violate* oughts. A belief as such does not violate anything; it is true or false. Only by recognizing, but going against, a reason can one violate it. A belief, however, does not have reasons for its own formation or maintenance, much less *normative* reasons. Hence, if a belief is true or false it may be correct or incorrect in the descriptive sense. But if it is not for any normative reason that 'correct' and 'incorrect' apply, there seems to me nothing left from which a *normative* understanding of 'correct' and 'incorrect' can derive plausibility. Therefore, this objection fails. Moving to the metaphysical normative claim in defence of a normative explanation of Moore-paradoxical beliefs is to move away from whatever may originally have lent such an explanation support.

In a similar vein of response to the metaphysical move, I may believe that it is raining yet believe that I do not believe this, and perhaps be self-contradictory and 'absurd,' for a number of reasons. But this does not suffice for the *additional* claim that, nor does it seem necessary for the claim that, I have any particular *normative* reason stating that I ought or ought not form or continue to have the beliefs. Therefore, even accepting metaphysical claims about the 'aim' of belief, no normative constituency claim about, or normative explanation of, false beliefs follow. Likewise, the absurdity of self-falsifying beliefs, as we assume that some Moore-paradoxical beliefs are, would still not consist in or necessitate an explanation in terms of norm-violation. At least, insofar we agree with Green and Williams's premises, no normative conclusion follows.

⁴⁷ Green and Williams, "Moore's Paradox, Truth and Accuracy."

⁴⁸ Glüer and Wikforss, "Against Content Normativity," 35-36; Fred Dretske, "Norms, History and the Mental," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 49 (2001): 87-104.

Perhaps it will still be objected that Green and Williams's point is that the absurdity of Moore-paradoxical beliefs consists in and is explained by norm-violations if I can be *reasonably expected to recognize* that the beliefs would be self-falsifying.⁴⁹ As Williams puts it, "I violate the norm ... because I may be reasonably expected to see that my belief is self-falsifying."⁵⁰ There are two reasons why the response does not avail the normativity part of Green and Williams's approach.

The first reason is that Moore-paradoxical beliefs appear no *less* absurd merely because one does not to recognize that they would be, say, self-falsifying, and thereby in violation of alleged norms. My belief, e.g., that it is raining and that I believe that it is not raining, bears the hallmark of absurdity because, we are assuming, it is self-falsifying. It would be absurd even if I do not *also* recognize that it is self-falsifying and even if I do not *also* recognize that the belief would violate some alleged norms of belief. Similarly, it appears no *less* 'correct' to reject that it is not raining if I believe that it is raining than it would be 'correct' to do so *and* do it because I recognize that one *ought* to. The beliefs are absurd or not quite irrespective of one *also* recognizing that they violate or conform to norms.⁵¹ Hence, the suggestion that it is only if I recognize that my Moore-paradoxical beliefs would be in violation of epistemic norms that my Moore-paradoxical beliefs are absurd does not avail Green and Williams's account.

The other reason for rejecting the present response is that a vicious regress ensues if the absurdity of Moore-paradoxical beliefs consists in forming or continuing to have them despite recognizing that in forming or continuing to have them one violates belief-norms. To 'recognize' beliefs as violating norms requires, minimally, believing that they would violate the relevant norms. If this is *not* required, then it cannot be *because* of norm-violations that one's beliefs are absurd, because a necessary means to *violate* is to believe that one ought (not) form some belief, yet, despite this, form (or not form) it.

To demonstrate how the regress will inevitably be engendered if we accept the normative part of Green and Williams's account, suppose that we grant their point that it is only by recognizing the normative incorrectness of one's beliefs, yet continuing to have them, that the beliefs are absurd. From this we may infer that beliefs are absurd only if one has a second-order belief that the beliefs are incorrect. That is, unless one is in a position to recognize, i.e., minimally, believe,

⁴⁹ Williams, "Moore's Paradox in Belief and Desire," 7.

⁵⁰ Williams, "Moore's Paradox in Belief and Desire."

⁵¹ Kathrin Glüer and Åsa Wikforss, "Aiming at Truth: On the Role of Belief," *Teorema* 32, 3 (2013): 137-162.

that one's beliefs are incorrect then they are not absurd. But now the necessary *second-order belief* about the normative incorrectness of one's first-order beliefs, qua itself a belief, will, on the normative proposal, be subject to the relevant epistemic norms. The second-order belief about the incorrectness of any first-order belief may itself be absurd, if it violates epistemic norms and I am in a position to recognize that this is the case. (In fact, if my second-order belief so much as *could* give rise to absurdity, *absent* recognition that it violates some alleged norm, then Green and Williams's account will be falsified. For in that case there is absurdity that does not consist in or is explained by norm-violations. On the other hand, if the second-order belief is *not* susceptible to epistemic norms just like the first-order beliefs, then the normative account will also be falsified. For then we have beliefs that may be false or self-falsifying yet not violate norms.) Suppose now that I form the necessary second-order belief about the normative incorrectness of my Moore-paradoxical beliefs and I recognize that my Moore-paradoxical beliefs would be in violation of epistemic norms. The obvious question then is: Is my second-order belief that my Moore-paradoxical belief is normatively incorrect itself normatively correct or incorrect? If we accept Green and Williams's normative account, then we can explain the absurdity or lack of absurdity of my second-order belief only by settling whether I recognize, i.e., minimally, believe, that it violates (or not) the relevant epistemic norms. I now form the necessary third-order belief about the normative correctness or incorrectness of my second-order belief that my Moore-paradoxical beliefs are normatively incorrect...⁵² Again, assuming that it is *possible* that higher-order beliefs are false or self-falsifying in relation to the lower-order beliefs that they are about, we again face the dilemma of settling whether the higher-order belief is absurd or not. If *it*, the third-order belief, cannot be absurd or not, then it is not the case that belief is normative. In that case, the prospects for providing a *normative* account of Moorean absurdity dims significantly. But if the higher-order beliefs can themselves be absurd for the normative reasons defended by Greens and Williams, then they would be absurd because I recognize, i.e., minimally, believe, that they violate some epistemic norm. In that case the regress pushes us towards absurdity for as long as we maintain that Moorean absurdity consists in or is explained by epistemic norms in the sense advocated by Green and Williams.

⁵² Note that what I refer to as a second-order belief in this argument is actually a third-order belief, and the third-order belief a fourth-order belief. The reason for this is that a Moore-paradoxical belief itself embodies a second-order belief about a first-order belief. So any belief about Moore-paradoxical beliefs will begin at the third-order.

The absurd consequence of the normative part of Green and Williams's account is, then, that in order for Moore-paradoxical beliefs to *be* absurd the believer must form ever higher-order beliefs. The only way out of this dilemma is to recognize that belief, including Moore-paradoxical beliefs, may be absurd for no normative reason but because they are, say, self-falsifying or self-contradictory. This is what Green and Williams's argument shows.

4. Second Attempted Normative Explanation

In this section we find reasons to reject another suggestion that Moorean absurdity consists in and is explained by violations of epistemic norms. The suggestion is due to Pascal Engel. He writes,

The reason why they [Moore-paradoxical beliefs] are paradoxical and the reason why we hesitate to attribute to the agent both the belief that P and the belief that not P is that when someone has a belief that P, he thereby has the belief that P is *true*. If he comes to believe (consciously, at the same time) that his belief that P is false, then either he does not have either one belief, or he is *not really* ... in a state of belief. So even someone who, for any reason, is not moved by an interest for truth, or who rejects the idea that it can be a goal for his beliefs, has to recognize that truth is what his beliefs are aiming at, *in virtue of their being beliefs*.⁵³

To be fair, Engel's general aim in this context is not to explain the absurdity of Moore-paradoxical beliefs. Even so, the passage is illuminating. In a recent paper Engel adds that, that beliefs aim at truth "is not true in the descriptive or causal sense ... It has to be true in the sense of conceptual necessity, or of normative necessity."⁵⁴ There are three points worthy to highlight in the quoted passage.

First, note that Engel says that we hesitate to attribute Moore-paradoxical beliefs because it involves attributing "both the belief that p and the belief that not-p." Engel seems to misunderstand Moore-paradoxical beliefs. To begin with, not all Moore-paradoxical beliefs have this form. In some cases, namely in the omissive version of the paradox, the belief is (1) "p but I don't believe that p." Engel does not mention this. His next point, that if one believes that p then one believes that p is true, will thus not apply to Moorean absurdity in general. On the other hand, the commissive form of the paradox that Engel mentions, in particular, has the form of (2) "p but I believe that not-p." What you should attribute to me if I have *this* belief is not the first-order beliefs that p and that not-

⁵³ Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" 49 (emphases added).

⁵⁴ Engel, "Sosa on the Normativity of Belief," 621; Shah and Velleman, "Doxastic Deliberation," 525; Shah, "How Truth Governs Belief," *The Philosophical Review* 112, 4 (2003): 447-482.

p, but the first-order belief that p and the *second-order* belief that I believe that not-p. Otherwise the Distribution Principle yields surface-level contradiction. And that, it is clear, is not what Moore's paradox is about.⁵⁵ Perhaps Engel implicitly assumes that the principle of Introspective Infallibility is correct. We have, for the sake of argument, granted that principle. Even so, one would require some further support of it if it were to carry the weight it does here. However, let us grant again, for the sake of consistency, that the principle of Introspective Infallibility is correct.

Engel's approach then faces a second dilemma. He claims that if I come to believe that one of my Moore-paradoxical beliefs is false, then either I don't *really* have both or I'm not *really* in a state of belief with regard to one of them. In a sense then, I cannot really have both beliefs. And this is true "in the sense of conceptual necessity, or of normative necessity." That is, since there are cases in which we in fact fail to 'hit at' truth when forming beliefs, it is not the case that we *do* believe only truths, but that we *ought* to believe only truths.⁵⁶ Engel's proposal, then, is this. My belief that

(2) p and I believe that not-p

is absurd because

Conceptual Truth Norm: The concept of belief is such that, for all beliefs, you ought to believe that p only if p.

Furthermore, we saw that Engel deploys what we might call the thesis of Normative Resistance:

Normative Resistance: If you believe that your belief that 'p and I believe that not-p' violates the conceptual truth norm, then either you do not *really* believe one of the conjuncts or you are not really in a state of *belief* with regard to one of them.

The thesis of Normative Resistance is problematic. If we accept it, then Moore-paradoxical beliefs are impossible. Here's why. According to the thesis, if I believe that p and that I believe that not-p, then either I *cannot* believe both conjuncts, or I'm not in a state of *belief*. In that case I cannot really believe that p and that I believe that not-p. Now, if I cannot believe this then I cannot really have the Moore-paradoxical belief. But what is to be accounted for is precisely the absurdity of beliefs of the form (2) "p, but I believe that not-p." Supposing that Normative Resistance is correct, in conjunction with the conceptual truth norm,

⁵⁵ de Almeida, "What Moore's Paradox is About."

⁵⁶ Engel, "Belief and Normativity."

makes this belief impossible. This, in turn, is problematic for two reasons. On the one hand, we have established that it is perfectly possible for it to be the case that p and that I believe that not- p .⁵⁷ Indeed, and this is the other problem, the situation had better *not* be impossible. For if it were, then the explanation would explain nothing. The explanans – the conceptual truth norm and the thesis of Normative Resistance – render the explanandum – the belief that p and that I believe that not- p – impossible. But then the explanation is itself contradictory. It starts out by having us imagine an instance of Moore-paradoxical beliefs. It then attempts to explain what is paradoxical in terms of norms that apply to beliefs by conceptual necessity. But it thereby renders the beliefs in question impossible by conceptual necessity. And so the approach debouches in the claim that the reason why we hesitate to attribute Moore-paradoxical beliefs is that Moore-paradoxical beliefs are impossible. Hence Engel effectively ends up empty-handed; there's nothing to explain, much less anything meriting normative explanation.

However, let us grant Engel that, somehow, the explanation can nevertheless be made to work. That is, assume that the reason why we hesitate to attribute to an agent a Moore-paradoxical belief is that we would then be attributing beliefs that violate the conceptual truth norm. This leads us to the third dilemma. One hallmark of *norms* is that they tell us what we ought (not) to or may (not) do; i.e., they take the form of imperatives with deontic force. If, as Engel rightly points out,⁵⁸ we substitute the 'ought' or 'may' in the imperative for a 'do' or 'will,' then the result is not norms, but descriptions of regularities between facts, evidence and the formation of belief. We can put this point in terms of the requirement that,

Normative Difference: Norms *should make a difference* to the way we form, manage and revise beliefs.

The deontic force embedded in an epistemic imperative should, that is, play a role in our forming, and way of forming, revising and abandoning beliefs. Glüer and Wikforss⁵⁹ argue that if a reason for belief fails to satisfy this requirement, then it is redundant to label it a *normative* reason. That is, if no part of one's reason for believing p is the reason that one *ought* to believe that p , then, even if there were a norm for believing that p , the norm makes no difference for what one ends up believing and how one ended up believing it. And if the norm makes no difference, then it is utterly idle and plays no role in an account of (manners of)

⁵⁷ Borges, "How to Moore a Gettier," 134.

⁵⁸ Engel, "Sosa on the Normativity of Belief."

⁵⁹ Kathrin Glüer and Åsa Wikforss, "Against Belief Normativity," in *The Aim of Belief*, ed. Timothy Chan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 80-99.

forming, continuing to have or revise belief. Furthermore, the Normative Difference-requirement suggests that one be in a position to choose to believe (or not believe) that *p*. A normative reason is open to deliberation. If what explains my belief that *p* is the normative reason that I *ought* to – rather than that I *will* believe it in my circumstances – then I may *violate* the norm. If I *cannot* do so, then the reason for my belief that *p* cannot be a *normative* reason. At the very least, to say that it was a normative reason that I *could not* violate would be no different from saying that it was, say, a causal reason that I had no influence over. So a norm has to make a difference in the sense that it can figure as my reason to form, maintain or revise a specific belief without it being necessary that I form, maintain or revise the belief accordingly.

Our considerations now make obvious the third dilemma with Engel's normative account. If violations of the conceptual truth norm are cases of *not really believing*, and if this is so by conceptual necessity, then the conceptual truth norm cannot make a difference in my forming, maintaining or revising Moore-paradoxical beliefs. If it is the case that I *cannot really* believe that *p* and that I believe that not-*p*, then it does not matter if, in addition, I ought or ought not have these beliefs. Of course I *may* recognize that I ought not have the relevant beliefs. But the *reason why* I don't (indeed never *really*) form them would, on Engel's account, not be that I recognize that I ought not to, but that I cannot, given the conceptual normative truth about belief. Hence, what explains the absurdity of Moore-paradoxical beliefs cannot be some *normative* reason. Perhaps there are such normative reasons against Moore-paradoxical beliefs. But the way Engel has set up the case, no such reasons figure in the explanation of why Moore-paradoxical beliefs are paradoxical.

We may conclude that Engel's normative explanation is problematic for three reasons. First, he doesn't really address Moore's paradox, at least not in its full complexity. Secondly, even if he were to address the paradox he would make it an impossible explanandum since his analysis of 'belief' entails that there cannot really be Moore-paradoxical beliefs. If there cannot be Moore-paradoxical beliefs, then there simply is no (normative) explanation of Moore-paradoxical beliefs. Thirdly, the norm invoked to explain the paradox would be explanatorily idle because if one forms Moore-paradoxical beliefs (given that one could) one would believe incorrectly no matter whether one forms the beliefs for any normative reason. Moreover, if the reason why one does not form Moore-paradoxical beliefs is that one *cannot*, then a norm that one *ought not* ads nothing to why one does not.

5. Conclusions

The two lines of thought examined here, according to which the absurdity of Moore-paradoxical beliefs consists in and is explained by belief-norm violations, are problematic. I have had the courtesy to grant premises that on closer inspection might themselves be problematic. The principle of Introspective Infallibility, for instance, might not be appealing to some. Some might find that Moore's paradox isn't about self-falsifying beliefs at all, as I have granted here. I'm sympathetic to worries that perhaps the paradoxical nature of the beliefs should be understood along other lines. But here I've wished to grant proponents of normative accounts as much as possible in order to refute their case. In being generous, we've found reasons to reject normative accounts. I conclude that an account of the psychological version of Moore's paradox that appeals to epistemic norms is unsatisfactory.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Thanks to participants at the ECAP8 for comments on an earlier version of this paper. Special thanks to Åsa Wikforss for helping me get to the point.

DISCUSSION NOTES/ DEBATE

GRUEING GETTIER

Giovanni MION

ABSTRACT: The paper aims to stress the structural similarities between Nelson Goodman's 'new riddle of induction' and Edmund Gettier's counterexamples to the standard analysis of knowledge.

KEYWORDS: Edmund Gettier, Nelson Goodman, Or Introduction, grue, knowledge

In *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, Saul Kripke emphasizes the analogy between Wittgenstein's puzzle about 'rule following' and Nelson Goodman's 'new riddle of induction.' In particular, Kripke claims that in the language of colour impression, Goodman's 'grue' plays the same role that Wittgenstein's 'quus' plays in the language of arithmetic.¹ In this short paper, I will stress the less obvious structural similarity between Goodman's riddle and Edmund Gettier's counterexamples to the standard analysis of knowledge. More specifically, I will argue that both Goodman and Gettier's argumentative strategies trade on the same logical trick: Or Introduction (or its infinitary counterpart, Existential Introduction, in the case of Gettier's first example). Moreover, I will also argue that they aim to accomplish similar goals: on the one hand, Goodman stresses "the problem of distinguishing between lawlike and accidental hypothesis;"² while, on the other hand, Gettier stresses the distinction between knowledge and justified beliefs accidentally true or true "by the sheerest coincidence."³ The main difference is that while Goodman, like most philosophers of science, focuses on our knowledge of universal truths: "All emeralds are green;" Gettier, like most epistemologists, is concerned with our knowledge of particular truths: "Jones owns a Ford."

In *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, Goodman invites us to consider a new unfamiliar predicate: 'grue.' By definition, the term "applies to all things examined before t just in case they are green but to other things just in case they are blue."⁴ Literally, something is grue *iff* it's examined before t , then green and if it's not so examined, then blue. In other words, something is grue *iff* it's examined before t

¹ Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 58.

² Nelson Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 77.

³ Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* 23 (1963): 123.

⁴ Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, 74.

and green OR it's not so examined and blue. All my evidence before t indicates that all emeralds are green. But the same evidence can be used to support the claim that all emeralds are grue. Nevertheless, while the first hypothesis seems to be a genuine candidate for scientific knowledge, the second one appears to be a spurious generalization.

Let us now consider a slightly revised version of Gettier's second example. Accordingly, let us consider the following unfamiliar term 'fowner.' By definition, the term applies to individuals that own a Ford now OR a Fiat later. Now suppose that I have strong evidence that indicates that Jones owns a Ford. Accordingly, I form the belief that Jones owns a Ford. In addition, suppose that on the basis of the same evidence, I also come to believe that Jones is a fowner. Nevertheless, Jones does not own a Ford, his car is a rental, but unbeknownst to me, he is about to buy a Fiat. My original belief, although false, was a genuine candidate for knowledge. In contrast, my belief that Jones is a fowner might be true and justified, but does not amount to knowledge.

Consider now the following revised version of Gettier's first example. Suppose that I have evidence that indicates that my colleague Mike will get the job and that he has ten coins in his pocket. Exploiting the rule of Existential Generalization, I form the belief that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket. However, since there are only three potential candidates for the job (Mike, Mark and I), I also form the belief that Mike will get the job and he has ten coins in his pocket OR Mark will get the job and he has ten coins in his pocket OR I will get the job and I have ten coins in my pocket. In addition, suppose that I also choose to construct the following unfamiliar term 'jten.' By definition, someone is a jten *iff* he has ten coins in his pocket and he is Mike OR Mark OR I. Accordingly, I form the belief that someone is a jten. As you know, in the end, Mike will not get the job, I will. So, once again, my original belief that Mike will get the job and that he has ten coins in his pocket, although false, was a genuine candidate for knowledge. In contrast, my belief that someone is a jten might be true and justified, but does not amount to knowledge.

'Grue,' 'fowner,' and 'jten' are all artificial terms constructed via Or Introduction. They are all used to generate artificial beliefs (in one of Gettier's original example, Smith uses Or Introduction to form three propositions at random), nevertheless they seem to pose a genuine challenge for any theory that aims to establish a distinction between those true justified beliefs that can aspire to the status of knowledge and those that cannot.

It could be objected that not all Gettier cases employ Or Introduction (or similar logical devices). For example, Bertrand Russell invites us to contemplate

the case of a man who acquires a true belief about the time by looking at a broken clock at the moment when it's right.⁵ But in such cases, it's not clear that the belief in question is justified. Russell himself does not use this example to challenge the standard definition of knowledge, but to support it. So on the one hand, Gettier's aim is different from Russell's; while, on the other hand, since the beliefs offered by Gettier are the result of a deductive inference, they do not readily invite the objection of not being justified.

In *Pyrrhonian Reflection on Knowledge and Justification*, Robert J. Fogelin divides Gettier-like counterexamples into two categories:

- (i) Those that employ a normally sound justificatory procedure in a context where it is not, in fact, reliable, then arrive at a normal *strong* true conclusion by good fortune.
- (ii) Those that employ a normally sound justificatory procedure in a context where it is not, in fact, reliable, then arrive at something true by drawing a conclusion *weaker* than normally warranted by this procedure.⁶

Obviously, Russell's case belongs to the first category, but in the present paper, I'm solely concerned with examples of the second kind.

'Fowner' and 'jten' helped us creating a disjunctive predicate in Goodman's style in order to bring forward the structural similarities between Goodman and Gettier. On the other hand, Goodman's riddle can be appropriately redescribed using the classic epistemic notions that Gettier traces back to Plato's *Meno*.

So, suppose that on the basis of the available evidence I form the belief that all emeralds are green. In addition, suppose that on the basis of the same evidence, I also form the belief that all emeralds are grue. Both beliefs seem to be equally justified by my evidence. Nevertheless, the belief that all emeralds are grue would not count as knowledge even if it turned out that some emeralds were really blue.

It might be tedious to address and critically evaluate all the responses to Gettier and Goodman in order to further enlighten the structural similarity between their arguments. However, I should at least indicate how my favorite solution to the challenge posed by Gettier's counterexamples can also be applied to Goodman's new riddle of induction.

There exist two kinds of solutions to the puzzles raised by Gettier. According to most responses, the counterexamples in question are genuine. Thus, we should seek for a better understanding of what knowledge is. But according to

⁵ Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2009), 140-141.

⁶ Robert J. Fogelin, *Pyrrhonian Reflections on Knowledge and Justification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 23.

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a minority of responses, such counterexamples are spurious. I happen to stand with the minority. In particular, I think that since logical rules are designed to preserve truth, as opposed to justification, we should not readily accept the idea that since my belief that Jones owns a Ford is justified, also my belief that Jones owns a Ford now OR a Fiat later is justified. As Irving Thalberg argues, “the justification for accepting a proposition is not always transmissible to propositions that it entails.”⁷ It should be now clear that Thalberg’s solution can also be applied to Goodman’s case: even if all my evidence indicates that all emeralds are green, I cannot just assume that *that* same evidence can be used to support the claim that all emeralds are grue.⁸

⁷ Irving Thalberg, “In Defense of Justified True Belief,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1969): 803.

⁸ I wish to thank my former colleagues Luis Estrada-González, for suggesting the title of the paper and his comments, and Daniel Cohnitz, for his critical remarks.

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