

# Towards a metaphysics of knowledge

## *Go Figure*, Pascal Engel fest, December 13 2007

Philipp Keller  
Department of Philosophy  
2, rue de Candolle  
1211 Genève Switzerland philipp.keller@lettres.unige.ch

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acceptance vs believing

Joelle Proust: believing = the disposition to credally feel that p; accepting = the mental act or policy of accepting p, which involves the commitment to use p as a premise in reasoning and decision-making; you can willfully and deliberately accept as a premise a proposition that you don't believe to be true, ie on a prudential rather than on an evidential basis; there is a pragmatic dimension involved in premising that can overrule belief, a dimension that seems to require an active and explicit decision - a policy - from the thinker. Cf Cohen 1992, Engel 1998, Engel dir 2000. Use this against contextualism: we differently accept in different contexts, but don't so believe: accepting is a manifestation of agency while believing is not

## **Lessons from Gettierology**

Is Belief a Propositional Attitude? Philipp Keller, University of Geneva philipp.keller@lettres.unige.ch  
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interpreted logical forms and procedures to produce others are realised Panaccio on Ockham and type/token sincerely uttering etc. = judging is a way of accepting the inscription you produce self-deception: do as if you accepted without accepting

Is someone believing that p standing in some relation to (the proposition) that p?

A bad reason for thinking so: From (1) Huey believes that snow is white. (2) Dewey believes that grass is green. (3) Louie believes that grass is green. we can infer (4) Both Huey and Dewey believe something. (5) There is something that both Dewey and Louie believe. From (6) Huey is a believer. we can infer (7) There is something that Huey believes. But we can also infer from (1\*) Huey runs at 8 mph, (2\*) Dewey runs at 10 mph, and (3\*) Louie runs at 10 mph, that (4\*) Both Huey and Dewey run at a certain speed. (5\*) There is some speed at which both Dewey and Louie run. And from (6\*) Huey is a runner, we can infer (7\*) There is some speed at which Huey runs. But running is not standing in a relation to a speed.

A reason to think that believing that  $p$  is not standing in a relation to (the proposition) that  $p$  (though perhaps it's standing in a relation to the objects (the proposition) that  $p$  is about):

Truthmaker maximalists hold that truth is a derelativisation of the relation of being made true, though not itself relational. The things made true are plausibly taken to be sentence-tokens or inscriptions, that are made true in some specific way: The inscription "Huey ate the cookies on the couch", e.g., is made true by some cookie-eating event as an inscription of English and as specifying the location of either Huey or the cookies.

Analogously, an adverbial theory of belief might hold that belief is a derelativisation of a broader and conceptually prior notion of acceptance, in which sentence-tokens stand to believers in certain ways. Believing that  $p$  is a matter of there being a sentence-token that is accepted in a certain way (i.e. the way in which, if it were true, would be made true).

Two immediate problems arise:

1. The famous translation argument, going back to Frege and expanded by Church (1950) and Bigelow (1980) against sententialist and paratactic theories of belief ascription seems applicable: (i) if the relations of acceptance are sentence-tokens, (1) and (8) *Tick glaubt, dass Schnee weiss ist.* involve relations to different sentences. Moreover, (ii) the acceptance of "Snow is white" by Huey can only underlie the truth of (1) if we presuppose that, in it, "snow" means snow rather than, say, grass. But the claim is not that (9) Huey accepts some sentence-inscription which means that snow is white. is synonymous with (1), or conceptually equivalent with it, or an explication of what is implicit in (1). (9) rather specifies some truthmaker for (1): it is a metaphysical analysis of (1) and their correlation a substantial thesis.
2. The adverbial theory seems committed to (i) ascribing beliefs only to language-using creatures and (ii) only in contents for which some inscription may be found. Against (ii), the adverbialist may claim that the accepted inscription is produced in (1). To avoid (i), the relation of acceptance has to be construed as passive (Cohen 1992) and as a more general attitude than belief as ordinarily construed, which "comes apart from belief in cases where one is warranted in acting on the assumption that  $p$  or taking it for granted that  $p$  or trusting that  $p$  for reasons that do not bear on the likely truth of  $p$ " (Wright 2004: 177). So construed, we may say that (intelligent) dogs accept sentence-tokens and accordingly have beliefs.

## 0.1 The general form of the sceptical argument

The general form of the sceptical argument is:

$$\{A_1, \dots, A_n\} \models \neg W_{x,t}P$$

where  $W$  ("warrant") is any relationship that mandates acceptance of a proposition (in virtue of which the thinker is in a position to accept a certain proposition): knowledge, justification, belief (in some sense). Modality comes in only at the level of the specification of a particular reading of  $W$  and typically falls short of logical necessity. Whether or not someone possesses warrant for a certain proposition is a normative issue:

"Acceptance-support is a normative notion: a relationship between a thinker and a proposition is acceptance-supporting if it suffices to warrant any thinker's acceptance of the proposition in question."

Warrant may be strong or weak:

- $x$ 's warrant at  $t$  for  $p$  is *weak* iff " $\neg W_{x,t}P$ " is consistent with  $x$ 's standing in some other acceptance-supporting relationship to  $p$ ;

- otherwise,  $x$ 's warrant at  $t$  for  $p$  is *strong*.

In view of Russell's retreat – to give up on knowledge and to retreat to some other notion of rational acceptance –, our response to the sceptic questioning possession of a certain kind of warrant for some proposition, should work equally for stronger kinds of warrants if the sceptic argument could easily be rephrased in terms of some such stronger kind of warrant.

According to Williamson, knowledge is strong, for it not only mandates assertion but also belief.

In order to defeat scepticism, the knowledge secured against the sceptic should be *claimable*; this means that second-order scepticism is equally to be avoided, the general form of argument of which is the following:

$$\{A_1, \dots, A_n\} \models \neg W_{x,t}(W_{x,t})p$$

The second-order warrant may consist in something different from what constitutes the first-order warrant. Typically, it is an internal kind of warrant.

Do you need just competent reasoning or competent control of reasoning (and awareness of validity of rules of inference used etc) for second-order warrant? It depends on the status of the iteration in question:

$$\begin{aligned} W_e p \& \rightarrow \& W_e W_e p \\ W_e p \& \rightarrow \& W_i W_e p \\ W_i p \& \rightarrow \& W_e W_i p \\ W_i p \& \rightarrow \& W_i W_i p \end{aligned}$$

The need to safeguard our knowledge claims against second-order scepticism shows that we should not try to avoid first-order scepticism by making the relevant kind of warrant available a priori: for this would make this warrant unclaimable and lead to second-order scepticism. Equally, it is not enough that it is not excluded by the right analysis of "knowledge" that we have warrant for some particular proposition, because we also firmly believe that this possibility is actual and this belief has to be claimed against the sceptic. The case where the sceptical argument really hurts is where the values of " $x$ " and " $t$ " at both occurrences are the same (at least the argument from claimability establishes only the nastiness of this much).

Some warrant is *internal* if " $W_{x,t}p$ ", if true, may be certified by deploying just resources of ordinary self-knowledge, reasoning and a priori reflection. These are just the resources you deploy to justify a claim that you acted for the best – reasoning on your motives, reconstructing (at best) the practical syllogism you acted on and reflecting on your good conscience. An (internally) justified belief is a belief that stands up to this kind of scrutiny. Some warrant is *external* if the truth of " $W_{x,t}p$ " involves relations between  $x$  and the world which are not so certifiable.

For knowledge, both internal and external warrant is required: a purely externalist account leaves something out of the picture, as is shown by the appeal to conscience in ethics even by externalist (e.g. utilitarian) theories. A purely externalist warrant also leads to second-order scepticism, for it is typically opaque to the thinker. It is not enough to dismiss, as some externalists do, the possibility that it "is all the same to the thinker" whether he has warrant or not. The reason we cannot do so and why we have to hear the internalist worry about second-order warrant for first-order externalist warrant is that we primitively care both about internal *and* external warrant. Both desiderata are clearly present in the case of knowledge: Gettier cases show that knowledge cannot be identified with a purely internal kind of warrant; the chickensexer example shows that it is neither reducible to pure reliability or sensitivity. *Both* factors therefore has to be taken into account for an analysis of knowledge.

*Cartesian* sceptical arguments work by floating some claimed undiscountable Horrible Possibility which does away with a whole tract of what we take to be reality or dislocates us from it. *Humean* sceptical arguments work by claiming a vicious circle in our justificatory procedures in an area which undermines our justification or knowledge for it by challenging our warrant for ampliative inferences of some kind. Humean scepticism with respect to induction is often presented as pointing to the fact that inductive inferences are deductively valid only if supplemented with a further tacit premiss which in turn can only be justified inductively. Humean scepticism, however, targets any kind of ampliative inference and is not to be remedied by an appeal to uniformity of nature (for, even given this extra premiss, the inductive argument is still deductively invalid, at least if we do not know that the observed regularity qualifies as a law of nature). Some inferences are *essentially* ampliative, in the sense that additional information is required to make them rational (not: to make them deductively valid or to force the transition). The problem then arises if the required additional information is only justifiable by the same kind of ampliative inference.

A *direct* sceptical argument is one which exploits just the purported unwarrantedness of “ $\neg H$ ” where “ $H$ ” is some large sceptical possibility, and closure of  $W$ , to unsaddle  $W$  for every  $p$  such that  $p \rightarrow \neg H$ . A classic case is the brain-in-a-vat scenario. Apart from closure, it is also presupposed that the mere fact that you cannot rule out “ $\neg H$ ” is enough to establish “ $\neg W\neg H$ ”:

$$(i) \quad \frac{p \rightarrow \neg H \quad \neg W\neg H}{\neg Wp}$$

Direct arguments are difficult to construct: you have to find a coherent scenario which is inconsistent with the truths of a large number of beliefs while still being consistent with them having the content they have.

An *indirect* sceptical argument works by exploiting the inconsistency of “ $H$ ” with the normal cognitive pedigree of the range of beliefs covered by “ $p$ ”, rather than their truth. The Dreaming argument is a classic case (if I am right now dreaming, I could not have the warrant I claim to have that it is now raining, even if my dream is in fact caused by the thunderstorm – the required *systematic* relationship normally present in perception is missing):

$$(2) \quad \frac{Wp \rightarrow \neg H \quad \neg W\neg H}{\neg W\neg Wp}$$

If  $W$  is iterative (if we have  $Wp \models WWp$ ), the indirect sceptical argument collapses into the direct one.

These two forms of scepticism – about procedures in the Humean and about possibilities in the Cartesian case – are the only ones to worry about.<sup>1</sup>

In an acceptable treatment of scepticism, the following are to be avoided:

**the Nozick mistake:** design a solution to a sceptical argument which depends on its involving a weak operator, when the premisses would be no less plausible for a strong one.

**the mistake of the Adversarial Stance (Moore):** respond as if to an opponent; respond as if the sceptical argument had a claim to persuasion.

**the McDowell mistake:** try to make out that no sufficient motivation has been provided for some

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<sup>1</sup>Chryssippos trilemma (how do you justify a knowledge claim? by nothing, a new or a old knowledge claim) is inconsistent with the possibility of non-inferential warrant.

of  $\{A_1, \dots, A_n\}$  – for if  $W$  is closed,  $\neg W \neg \{A_1, \dots, A_n\}$  will suffice for a second-order paradox (or the original, if  $W$  is iterative).

**the second-order mistake:** do not overlook second-order scepticism.

**the externalist mistake:** do not make a case, even if true, that the paradoxes can be blunted under externalist reconstrual of  $W$  involved, if there are any genuinely internal ones that give rise to paradox and are of value to us.

## 0.2 The tracking account of knowledge

### 0.2.1 Nozick's account

The classic analysis of knowledge is Russell's:

- (i) It is true that  $p$ .
- (ii)  $a$  believes that  $p$ .
- (iii)  $a$ 's belief that  $p$  is justified.

Gettier's targets were (?) and (?)

In response to Gettier problems, two kinds of proposals were made:

- (a) strengthen (iii) by some "no false lemmas" condition
- (b) add a fourth causal condition

Both proposals have problems: the second seems to rule out knowledge of the future and knowledge of generalities, while the first rules out knowledge obtained by relying on Newtonian mechanics, known to be false. The general problem is that they do not account for the context-dependence of the Gettier problem: perception of the the only non-fake barn among all the fake ones will still provide me with knowledge.

? proposed a radical solution to the Gettier cases: give up closure.

After Dretske's "Epistemic Operators", Robert Nozick was the first to explicitly connect the quest for the right analysis of knowledge with the issue of scepticism. His master idea was to identify knowledge with non-coincidental true belief.

In order to require that belief and truth covary in nearby worlds, Nozick proposed in 1981 subjunctive third and fourth conditions, imposing counterfactual dependency between the truth of the belief and the fact that it is had. Nozick calls such counterfactual dependence "tracking" and explicitly links it to there being a *constraint* on our beliefs and the way the world is:

"A person knows that  $p$  when he not only does truly believe it, but also would truly believe it and wouldn't falsely believe it. He not only actually has a true belief, he subjunctively has one. It is true that  $p$  and he believes it; if it weren't true he wouldn't believe it, and if it were true he would believe it. To know that  $p$  is to be someone who would believe it if it were true, and who wouldn't believe it if it were false. [...] To know is to have a belief that tracks the truth. Knowledge is a particular way of being connected to the world, having a specific real factual connection to the world: tracking it." (? : 178)

His first shot at the definition of knowledge is the following:

**Definition 1** (Nozick's first definition of knowledge). *An agent  $a$  knows that  $p$  iff*

(i) *It is true that*  $p$ .

(ii) *a believes that*  $p$ .

(iii\*) *If  $p$  were not true,  $a$  would not believe that*  $p$ . (? : 172)

(iv\*) *If  $p$  were (still) true (under different circumstances),  $a$  would still believe that*  $p$ . (? : 178)

(iii\*), however, is too strong: must be relativised to methods of having the belief in question: If Osama had not lived, I could not have used visual recognition to believe that he lived, but I might have believed it anyway; so I will know that Osama lives even if my belief was not essentially based on perception but on pure superstition. On the other hand, it should be possible to know something and it still be true that you'd use a different method if the belief were not true; you know because you see him; the fact that otherwise you would have believed the propaganda does not do away the knowledge.

Dretske didn't consider (iv\*); Nozick's argument for its inclusion is that the account should leave room for knowledge of necessary truths. Independently, however, it is also needed to exclude the following case: Known to me, my speedometer is highly reliable whenever I drive at less than 140 kmh and highly unreliable above (as likely as not to indicate speeds below 140 kmh). Travelling at 150 kmh, I look at the speedometer, indicating 150 kmh, and come to believe the truth that I am travelling at more than 140 kmh. (iii) is satisfied because the speedometer is reliable below 140 kmh.

As with (iii\*), (iv\*) has to be relativised to methods of belief formation: you need not only reliability of the method in cases where the belief is false but also in cases where the belief is true:

(iv\*\*) *If  $p$  were still true under different circumstances and  $a$  formed his belief by the same method that he actually used,  $a$  would still believe that*  $p$ .

(iv\*\*), however, is too strong: it excludes the case where you perceive Jesse James and recognise him even though he normally wears a mask – you know it's him even though in many nearby worlds you would not. So we would have to restrict the condition to cases where you actually form a belief on whether  $p$ . But even this modified condition is too strong: suppose that Jesse James normally wears a Tom Cruise mask and that in many nearby worlds you would falsely form the belief that he is Tom Cruise.

It seems plausible that there is no refinement of the counterfactual analysis that handles both the speedometer and Jesse James examples.

Can we therefore conclude that the subjunctive account is wrong? Not too quick! Note a similar problem in the analysis of dispositions:

$$x \text{ is fragile} \& \rightarrow \& \text{if } x \text{ were subjected to moderate forces, } x \text{ would break} \\ \& Cx \square \rightarrow Mx$$

This is hopeless: right-hand side is neither necessary nor sufficient for a wide class of dispositions (for which we readily imagine interference between the nature of the thing concerned and the bringing about of the conditions necessary for the manifestation of its dispositional properties). Think of finkish dispositions: whether or not the manifestation conditions are sufficient for the manifestation is there contingent on the categorical nature.

We have to distinguish three cases:

1. altering (finkish dispositions)

2. mimicking (under non-normal conditions, the conditional may be true without the thing having the disposition)
3. masking (the glass is packed which prevents the manifestation)

Nozick makes knowledge look more like a disposition than like a state. Dispositions are in those cases close to states where our interest lies with categorical bases, as with colours changing under illumination by white light (finkish dispositions). Generally, however, dispositions are different from states: with many dispositions, our interest lies solely with their manifestations (as with “being courageous”). Call the first kind of dispositions ‘Quinean’ and the second kind ‘Rylean’. Is the distinction between Rylean and Quinean dispositions interest-relative? Can we say that being fragile is Quinean for physicists but Rylean for postmen?

If you are a Quinean, then you use the subjunctive conditional as a reference-fixer; but we would like them to be more than that. Colours can be altered, mimicked and masked, so they are not Rylean; but it might still be the case that there is no interesting physical similarity among green things – are we forced to eliminativism about colours? (two kinds of jade, many kinds of green etc) - what colours are things on Twin Earth, where on the surface everything is the same but the underlying physics is different? Even on Twin Earth, glass still seems fragile. So we’d better not think of the conditionals just as reference-fixers.

Nozick’s mistake was to move too quickly to subjunctive conditionals, where he should have stayed with dispositions. To know is to have a true belief formed as a result of an exercise of a disposition of being right (better: an ability to be right) which is not too local. The Jesse James / Tom Cruise case is literally a case of masking: the mask is masking your ability to recognise Jesse James.

### 0.2.2 Nozick and closure

It is plausible that if  $W$  is closed, then  $\neg W \neg$  is closed too.<sup>2</sup>

Nozick used his counterfactual account to motivate a denial of closure: the closest world where  $\neg p \wedge \neg q$  may be such that I still believe that  $q$ . In this case, we’d have  $Kp$  and  $K(p \rightarrow q)$ , but not  $Kq$ . Nozick makes indeed a case that knowledge is not closed but this leaves untouched weaker notions of warrant. Counterfactual dependence is offered as diagnosis of why both the sceptic and Moore are right: Moore is right that he knows that he has two hands, the sceptic is right that he does not know (and indeed cannot know) that there is an external material world. Both, however, are wrong about closure:

“The details of different sceptical arguments vary in their structure but each one will assume some variant of the principle that knowledge is closed under known logical implication.” (? : 204)

Nozick is right that all Cartesian arguments depend on (some form of) closure. But even there Closure-minus suffices:

**Closure minus:** For any  $X$ ,  $A$  and  $B$ : if  $A$  and  $B$  are incompatible and  
 $X$ ’s total evidence for  $A$  does not warrant preferring it to  $B$ ,  
then  $X$  does not know  $A$ .

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<sup>2</sup>Suppose it were not:  $\neg W \neg p$ ,  $W(p \rightarrow q)$  and  $W \neg q$ . From  $W(p \rightarrow q)$ , we get  $W(\neg q \rightarrow \neg p)$  and, distributing  $W$ ,  $W \neg p$ .

This is equivalent to

For any  $X$ ,  $A$  and  $B$ : if  $X$  knows  $A$  and  $A$  entails  $B$ ,<sup>†</sup>  
then  $X$ 's total evidence for believing  $A$  warrants preferring  $A$  to  $\neg B$ .

So we have at least the following principle:

$$Kp \wedge K(p \rightarrow q) \models K^*q$$

This is disastrous enough, even though  $K$  and  $K^*$  come apart in lottery cases. So Nozick has to say something about  $K^*$  or else warrant in general does not satisfy the tracking constraints.

To rule out closure, Nozick has to rely on a questionable assumption about the behaviour of subjunctive conditionals.<sup>3</sup> Nozick requires that

(3) I do not have hands  $\square \rightarrow$  I do not believe that I have hands

may be true (I know that I have hands) but that

(4) I am BIV  $\square \rightarrow$  I believe that I am BIV

is false (I do not know that I am a BIV) – simultaneously and in the same context. However

(5) I am a BIV  $\square \rightarrow$  I do not have hands

is uncontroversial. And (3) can only be true if

(6) I do not have hands  $\square \rightarrow$  I am not a BIV

Argument: Suppose I would not have hands and still be a BIV. Then I would not believe that I have hands. But a BIV believes that it has hands.

I do not have hands  $\square \rightarrow$  I do not believe that I have hands

I do not have hands  $\square \rightarrow$  I am not a BIV

The antecedents pick out the same class of worlds. If I were a BIV in one of these worlds, I would there believe that I have hands, which is a contradiction. So I am not a BIV in these worlds.<sup>4</sup>

Why is (2) false? Because BIVs are indifferent to whether or not they are BIVs and – a fortiori – to whether or not they have hands.

But given (3) and (4), what stops the inference to

(8) I am a BIV  $\square \rightarrow$  I am not a BIV

which can only be true if there is no relevant scenario in which I am a BIV,

So transitivity of subjunctive conditionals fails on Nozick's analysis – but what is the use of subjunctive conditionals if transitivity fails for them? What would be a restriction on transitivity that would avoid

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<sup>3</sup>Nozick's argument also presupposes conditional excluded middle.

<sup>4</sup>Doesn't this still presuppose that by (3) I track the truth even among BIV worlds. Doesn't it therefore amount to:

(7) I do not believe that I have hands  $\square \rightarrow$  I am not a BIV



the inference? If I say both “If there had been snow, I would have gone skiing.” and “If there had been an avalanche, there would have been snow.” I typically want to get across a message about me and avalanches – which can only be extracted using transitivity. This indicates that transitivity holds for assertability within a context, even though it perhaps does not hold for truth.

If, on the other hand, the relevant worlds to consider are determined by the most ‘far out’ conditional in a context (supposed, or taken to be true, but not just thought about), Nozick loses (3).

### 0.2.3 The case for closure

Suppose I know that  $p$  and that if  $p$  then  $q$ . If I do not know  $q$ , then, for all I know,  $\neg q$  might be true. This means that  $\neg q$  is consistent with everything I know. So  $p$  cannot be something I know, for  $\neg q$  is inconsistent with  $p$ . This means that someone who denies closure has to argue against one of the following:

- If I don’t know that  $q$ , then for all I know,  $\neg q$  might be true.
- If, for all I know,  $\neg q$  might be true, then  $\neg q$  is consistent with all I know.

Another popular argument for closure is the following: If closure fails, how can reasoning be a means of discovery? how can we obtain knowledge in mathematics? Failure of closure better had to be local. That there are exceptions to closure is consistent with it’s being a method of gaining knowledge of conclusions.<sup>5</sup>

To uphold closure because reasoning should be a method of producing knowledge, however, is to confuse closure with transmission. And we know that there are exceptions to transmission. There are differences, however: to have transmission across entailment, we have to carry out the proof of  $q$  from  $p$  – what we presumably are not required to do for closure.

Nozick’s failure to motivate failure of closure is a step back behind Dretske, which argued against closure in (?). According to Dretske, what the sceptic has done is writing large the situation of the zebras:

(9) 
$$\frac{\text{These animals are zebras.}}{\text{These animals are not mules, cleverly disguised.}}$$

is analogous to

(10) 
$$\frac{\text{I have hands.}}{\text{I am not a brain in a vat.}}$$

If the conclusion were false, you could not use the means of achieving knowledge of the premiss you actually used. The grounds I have for the premiss (visual perception say) are not grounds for the conclusion.

Dretske’s analysis, contrary to Nozick’s, works equally for stronger epistemic operators than knowledge.

Dretske is not really giving a counterexample to closure, however, but a case of transmission failure: Visual perception is only evidence for the premiss if the conclusion is already taken for granted. The route to warrant the premiss goes through the conclusion. Dretske gave an argument against “ $K^*p \wedge K(p \Rightarrow q) \models K^*p$ ”, where  $K^*$  is a particular way of coming to know a certain proposition.

<sup>5</sup>There are other arguments against closure: given closure, every necessary truth is in principle knowable; it is not very clear how closure might deal with undecidable propositions.

what you have the permission to take for granted cannot be supported by something which is evidence for a premiss from which it follows only if it *is* taken for granted.

Tracking conditionals are only appropriate if the operator is factive. They are not appropriate, e.g., for all-things-considered justification. If your attitude towards “*p*” is not factive, the nearest world in which *p* is false and you still have the belief may be the actual world.

closure holds but transmission fails: the warrant for the premiss does not transmit to the conclusion but I still know the conclusion by some other means than the means by which I know the premiss.

against externalist construal just by looking, I can discover that some scenario does not obtain which is such that if it would obtain would look just the same – this is absurd I cannot perceptually discriminate between perceptually indistinguishable scenarios – it is possible that there are two perceptually indistinguishable scenarios  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  and a proposition *p* such that, in  $s_1$ , *e* is evidence for *p* and, in  $s_2$ , it is not? – to be evidence is to exclude possibilities (this is just the closure thought).

“looks like *p*, hence *p*” must be right (Pryor’s thought), but the premiss is looking like a zebra *is* looking like a cleverly painted mule

looks like a zebra is a zebra is not a c.d. mule does not transmit warrant but looks like a c.d. mule is a c.d. mule is not a c.d. mule

Take the following inference

- (1) 
$$\frac{\text{(1) those animals are zebras}}{\text{(2) these animals are not disguised mules}}$$

e: look of the beasts

What if anything, do we presuppose in taking *e* as evidence for 1? What do I have to take to be the case to make the transition from *e* to (1) rational? What, if anything, additional has to obtain in order for possession of *e* to warrant acceptance of (1)?

- (a) nothing
  - (b) 2)
  - (c) lack of warrant to deny 2 (covers agnosticism about 2)
  - (d) warrant for 2
- (a)
  - (b) pure externalist answer -> this will condition the kind of warrant you get (you’ll only get an external warrant) – but we need internal warrant to meet the sceptical challenge
  - (c) Pryor -> problem of easy warrant: if you are open-minded about 2), this is enough; if I give you information that forces you to be open-minded (or that makes it rational to be open-minded) about (2) (e.g. “the probability of zoo fraud is fifty-fifty”) (*e* may still warrant (1) if you do not have no information at all about the truth of (2))
  - (d) is the sceptical thought and the case of transmission failure.

if doubt covers both agnosticism and disbelief, then lack of warrant to doubt is warrant to believe against (a): insofar as it is reasonable to take their looking like zebras as evidence for their being zebras you overdescribe the evidence (which, by itself, is indifferent between a description as looking like zebras and looking like cleverly disguised mules)

Pryor: there is transmission failure in the zebra case but no transmission failure in the case of Moore's proof; there are some material object concepts such that the evidence of the senses is sufficient for their correct application (zebras are a natural kinds, but hands are not)

On Pryor's behalf: do we also need warrant that the animals are not disguised flogs (where a flog is a merely possible kind of creature easily disguised as zebra)? shouldn't we allow for the case where I never was in any epistemic relation and never had an attitude to the proposition excluded by what I conclude from my evidence? g) emptiness of attitude to (2) d) should be an instance of something more general (and (2) should be rather something like "those animals are not non-zebras"): something like "warrant for the conduciveness of the environment to sense-experience".

PROBLEM: but then (2) not only follows from (1) but is equivalent to (2) and then

g) leads to the absurd (?) result that unreflective people are in better epistemic positions (h) if you have an attitude (agnosticism included) then it should be one of warrant

2) Humean scepticism is untouched

### 0.3 Humean (I/II/III) scepticism and transmission failure

#### 0.3.1 I/II/III arguments

Some examples:

matter & mind & past

My current experience is in all respects as if  $p$ . & For some other person  $a$  distinct from myself:  $a$ 's behaviour and physical conditions are such that  $p$  &  $a$  is in mental state  $m$ . & It was the case that  $p$  yesterday.

There is a material world. & There are minds besides my own. & The world did not come into being today replete with apparent truth.

The I/II/III paradox:

**Cognitive locality:** (In this area,) type-II propositions can only be known on the evidence of (by ampliative inference from) type-I propositions.

**Ampliativity:** The evidence provided by type-I propositions for type-II propositions is information-dependent, requiring (among other things) collateral warrant for a type-III proposition.

**So:** Knowledge of type-III propositions cannot be achieved by transmission of evidence provided by type-I propositions for type-II propositions across a type-II to type-III entailment – rather it's only if one already has knowledge of the type-III proposition that any type-II proposition can be known in the first place.

These premisses do not have to be warranted to get I/II/III scepticism going: it is enough if their However,

**Empiricism:** Type-III propositions cannot be known in any other way.

The general principle is

**No bootstrapping:** In a case where  $H$  is probabilified by  $e$  only under assumptions (collateral information)  $\{I_1, \dots, I_n\}$ , the warrant constituted by  $e$  for  $H$  does not transmit to  $I_i$ .

difference between

- $e$  is evidence for  $H$  only given  $\{I_1, \dots, I_n\}$

- $S$  is justified in using  $e$  as evidence for  $H$  only if  $\phi(\{I_1, \dots, I_n\})$ , where “ $\phi$ ” stands either for the truth predicate or for some relation between  $S$  and  $\{I_1, \dots, I_n\}$ .

Does not the first reduce to the second if the relevant notion of evidence is closed under implication (which it should be)? The Zebra case is only a failure of closure-under-visual-evidence: the conclusion you have for them not being cleverly disguised mules is partly inferential. To answer the sceptic, we have to answer the second worry anyway.

### 0.3.2 Moore’s proof

Pryor: the proof works, *except* for the sceptic

## 0.4 Transmission failure

what fails in Moore’s proof is not closure but transmission

transmission: counts reason: you get a new reason by getting a reason for something that entails it; closure: permits the case where the warrant for  $B$  is the same as for  $A$  or that  $B$  has first to be justified to justify  $A$ .

”This only probabilifies H if I is true”  $\rightarrow$  Dretske’s channel conditions

*Pace* contextualism, it is true that we use different standards but we do in fact take for granted (at least) the *truth* of type-III propositions even in ordinary contexts. So contextualism cannot help us with specific sceptical paradoxes.

Contextualism about knowledge has problems with factivity and normativity:

- Factivity: If, relative to two different contexts, it is both true to say that we know that  $p$  and that we do not know that  $p$ , then I can, in a third context from which I describe them both, infer that  $p$  and thereby come to know that  $p$  – so I cannot represent the sceptics’ and the ordinary folk’s context evenhandedly: I am *forced* to side with common-sense and lose my neutrality.
- Normativity: The questions what contexts are appropriate and by what are they constrained raise the same problems and issues.

DeRose: even in the philosophical context, the sceptic’s standards are too high

General characteristic of question-begging arguments: valid inferences with no informational gain

### 0.4.1 Wright’s template

An argument of the form

$$(12) \quad \frac{p \rightarrow q}{q}$$

fails to transmit warrant iff there is a proposition  $r$  such that

- the thinker’s warrant for  $p$  consists in his being in a state that is subjectively indistinguishable from some state he could be in if  $r$  were false and
- if  $r$  were false, then  $q$  would be false

In typical cases,  $p$  is a proposition about my evidence, e.g. my subjective experience (a type I proposition),  $q$  is a type II proposition I take to be justified on the basis of my subjective proposition and  $r$  is some hinge proposition, i.e. that there are other minds or that the world did not come into existence five minutes ago.

Diagnosis:  $p$  is only evidence for  $q$  if (and hence the second premiss is only justified to the extent that) we are justified in taking  $r$  to be true. So  $p$  justifies  $q$  only to the extent it also justifies  $r$ . But it cannot justify  $r$ , for it is compatible with  $\neg r$ . Hence it cannot justify  $q$ .

#### 0.4.2 Some worries against the sufficiency of Wrights template

Either Wright accepts that some state may warrant a proposition even if it is subjectively indistinguishable from a state in which the proposition is false or he does not. If he does not, then he has already granted much too much to the sceptic. If he does, then take  $p \equiv q \equiv r$ : we have the consequence that arguments between logically equivalent propositions do not transmit warrant. But there are instances of such arguments that seem ok, i.e.

(13) 
$$\frac{\text{I have hands.}}{\text{I have hands and arithmetic is incomplete.}}$$

[Andri:] BUT: YES, THIS IS OK IN A DEDUCTION BECAUSE PRECISELY THEY ARE LOGICALLY EQUIVALENT. BUT THE ARGUMENT IS USELESS FOR SOMEONE WHO DOES NOT KNOW THAT THEY ARE LOGICALLY EQUIVALENT. THE WARRANT FOR THE BELIEF THAT I HAVE HANDS DOES NOT TRANSMIT TO THE BELIEF THAT I HAVE HANDS AND ARITHMETIC IS INCOMPLETE. FOR, LOGICAL OMNISCIENCE DISCARDED, THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE HANDS DOES NOT YIELD KNOWLEDGE THAT ARITHMETIC IS INCOMPLETE. CLOSURE FOR KNOWLEDGE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION, NO? BUT MAYBE THE FAILURE OF TRANSMISSION OF WARRANT FOR THAT CASE IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE FAILURE OF TRANSMISSION OF WARRANT IN MCKINSEY'S PARADOX. FOR IN MCKINSEY'S PARADOX THE ANALYSIS COULD BE (IS BY DAVIES) THAT THE WARRANT FOR THE PREMISS RESTS ON A PRESUPPOSITION THAT IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH DOUBTING THE CONCLUSION. IT'S A FORM OF BEGGING THE QUESTION. IN THE CASE AT HAND ABOUT LOGICAL OMNISCIENCE THERE IS NO SUCH PROBLEMATIC RELATION BETWEEN THE WARRANT FOR THE PREMISS AND THE CONCLUSION.

#### 0.4.3 Some worries against the necessity of Wrights template

Suppose that some football matches are mere holograms, but that they differ, unbeknownst to me, from real football matches by having a pink ball. I watch a match on TV and argue as follows:

(14) 
$$\frac{\text{They scored a goal.}}{\text{If they scored a goal, the football match is real.}} \\ \text{The football match is real.}$$

clearly, this argument does not transmit warrant, but the only available sceptical scenario  $r$  is subjectively distinguishable from the one I suppose to hold.

#### 0.4.4 Responses to I/II/III scepticism

- the dogmatist response: the attitude we are required to have towards the type-III proposition for the inference to be warrant-transmitting it that we are not doubting its truth  $\leftrightarrow$  falls foul on our intuitions; being open-minded is not enough BUT not doubting does not entail being open-minded
- the externalist response: the type-III propositions that are part of the collateral information needed for the type-I propositions being evidence for some type-II proposition are only required to be true but neither required to be believed nor to be warranted  
BUT STILL: it is a transition from truth to warrant  $\leftrightarrow$  how is this going to make sth rational  $\leftrightarrow$  CF Hartry Field

Is any subjunctive conditional true in which the consequent spells out some of the presuppositions or ceteris paribus clauses of the antecedent (any  $p$  that is true in all the worlds relevant by the lights of the antecedent)?

If I would go right, I would not be a BIV. If I would go left, I would not be a BIV. I go either right or left. So I am not a BIV.

### 0.5 Cartesian indirect scepticism

#### 0.5.1 The argument from dreaming

Does Descartes infer from lack of conclusive evidence that he is not dreaming that he does not know that he is not dreaming by falsely taking “knowledge rules out error” to be infallibility rather than factivity?

The argument from dreaming has the following structure:

$$\neg K \neg D, D \models \neg K p \implies \neg K K p$$

Descartes is ready to have a sceptical doubt about the external world while he is not ready to have sceptical doubts about his philosophy.

Externalist attack on “ $\neg K \neg D$ ” in terms of me being reliable about non-dreaming *presupposes* for its intelligibility a mixed picture: if  $K$  is external, we are not in a position to assert “ $\neg K \neg D$ ” for we could *for all we can tell* still know that we are not dreaming there is at least one thing you can decide in the armchair: that you can know things just by being situated in a conducive environment

Supporting  $\neg W \neg D$ :

*Proper execution principle* (PEP):

If the acquisition of warrant to believe a proposition depends on the proper execution of some procedure, then executing the procedure cannot give you any stronger a warrant to believe the proposition in question than you have independently for believing that you have executed the procedure properly.

**PEP<sub>1</sub>**:  $W(p)$  is not stronger than  $W(p^*$  was executed properly)

from which it follows that

**PEP<sub>2</sub>**: My claim that  $W(p)$  is not stronger than my claim to  $W(p^*$  was executed properly)

If the externalist wants to weaken PEP<sub>1</sub> to the following:

**PEP<sub>1</sub><sup>+</sup>**:  $W(p)$  is not stronger than **Probable**( $p^*$  was executed properly)

which still gives us

**PEP<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup>**: My claim that  $W(p)$  is not stronger than my claim to **Probable**( $p^*$  was executed properly)

which is enough to get the sceptical paradox started

That I am not dreaming is an empirical proposition and has to be justified by empirical procedures. My confidence that I am not dreaming is thus rationally restricted by my confidence that I executed the procedure at all (let alone that I executed it properly).

Barry Stroud sees the PEP in Descartes.

Why is it an empirical proposition that I am not dreaming? Because (i) it has the same truth-conditions as the proposition that PK is not dreaming, and because (ii), if two propositions have the same truth-conditions, evidence and warrant for one it evidence and warrant for the other.

There is no problem about my using empirical procedures to ascertain that *you* are not dreaming.

What about an emotivist reading of “I am not dreaming”, assimilating it to a Wittgenstein-inspired interpretation of “I am in pain”. If there are no truth-conditions expressed, how come we change tense, may negate it, embed it in conditionals, etc.? These operations presuppose a content to which they are applied. If they express a state, then that state may be stated as well as expressed – so why not just say that these expressions are doing both (as Wittgenstein did)? If they express feelings that cannot be stated, why should “I am not in pain” not correctly express what I feel during sleep? And still it is not assertible when I am sleeping.

But even if we only have  $\neg W\neg P_1$ , we still get a second-order paradox to the conclusion that  $\neg WWp$  which, given Iterativity, collapses into  $\neg Wp$ .  $\neg W\neg P_1$ , however, has still to be motivated by the sceptic. In order not to presuppose that  $\neg W\neg$  distributes not only across  $W(p \rightarrow q)$  but also across  $\neg W\neg(p \rightarrow q)$ , (at least) modus ponens has to be considered common ground: in order to have

$$(15) \quad \frac{\neg W\neg(p \wedge (p \rightarrow q))}{\neg W\neg q}$$

indirectskopt

internal justification, external pedigree in the dreaming argument: to have warrant is to have justification such that someone who had the same justification but access to relevant information about your external situation would be convinced of  $p \rightarrow$  stops the coherence counterargument

to claim warrant requires claiming pedigree, which is not possible in the dreaming case; problem: trade-off with iterativity; the more important the pedigree component, the less plausible iterativity

BUT, contrary to the paper: the maundering move is available here too: hawering is dreaming like maundering; dreaming, but with extreme coherence, and with inner, but disconnected causality.

then we can co for a purely internal notion of warrant  $\rightarrow$  result that we have no warrant to conscience for any perceptual claim

### 0.5.2 Responses to the sceptic argument

There are two strategies to respond to the sceptical paradox: implosion and explosion. You explode the paradox if you show, using external resources, that one of the premisses is false, nonsense or

unwarranted. A paradox is an aporia generated by some premisses, a logic and some motivation theory, designed to show that the premisses are motivated. Implosion is a matter of showing that the very resources involved in the paradox itself (it's 'motivation-theory') are somehow so in internal tension as to yield a demonstration that there can be no warrant for its premisses simultaneously.

Conservativity principle: if you claim a warrant for some proposition, you commit yourself to claiming warrant or relevantly similar propositions. The motivation theory has to have a certain generality. If the (only available or the only plausible) motivation theory entails that you have warrant for other premisses which entail, given the logic used, the falsity of the premisses of the paradox, then either your motivation theory is not in good standing or your premisses are (jointly) unwarranted. If your motivation theory is not in good standing, your premisses are (jointly) unwarranted, hence they are jointly unwarranted.

"I do not have warrant that I am not mauding now", supposedly, is motivated by the same motivation theory than "I am not warranted that I am not dreaming now" – so it should be a proposition that can be made plausible by me now.

Dear Otto Sorry for having once again changed my mind: I no longer agree with Wright, but for reasons that seem to be different than yours. To facilitate the discussion tomorrow and to organise my mind, here is what I think of Wright's and your text. One of the misgivings I have about Wright's paper concerns the transfer of the sceptical argument from perception to intellection. In both cases, he motivates P<sub>2</sub> by a sort of "x could do the same" argument quite common in philosophy. You (the author of the text) show that if p then q and then you simply stipulate that anybody and in particular the sceptic's victim you are talking about could do the same reasoning. But in the intellection case, this move just isn't available. The motivation given for P<sub>2</sub> (your p. 12, Wright's pp. 102, 107) is valid only under the presupposition that x is not dreaming. In your reconstruction of the arguments, you pass over this step without further ado (p.3, p.12). The assumption that x is "cognitively fit" (whatever that means) is not enough to provide it with such a warrant, neither is the assumption that x "understands" the definition of warrant (p. 14). Warrant is much a stronger notion than that. As I understand it, this point also affects your new argument on p. 19: how exactly do you get to P<sub>2</sub> from 2\*? A second problem I had with Wright is that his claim that the second version of the argument leads to a conclusion which contradicts P<sub>2</sub> is just not right. As we are using a schematic letter P, we are dealing not with arguments but with argument schemata. If we substitute e.g. RxtP → -Dxt for P (or Q in Wright's case) we have ANOTHER argument, for which P<sub>2</sub> is not Rxt(RxtP → -Dxt) but Rxt(Rxt(RxtP → -Dxt) → -Dxt) which is NOT the negation of the conclusion we get. The problem cannot be solved by just quantifying universally, for the quantor would then bind the Ps in the whole of the argument. Third, I was troubled to see Wright respond to Rosen's objection in an entirely ad hoc way, by its definition of mauding which you seem to accept (p. 14). I took Rosen to insist on the point mentioned in footnote 15 (p. 100), that de facto flawless execution of the procedure is enough. Of course, Wright is free to define whatever he likes. The problem, however, then occurs with (I), i.e. Axt(P<sub>1</sub>) → Axt(P<sub>1</sub>\*\*). There he takes it to be enough to give some intuitive remarks to force us into agreement with either (I) or Axt(I). This will only do, however, if we already forgot at this point that M is BY DEFINITION much stronger than D, i.e. that it is BY DEFINITION not the case that whatever reason you have to consider reliable a procedure showing that you are not mauding is also a reason to consider reliable a procedure showing that you are not dreaming. Simplified, (I) is just the claim that you cannot have reason to think that your intellection is ok, without also having reason that your perception is ok, whose (evident) falsity has led Wright to introduce mauding in the first case. Depending on what you mean by "the same procedure" on p. 15, I perhaps agree with you: the same procedure can give me a perception-based warrant for P and an intellection-based warrant for RxtP. The warrants, however, differ in that the second one needs no extra-procedure: I'm with Descartes here and perhaps with you, if I understood you aright on p. 16. I think that your criticism of PEP



is misguided and this for two reasons: First, you embezzle (if this is the right word) the fact that for Wright the warrants have to be INDEPENDENT. I therefore not think that he would give the answer you propose to the regress problem. Instead, he could either (i) use Thinning and Iterativity to trivialize the problem, or (ii) he would have to take back things he says latter about the transferal of the opacity problem from perception to intellection and conclude that the regress stops as soon as we have reached the realm of intellection (i.e. after the first step). The second reason is that he grants the point you're making on p. 10 I do not... for reasonable belief. I'm not sure whether you are showing more than that, for the notion of warrant seems to exclude acquisition of warrant while dreaming by definition. I was some sort of confused by seeing you make in the end the reasoning I took you to have criticized in the passage on PEP. I'm, however, entirely on your side with respect to procedures. This is a point Dretske stressed: closure, problematic on its own, is OBVIOUSLY invalid with respect to modes of knowing. Suppose I'm looking at a table, where there are two glasses near the right, and two glasses near the left edge. I'm seeing four glasses. A necessary condition for that, however, is that  $2+2=4$ . My knowledge or warrant that there are four glasses is perceptually based, although I cannot SEE that  $2+2=4$ . The way of knowing the latter is not the way of knowing the former. Incidentally, I don't even think that Wright's circularity argument is any good. Remember what Dretske said about calibration (or what you say about verifying that a clock is working correctly). It seems to be not only harmless but also NORMAL that two things reciprocally provide warrants for each other. I'm not sure whether you are granting too much to Wright if you agree that if you believe you don't have a warrant you don't have any (p. 17). If, as you say, de facto flawless execution of the procedure is enough, you could still think that it was flawed. You would just be wrong, but who cares about that (except you)? Although I completely agree with your misgivings concerning iterativity, I would go further than that:  $K_{xt}K_{xt}P$  is, in general, a much stronger claim than  $K_{xt}P$ , just because for the latter de facto flawless execution is enough and for the former not. I would like to elaborate a bit on that in my Barcelona paper (forthcoming :-)). What you say in Fn 10 about the absurdity of unearned warrants is very good. I would include it into the main text and elaborate a bit. On the "new argument", I still have to think... Some minor points: p.3 The grounds... Your argument seems to depend on the possibility that you may FIND OUT that you are dreaming, whereas this seems unnecessary (why not stipulate everlasting dreams?) p.4,p.12 You should perhaps say that you use "transmissible" for a notion which is different from Wright's: you mean closure under known or warranted consequences, he closure under any consequences whatsoever. p.5 Whatever... I'm not sure whether what you are sketching here is some sort of Russellian retreat. p.7 Although I understand that you want to avoid technicalities in your reformulation of what it is to have a warranted belief, I don't think that the recourse to a (specific, but indeterminate) threshold  $n$  is adequate (at least as a reconstruction). Instead of "greater than  $n$ " I would say "not decreased by the (circumstances of) my having it (the belief)". p.8 Here... I'm not sure whether you are not criticizing Wright unjustly. For he said that unwarranted beliefs could seem to be like guesses FROM A GOD'S EYE POINT OF VIEW. In the example you construct, e.g., your belief that the text is impeccable would not be unwarranted, for the probability of its truth is (as you say yourself) improved by the fact that you have come to have it (by proofreading while being drowsy).

There is no second order paradox because, given iterativity,  $\neg W \rightarrow \neg P_1$  collapses into  $P_1$ .

#### ITERATIVITY

1)  $Kp \rightarrow KKp$  2)  $Wp \rightarrow WWp$  3) its role in the sceptical and antisceptical argument

knowledge founded on proof: 1) automatic: a proof that  $p$  is ipso facto a proof that  $p$  is provable: provable  $p \rightarrow$  provable provable  $p$  (what if your system does not have a provability predicate); no good in cases where to have  $KKp$  you have to consider whether  $Kp$  (you might lack the belief); same thing suspicious about counterexamples in the case of mathematics and of self-knowledge - is it really a further step? we are not asking whether self-knowledge is reliable modality matters if an extra step is

needed; if the extra step is easy and always possible, iterativity holds

self-knowledge: distinction between immediate and interpretative self-knowledge; in the latter case, knowing that you knowing entails knowing that your interpretation is good, which might be more difficult than just simple knowing.

founded on demonstration and immediate self-knowledge -> it iterates for Descartes and for the project of good conscience -> so it holds in the context of sceptical arguments BY DEFINITION

if knowledge and having warrant is connected to claimability, it should be the case that I can claim that  $p$  in the same situation in which I can claim that I know that  $p$ .

true if knowledge is partly externally constituted

but in the case of immediate self-knowledge and mathematics, they only differ by conversational maxims and implicatures -> but the claim that I know that  $p$  might beg the question while the claim that  $p$  does not (if, for example, the question is whether I have

When Wittgenstein, regrettably, says that I cannot know that I am in pain, he needs to say that even the thought that I know that I am in pain is incongruous; but, contra him, this is not a case similar to the "it's five o'clock on the sun", where its truth violates its assertability conditions. He simply does not make the distinction between constraints flowing from the context of an assertion and constraints flowing from the content.

There are bad reasons brought up against " $K_e p \rightarrow K_i K_e p$ ": for example, that you might know but not be able to tell. Being able to tell, however, is not a precondition of knowledge if the latter is interpreted modally.

Upshot IF iterativity holds, it holds in virtue of the peculiarities of the  $p$  in question

BUT this shows that the sceptic is entitled to iterativity, but is he obliged to accept it, thereby collapsing his second-order paradox into the first-order one

\*\*\*

leaves us with a diagnostic task: we have shown that  $\neg WPI$  is a stable position, but after all there has been made a case for  $PI$

and Humean paradoxes are still with us

fundamental mistake of both Cartesian and Humean paradoxes: conflating warrant and evidence

If there is a way of getting warrant which does not depend on getting evidence then (iv) is wrong: we might be rationally entitled to accept a proposition even if we do not have evidence for it.

difference: with evidence in general, you have to appropriate it in order to get justification from it for a certain belief with warrant, however, it should be enough if a philosopher, benefactor of mankind, does the work

insight of scepticism: building up of a system of justified belief cannot be done without presuppositions.

we need a notion of unearned rational warrant -> entitlement is such a notion which is not, however, connected to truth - perhaps we can bootstrap truth-conducitivity out of closure and purely epistemic entitlement -> would be nice to have a notion of unearned rational warrant that is connected to truth - but wouldn't this be idealism?

argument is not pragmatic: trusting is not claimed to be a dominant strategy - there are not really two scenarios to consider

Berkeley/idealism/BIV: avoid intertranslatability of metaphysically different doctrines by subjunctive conditionals; zombie world for other minds is much more imaginable, but still -> for this you need entitlement of substance for matter and mind; matter is easier because we don't really have a conception of what the alternative is

contextualism is at odds with the unity of science we prize in science and should also prize in enquiry in general

### 0.5.3 Cornerstone propositions

### 0.5.4 The explanandum

cornerstone propositions

- very general, arise all the time
- underwrite our very search for evidence: if we don't warrantedly accept them, we cannot have warrant for a large class of other propositions
- are such that we cannot get evidence for them (as the sceptical arguments show): they are beyond evidence

The Dream argument shows that propositions to the effect that you are cognitively competent have to count as cornerstone propositions.

At this point, Moore (in some moods), Wittgenstein (On Certainty) and Strawson (scepticism and Naturalism) deny that 'ought' implies 'can': even though the sceptical argument shows that we should not accept them; but our animal nature is just such that we accept these propositions – we are not failing a standard but are just naturally so constituted to do otherwise. We have standards we cannot, as animals, live up to. This, however, is disappointing. We want the acceptance of cornerstone propositions not only to be natural, but we want it to be rational. If we can do that, we have a response to scepticism that leaves us in good intellectual conscience.

task: find non-evidential warrant for the cornerstone propositions that enables us to acquire evidential warrant for those propositions that depend on them

problems: 1. If entitlement can be made good, what will it be an entitlement to do? It is not obvious that entitlement, if we get it at all, will be an entitlement to believe. One problem here is that "belief" is probably not a unitary notion. We also have to respect the lesson learned from Wittgenstein, that there is nothing it is like to believe that  $p$ : Even though we have the same kind of authority for beliefs as for sensations. Observation, even if it has some plausibility (perhaps wrongly) in the case of sensations, is clearly unavailable to explain first-order authority about beliefs.<sup>6</sup> The explanandum – easy self-knowledge about our own beliefs – is not just dispositional, but normative: ascribing a belief to someone is ascribing a state that is committal with respect both to in- and out-rules. Given that they have that belief and they are rational, they ought to do certain things. Having a belief is not just a functionalist state: there is no sense in which the glass ought to break just because it is fragile but if you believe that it is fragile you should believe that it will break. Beliefs are rationally controlled and rationally committing.

The problem is that given this picture, the project is forlorn: if beliefs have to be normatively controlled, I cannot rationally believe a cornerstone proposition knowing that I do not and cannot have evidence for it. We want something belief-like which does not have that feature: something that we may entertain in the absence of evidence. The way to go is to find a better attitudinal psychology. We have to find something more general than belief:

1. to accept  $p$

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<sup>6</sup>It seems that second-order beliefs are essentially linguistically manifested (even the most convincing experiments with non-linguistic animals seem always to admit of a deflationary first-order interpretation).

For Plantinga, belief in God is a cornerstone proposition.

2. The notion of entitlement oscillates between permission and mandate and we want the latter.

3. The leaching problem: closure has to be qualified for mandated acceptance. What if we make a case for the cornerstone proposition that mandates its acceptance but do not get more than mandated acceptance – and, in particular, do not get genuine knowledge – for the propositions depending on them. We want it to be the case that we can be justified in believing  $p$  and have  $p \models q$  and still *not* be justified in believing the cornerstone proposition  $q$  (but only be mandated to accept it). One might say that closure only holds for the most general notion of warrant, a notion that includes both evidential justification and mandating rational entitlement.

jb -> w entit -> w belief -> acceptance

underlying idea: I believe  $p$  but I do not have evidence for ' $p$ ' I accept  $p$  but I do not have evidence for ' $p$ '

Drive as if every guy on the street is a dangerous maniac! For the purposes of the project make no assumption inconsistent with the innocence of the accused: you are required to take it that

accept = pretend to believe, do as if you believed

problem: like do as if we believed there is a monster out there is not subject to the same kind of evidential constraints.

1) why should it be assumed that pretending to believe / doing as if you believed should be subject to the same epistemic norms (or at least to the same kind of epistemic norms) as believing? 2) even if belief is involuntary, will acceptance be involuntary to the same degree and in the same way?

difference between thinking and mauling could motivate the position according to which drug-induced insertion of belief-tokens does not count as acquisition of a belief. -> wouldn't that rule out irrational belief?

### 0.5.5 The Reichenbach proposal

Reichenbach: if we cannot realise the sufficient conditions, we should realise at least the necessary one (if anything can save the man, an operation will)

justification is not evidential but game-theoretic

nothing works in the non-inductive worlds, and induction works in the inductive worlds -> so using induction is a dominant strategy; in all worlds, it -> you are warranted in inducing even though you do not have evidence it will be successful : one example in which evidence and warrant come apart

problems 1) rationality of eating the fruit is localised -> has to be generalised to get warrant for cornerstone propositions 2) warrant is for an action ("behave inductively"), not an attitude towards the proposition that the fruit is edible (= the proposition that would rationally explain the action) -> acting on the assumption that  $p$  and the belief that it is the dominant strategy PROBLEM: acting on the assumption is unlike believing; even the rationality of assuming is not delivered by the game-theoretic strategy 3) Schiffer problem If the plane crashes, it is best to have taken the leaflet (offering free life-insurance for the flight) If the plane doesn't crash, no harm done in taking the leaflet If the rationality of behaving inductively can be massaged into rational acceptance of the antecedent (that nature is uniform), then the rationality of taking the leaflet can somehow be massaged into acceptance of the proposition that the plane crashes. So why I am boarding the plane?

So: If there is a proposition rational acceptance of which is justified by the Reichenbach argument it is not the antecedent of the first conditional. There is no attitude towards the plane crash justified by the argument.

rationalises acting on the assumption that the plane crashes with respect to the open issue of taking

the leaflet

other example: either you turn your clock going five minutes late or not (with 50% probability): if it's five minutes late, you are more often on time; if not, no harm done. -> it is rational to fool yourself -> disconnected from epistemic virtues

So what we best get is rationality of inductive inferences but agnosticism about whether they are truth-conducive.

you get Pascal's wager warrant for certain propositions

but the phenomenology of inductive confidence is not like that

what is the difference between the plane case and the cases of the fruit and induction? 1) generality within a certain project (covering the fruit case) If you believed the first antecedent, you would act differently even in the local context acting on an assumption becomes a bit more belief-like if the assumption is very general 2) you must behave exactly as if you believed the proposition in question with respect to things that may be rationalised by practical syllogisms

aim: an attitude that does not differ from belief with respect to what is rationalised by it even though they differ: you can tell whether you are believing that  $p$  or just acting on the assumption that  $p$  difference is in confidence

even if I decide that it's a rational rule to follow, how can I follow Reichenbach's rule? How do I make myself to rationally believe propositions about the future? Induction is only rationalised in so far as it is something I can do voluntarily.

In the end, I have no real evidence that nature is uniform. no specific attitude towards the future which is formed inductively is rationalised.

Even if Reichenbach would have succeeded in disposing of scepticism with respect to induction, his response falls short of an argument against material world scepticism. Recall that type-III propositions amount to the claim that there is a track of reality apt to make type-II propositions so much as true or false. This, however, is only necessary but not yet sufficient to make it reasonable to believe the type-II proposition on the basis of the type-I proposition. To make the transition reasonable, the type-III proposition has to be more complex and contain a further conjunct to the effect that the track of reality apt to make the type-II proposition true or false really reflected, more or less, in the relevant type-I proposition. With inductive scepticism, only the second conjunct is called into question: what is at stake is the methodological, not the ontological component of the presupposition. What is challenged is a specific belief-forming method, not the very existence of that in virtue of which my generalisations are true or false. Reichenbach's answer, at most, warrants the methodological component of the type-III proposition.

### **0.5.6 Rational trust**

desideratum: acceptance must licence treating things as evidence and therefore cannot be at all like acting on an assumption -> trust. can it be rational to trust things? trusting = accepting without evidence

trusting an ability vs trusting a proposition but can I trust my memory without taking it on trust that my memory is mostly reliable?

presuppositions such that if I came to doubt them I would have to withdraw my claim it is a necessary truth that any time I claim warrant for something I have to presuppose that some other things are TRUE testing the presuppositions is a NEW project, with new presuppositions

regress in itself wouldn't matter if the presuppositions checked got safer and safer if they are not getting more secure, there is no point in checking and no point in launching the regress -> pragmatic

point - justified by game-theoretical argument?

if you want to be a rational enquirer, you'd better believe you can do it - transcendental argument? - sceptical argument? If you do not trust and you are rational, you do not form beliefs.

"*p*" is an entitlement of a cognitive project

The condition (iii) is satisfied if the new presupposition is of the same kind than the old one.

which projects are such that we have no option but to undertake them given that we are the kind of creatures that we are? are there rationally non-optional kinds of cognitive projects?

don't you have a problem of "easy entitlement", corresponding to Pryor's problem of easy knowledge? does it help to replace (ii) by "no evidence to believe that (*p* is no more likely (to be true/valid) than  $\neg p$ )".

doesn't work because even 45

no evidence bearing on whether *p*; presupposing that you are innocent with respect to *p* -> if you have, you have to get it out of the way first entitlement to consistency may be lost if probable arguments are allowed in mathematics

the notion is only of help against the sceptic if what the sceptic does is ensure (ii) by destroying the evidence we have and does not rid us of evidence by balancing the case for and against some proposition -> only Cartesian scepticism, not Pyrrhonian scepticism premiss 1 of the dreaming argument -> clause 2 antisceptical argument establishes clause 3 clause 1 secured by 2nd premiss of the sceptical argument countervailing evidence redefined as evidence against and evidence that makes it rationally to treat them alike

cognitive projects: only whether *p* is true or also whether *p* is *justified*

no entitlement to a specific way the world is: you only get entitlement of method, not entitlement of substance

Lewis generous: entitlement to think of modal propositions as being made true or false by how modal worlds are and of modal intuition as being a good guide to modal reality austere: only entitlement to trust your modal intuition (IF backing up modal claims is only possible by further modal claims)

you get entitlement to: if there is a material world, then your perceptual apparatus is up for the task this is not the mistake of the Adversial Stance because the projects are not optional trust is rational, because whatever is rational for rationality is itself rational

what if the sceptic disagrees on what are the presuppositions? even for Berkeley, it must be possible to say false things about the empirical world - so there is still room for scepticism - YOU give me a conception of the world and I give you its presuppositions

cognitive project = physics, *p* = the truth of the theory, as opposed to its acceptability (ii) no evidence that distinguishes between truth and empirical adequacy truth, not adequacy is a presupposition for realists, adequacy, not truth is a presupposition for antirealists -> *p* and  $\neg p$  are entitlements of the same project

maundering problem for the cogito: arises when he wants to do something with sum ie when he claims to know it

leaching problem: Justification by evidence gives you resources to claim that some proposition is more likely to be true than not. Entitlement, however, is not evidential: even though it means immunity to criticism, gives you no sense in which you can take the proposition in question to be more likely to be true than not.

experience as of having two hands I have two hands There is an external world (broadly as revealed in sense-experience)

entitlement to (3) insulates it from experience. But if I have only entitlement to (3), how can I stay open to the possibility that (2) is knowledgeable?

knowledge of (2) = matter of certain conditions being satisfied (externalism); entitlement to (3) is entitlement to the claim that I indeed acquired this knowledge: there is leaching, but second-order. The entitlement to my knowledge claim is on the basis of the very same thing that enables the knowledge claimed in the first place three options - complete closure failure (unmotivated) - no closure for knowledge, but we have closure for warrant - bite the bullet and say that both for (2) and (3) we are entitled to know them.

formulated as a paradox; take  $p \rightarrow c$ , where  $c$  involves a risk (1) if acceptance of  $C$  is risky, so is acceptance of  $p$ . (2)  $c$  is a mere entitlement, so acceptance of  $c$  is risky. (3)  $p$  is known

denying 2): -free the notion of entitlement from risk - beneath the level of evidence, we cannot really call cornerstones risky. problem with 1) what is risky at best is acceptance of the claim that I know  $p$  (I could know  $p$  in an entirely un-risky way).

our projects presuppose entitlement to those propositions, and perhaps they are not optional for us, but nothing assures us there might not be other projects that do not have these presuppositions there seems to be such an alternative in the case of other minds which makes this problem especially difficult

### 0.5.7 The McKinsey paradox

The concept of water is only available to you if you are in some relation to real water

I believe that water is wet. If I so believe, then .... water exists. So, water exists.

we are getting a priori warrant for something one cannot a priori warrant for. responses: - externalism, but give up on a priori knowledge - externalism is false - transmission failure: the sense of which the first premiss is a priori is by courtesy of warrant for the conclusion  $\rightarrow$  still a paradox if we have closure (water is not wet)

### 0.5.8 Davidsonian anti-scepticism

An omniscient interpreter would also be charitable.

## I Questions for Paul Horwich in Heidelberg

I have five questions, a résumé (where the question, not really to be discussed in class, is whether it is accurate) and a follow-up to the discussion we had in and after Paris.

The questions:

1. *your argument against disquotationalism in "Theories of Truth"*: The identity conditions for propositions derivable from the projection principle are too weak: if propositions were identified by material equivalence, not even Quine would have anything against them.
2. *the problem of justifying epistemic norms in "The Value of Truth"*: I do not see an epistemic circularity: it is true that we rely on our epistemic norms when arguing for premise  $m^*$ ; in order for  $m^*$  to be justified, however, it is enough that our epistemic norms are truth-conducive *de facto*, we do not have to presuppose them to be so (cf. the argument in ?); the equivalence problem could perhaps be alleviated by the observation that norms of justification, but not (at least not primarily) (VT) are *social*: we adopt scientific practices because they are likely to produce true beliefs in others, contribute to scientific progress, which in turn, via (VT) benefits us.

3. *communal meaning, similarity of rules in "Rule-following and Meaning"*: To avoid the tricky notion of rules being similar, why not define the explanatorily basic core use  $u(w)$  of an expression  $w$  to be its use *within a linguistic community*. The idealised law that best accounts for it would then already "idealise over" the possibly deviant use of the expression by some individuals.
4. *the constitution of meaning properties, fn.13 of "The Pseudo-Problem of Error"*: Would you say that it is necessary a posteriori that the ideal law governing some core use of an expression constitutes its meaning (" $u(w) \Rightarrow w$  means DOG") or would you rather say that " $u(w) \Rightarrow w$  means DOG" is contingent and a posteriori, but that " $w$  means DOG  $\Rightarrow \forall x(w \text{ is true of } x \leftrightarrow x \text{ is a dog})$ " is necessary and a priori and so that " $u(w) \Rightarrow \forall x(w \text{ is true of } x \leftrightarrow x \text{ is a dog})$ " is necessary a posteriori?
5. *another follow-up to fn.19 to Objection 6 in "A Defense of Minimalism" [this was not discussed in class]* If one wants to draw, with Dummett (I think), a distinction between the principle of bivalence (every false proposition is not true and every true proposition is not false) and the law of excluded middle (every proposition is either true or false), then it seems that only the latter arises by generalisations of all (ES)-instances of the form " $p \vee \neg p$ ": if acceptance of the former is also meaning-constitutive, it would have to be added as an extra axiom as well.

If one does not want to ascribe to people an acceptance of the schema itself (rather than of its instances), one could perhaps help oneself to non-rigid descriptions, i.e. ascribe to them acceptance of something like "whatever proposition  $p$  I think about now  $\leftrightarrow p$ ".

The following is a kind of summary/extension of your theory. I just wonder whether you agree: According to the minimalist theory of truth, grasping the concept of truth is to have the disposition to underivedly accept all (or at least, all but the Liar-like) instances of the so-called "equivalence schema":

(16) the proposition that  $p$  is true  $\leftrightarrow \&p$

Underived acceptance is acceptance that does not stem from the acceptance of other sentences containing the truth-predicate. Because we do not want to say, as Tarski has to, that our concept of truth changes with every change to our language, instances of (16) have to be accepted *in virtue of their having a certain form*, i.e. in virtue of their being instances of the schema (16). This means that everyone having the concept of truth must have the concept of material equivalence  $\leftrightarrow$ . This implausible consequence of the minimalist theory could be avoided if we required that someone possessing the concept of truth has a disposition to accept all (unproblematic) instances of the following inferences:

(17) 
$$\frac{\text{the proposition that } p \text{ is true}}{p} \qquad \frac{p}{\text{the proposition that } p \text{ is true}}$$

The problem with (17), however, is that underived acceptance of an inference is less clear a notion than underived acceptance of a sentence: while the primitively compelling introduction rules for logical constants add deductive power, nothing of that kind seems to happen with the trivial reformulation in (17).

The minimalist claim about the meaning of "true" is but a special case of a more general heuristic to determine the property constituting the meaning of some given expression type  $w$  given by the "use theory of meaning":

1. Identify the overall pattern of use of  $w$  within a linguistic community  $C$ .
2. Identify the core (= meaning-constituting) use of  $w$  (the part of the overall-use of  $w$  that is explanatorily basic).



3. Find an idealised law that best systematises the core use of  $w$  within  $C$ : specify the sentences (conditional) acceptance of which is, within  $C$ , constitutive of mastery of the concept expressed by  $w$ .

For many terms, in particular for natural kind terms, the core use of an expression within a community is its use by the experts; for other terms, e.g. for “true” and the logical constants, it is the one codified in transitions of the type (17) which have to be recognised as trivial and automatic. We can mimic (17) for other semantic concepts as well:

$$(18) \quad \frac{a \text{ exemplifies } F\text{-ness}}{Fa} \qquad \frac{Fa}{a \text{ exemplifies } F\text{-ness}}$$

$$(19) \quad \frac{\text{the referent of “}a\text{” is } F}{Fa} \qquad \frac{Fa}{\text{the referent of “}a\text{” is } F}$$

The sentences acceptance of which provides the best ideal law governing the core use of the concepts give us a classification of concepts:

1. The meaning of *formal concepts* is constituted by the *everyone’s* disposition to accept *language-internal* transitions, e.g. (17) or the Gentzen-rules for logical constants, reformulations like (19) and (18), analytical equivalences like “ $x$  is a bachelor  $\leftrightarrow x$  is an unmarried man” and so on.
2. The meaning of *theoretical concepts*, on a structuralist account, is constituted by *the experts’* disposition to accept *language-internal* transitions of the form “ $x$  is an electron  $\leftrightarrow$  the Ramsey-sentence of theory  $T$  is true of  $x$ ”.
3. The meaning of *recognition concepts* is constituted by *everyone’s* disposition to accept *language-entry* rules of the form “ $x$  is red  $\leftrightarrow x$  has a tendency to produce a red-impression in *me*”.
4. The meaning of *natural kind concepts* is constituted by *the experts’* disposition to accept *language-entry* rules of the form “ $x$  is water  $\leftrightarrow x$  has the same underlying nature than *this*”.

My original Paris worry about (VT) was the following:

Take any moment at which it is true of me and of some proposition  $p$  that  $p$  but that I do not believe that  $p$  (any true instance of Moore’s paradox). It would then follow from (scope) that it is desirable to believe “ $p$  and I do not believe that  $p$ ”. But it seems neither pragmatically nor morally desirable (for me, at least) to believe the quoted sentence, given that I could not non-contradictorily self-ascribe such a belief and not even rationally maintain it, given that I know that I am having this belief.

Your reply was:

Re. point one, it’s a very nice observation. The only thing I can think of to say at the moment is that it doesn’t jeopardise my claim that IDEALLY one would believe every fact; because, in that casem the IDEAL situation would be one in which no fact of the kind that your counterexample requires (i.e. where it is true that  $p$  but I don’t believe it) would exist.

But I am not sure that such an ideal situation (where I would believe all the truths) is possible. For I would believe an infinite set of truths  $T$ . For any subset  $T'$  of  $T$ , however, it would be true that I believe all the truths in  $T'$ . So, by Cantor’s Theorem (there are more subsets than elements of a set), there are truths that I don’t believe. Even if we do not assume that the collection of all the propositions I would ideally believe is a set, it follows from Gödel’s diagonalisation theore that there is a sentence of my language (assuming that I may express in it basic arithmetic) which is true iff I do not believe it (? : 173).

With (VT\*), you are in a somewhat more comfortable situation, for you could just restrict (scope), excluding Moore-sentences and tautologies.