Contents

Emotions as Temporarily Transformative Experiences

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How do emotions affect rational choice? The possible elements of emotions are standardly taken to fall into the following categories: behavioral, mental, expressive, physiological, phenomenological, and evaluative (Prinz, 2004). The evaluative dimension of emotions is seen by some as central to practical rationality. This is because an emotion is an evaluative appraisal of an object – for instance, fear is an appraisal of a particular dog as dangerous (e.g., Brady, 2013, D'Arms & Jacobson, 2023).

In my talk, I will argue that there is an evaluative element of emotion that affects practical rationality in a major way and has so far been overlooked in the literature. Some emotions may function as what Laurie Ann Paul (2014): calls "transformative experiences": they may transform a person's system of values, albeit only temporarily. Thus, a person experiencing an emotional episode not only appraises a particular object as (dis)valuable, but also begins to value different things. For example, a person who is angry with her boss for mistreating her not only appraises her boss as offensive, but may also endorse the decision to leave her job, which she wouldn't have done prior to getting angry. After getting angry, she starts valuing her self-worth more than career security. Importantly, the angry person is not committing a rational mistake either before experiencing her emotion or after that. She simply has a different, but acceptable, ordering of values in those two moments. Furthermore, this temporary emotional transformation concerns not only the object of the emotion but has a more global impact. Even though the initial trigger was getting angry with her boss, during the episode of anger, the person's whole evaluative outlook has changed – for instance, now she also endorses the decision to confront her family about their unpalatable political statements.

I will distinguish emotional evaluative transformation from other similar phenomena, such as a value's becoming more salient or receiving the motivational power to pursue one's values. This component of emotion helps explain why emotions deeply affect not only how we react to a particular object, but also how we evaluatively see the world more broadly. I will end by sketching some of the problems for rationality that emotional evaluative transformation gives rise to, most notably how one ought to view one's emotionally influenced decisions after the emotional episode has subsided.

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Normative Defeaters in Reasoning

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The concept of a *defeater* is defined in Pollock (1987) and has received much attention in epistemology. A distinction is usually made between defeaters for knowledge (as in Gettier cases) and defeaters for justification (Kelp 2023: 5). Concerning the latter, a strong case has been made for the existence of *normative*, or *external*, defeaters. Normative defeaters of justification are, according to Lackey (2014), who introduced the term, "doubts or beliefs that S *should have* (whether or not S does have them) given the presence of certain available evidence" (2014: 292). Although the idea seems counterintuitive (Kelp 2021: 6), intuitively plausible examples of normative defeaters have been given (Harman 1980: 164; Goldberg 2018; Kelp 2023: 22).

In this paper I assume that there are normative defeaters for justification, as many epistemologists do (cf. Nottelmann 2021), and I consider the possibility of normative defeaters in *reasoning*. While it is widely acknowledged that reasoning and arguing in natural language are defeasible (e. g., Walton, Rees and Macagno 2008), the notion of a normative defeater in reasoning has not received much attention.

Only *beliefs* that an agent has, or information that she possesses, have been considered as possible defeaters in reasoning. One might suspect that this is because reasoning is a cognitive process or activity, in contrast to justification, which is not. It is therefore plausible to hold that the reasons capable of defeating an inference must be internal to the reasoner, rather than external. A subject uses in reasoning, at a particular moment, the information she possesses at that moment. Beliefs or reasons that fall outside her cognitive grasp require inquiry before they can play a role in evaluating an argument.

But this approach to reasoning does not account for certain epistemic contexts in which we have the intuition that there are normative defeaters, even if the subjects engaging in reasoning or in interpersonal argumentation are not in possession of the defeating reasons. Starting from Ballantyne (2015), I am considering contexts in which evidence pertaining to a specialized field of scientific inquiry is relevant to the evaluation of an argument. Taking the correctness of a reasoning process to be evaluated relative to the agent's

actual beliefs, or the evidence available to her, leads to the wrong results. In these cases, correct reasoning does not amount to correct inference from the information that one *currently* has, while ignoring relevant but available information that one does not possess but *should* possess.

In the second part of the paper, I address the problem of the nature of the normativity involved in the "should" in "evidence one *should* possess", a problem which has attracted attention lately in epistemology. Lackey (2014), Goldberg (2018), and Simion (2024) have examined the norms that demand responsiveness to evidence that extends beyond one's internal epistemic states. Addressing this problem helps clarify the ways in which subjects can be held epistemically accountable for overlooking information they do not actually possess but which is, in principle, available to them.

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Situated Rationality and the Norms of Reasoning

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Epistemology and cognitive science are increasingly turning toward what I call the de-idealized cognizer. The image of an omniscient, unbounded agent recedes. New models foreground the limits and situatedness of real cognitive systems. Idealized agents—Bayesian updaters, perfect optimizers, coherence maximizers - do not fit well ecological and embodied cognition. My claim is: cognitive limitations are not deviations from an ideal but constitutive features of rationality.

I introduce into epistemology the work of Gerd Gigerenzer, and his theory of ecological rationality. Gigerenzer's program shifts the normative focus from internal coherence to ecological success. Thus, heuristics such as Take-the-Best achieve high accuracy with minimal information and computation by exploiting stable regularities in the environment.

I reframe his central regularity as cue-validity symmetry and express it formally. An environment is symmetric when cue-validity is task invariant—that is, when for any two tasks T and T' drawn from the same environment, the cue-validity remains constant, $v_{T(C)} = v_{T'(C)}$. More formally, suppose the environment consists of tasks generated from a base task T, where G acts on the task structure. Cue-validity symmetry then requires that for all $g \in G$, cue-validity is preserved, $v_{T(C)} = v_{gT(C)}$; reversal $(A, B) \mapsto (B, A)$ is a canonical example of such a transformation. When cue-validities are invariant under all transformations in G, the ordering $v(C1) > v(C2) > \ldots > v(Cn)$ is stable across tasks. Combined with skewness – $v(C1) >> v(C2), v(C3) \ldots$ – this stable ordering ensures that the leading cue reliably dominates, making early stopping normatively appropriate. In such environments, lexicographic heuristics exploit structural invariants rather than integrating all available evidence. This mathematical structure explains why heuristics can outperform compensatory models in many real-world settings.

When the environment is not symmetric, cue-validity becomes task-dependent, and the ordering of cues is no longer stable across tasks. Skewness may hold locally but not globally, so no single cue reliably dominates. Thus, early stopping loses its normative justification: a cue that is highly informative in one region may be misleading in another. In non-symmetric environments, rationality requires sensitivity to local structure rather than reliance on a fixed cue hierarchy.

Thus, normativity shifts: boundedness is not a defect, and heuristics are not approximations of ideal reasoning. Simple strategies can outperform complex ones when they fit the environment's invariant structure. Normativity cannot rest on abstract optimization alone but must be indexed to

the capacities of real agents. Symmetry offers one such structural condition: when cue-validities are invariant under reversal, heuristics that exploit this invariance are rational because they track the environment's dominant dimensions. Normativity, in this sense, becomes a matter of "memorized heuristics." Non-heuristic decisions can also be effective not because they approximate an ideal optimizer, but because they exploit environmental structure that simple heuristics are blind to. Thus, Bayesian norms exemplify one working, but not universal, model.

By integrating Gigerenzer's ecological rationality with a de-idealized metaphysics of the cognizer and a formal account of environmental symmetry, I advance a naturalistic, externalist, and pluralistic account of rationality that explains how finite, embodied agents can reason well in a complex and uncertain world.

Coherence under Uncertainty

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Rational reasoning often proceeds on the basis of bodies of information whose individual components are uncertain. In such contexts, epistemic assessment is not exhausted by evaluating propositions one by one. It also involves assessing how collections of claims hang together as sets of information. Consider a case in which several probabilistic indicators each weakly support a hypothesis, in the form of different measurements, correlations, or observational cues. Taken individually, none provides strong support; taken together, however, they may either reinforce one another or partially undermine one another, depending on how they are related.

This talk argues that epistemic coherence, which may be understood as a property of information sets rather than individual propositions, plays an indispensable role in rational epistemic assessment under uncertainty. Coherence concerns relations among propositions that become salient when claims are assessed jointly rather than in isolation: whether pieces of information support the same conclusions independently, rely on overlapping assumptions, or introduce hidden redundancies. In cases of structural interdependence, coherence helps distinguish collections of claims that merely accumulate support from those that exhibit epistemically significant structure, in the sense that the support they provide is not merely the aggregate of the support provided by individual claims, but depends on how those claims are related. This is also reflected in assessments of explanatory power and in judgments about argument strength.

On the view developed here, coherence is neither a foundational epistemic principle nor a stand-alone reasoning norm. Rather, it is one among several considerations that guide rational assessment when agents evaluate bodies of information rather than isolated claims. Its epistemic significance is conditional and context-sensitive, and in some cases coherence itself may be difficult to determine. Still, this does not diminish its importance. Precisely because uncertainty often concerns how pieces of information are related, rational epistemic assessment cannot dispense with set-level considerations altogether. Coherence matters not because it always settles epistemic questions, but because it captures a dimension of rational evaluation that becomes unavoidable whenever uncertain information must be assessed as a whole.

Co-Cognition and Practical Reason: Towards a Non-Theoretical Model of Mindreading

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This article investigates the relationship between practical reasoning and mental simulation, focusing particularly on Jane Heal's co-cognition theory of mindreading. The central claim developed throughout the paper is that practical reasoning, when understood in its expanded and philosophically rich sense, provides an illuminating framework for understanding how humans interpret and predict the mental states of others without appealing to theoretical generalizations. The article unfolds in three major stages: an analysis of practical reasoning, an exploration of its logical structure and third-person applicability, and the application of these insights to Heal's account of co-cognition as a model for knowing other minds.

The first section distinguishes practical reasoning from theoretical reasoning. While theoretical reasoning aims at forming true beliefs about how the world is, practical reasoning concerns deliberation directed toward action and involves normative considerations of what an agent ought to do. Practical reasoning is therefore first-personal, often context-laden, and grounded in norms of action rather than norms of belief. The author surveys the philosophical literature, particularly Gilbert Harman's argument that intentions necessarily involve beliefs. This insight, Harman suggests, bridges theoretical and practical reasoning by showing that both operate holistically to maintain coherence among an agent's attitudes. Practical reasoning, because it concludes in intentions that dispose agents to act, plays as fundamental a role in shaping one's overall worldview as theoretical reasoning does.

The second major section examines Von Wright's analysis of "practical inference", which demonstrates how first-person practical deliberations can

be systematically extended into third-person predictions of others' behavior. Von Wright's reconstruction of the practical syllogism reveals that practical inferences involve not only facts about what means lead to an end but also the agent's epistemic attitudes toward these means–end relations. By adding epistemic clauses such as "X thinks that unless he does A, E will not be achieved," the practical syllogism becomes applicable to third-person ascriptions while preserving the internal logic of practical reasoning. This transition from "I shall do A" to "X will do A" forms a natural bridge between self-understanding and mindreading.

The final and most significant section applies these insights to Jane Heal's theory of co-cognition, an influential alternative to the "theory theory" of mindreading. Heal challenges the claim that we understand other minds by deploying tacit psychological theories; instead, she argues that we use our capacity to imagine, simulate, and replicate others' perspectives. For Heal, understanding humans requires not theoretical explanation but perspective-taking grounded in shared cognitive capacities—what she calls "minimal rationality." We co-cognize when we engage with the same subject matter in ways structurally similar to how another person engages with it, relying not on causal generalizations but on semantic and normative connections between thoughts.

The article argues that practical reasoning provides the best model for understanding the rationality presupposed in Heal's co-cognition. Practical reasoning incorporates subjectivity, imagination, deliberation about possible futures, and first-personal norms, yet it also allows smooth transition to third-person prediction. By aligning co-cognition with practical rather than theoretical reasoning, the author contends, we avoid collapsing Heal's model into the theory-theory framework while explaining how agents can understand others without reducing rationality to empirical or naturalistic terms. The paper concludes that practical reasoning and co-cognition share deep structural affinities, making practical reasoning an ideal conceptual tool for articulating and defending Heal's simulationist view of mindreading.

Disinformation is About Evidence, not Belief

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In this talk, I wish to argue that disinformation, if meant as a cause of current epistemological issues brought by social media, is being misunderstood by philosophers and social scientists. While most accounts of disinformation are preoccupied with the impact of content in false belief (Fallis (2014), Harris (2024) and Simion (2023)), the crux of the issue, I contend, should be the impact of content in user's perception of what constitutes evidence, especially higher-order evidence such as experts. The problem is not the quantity of false beliefs but its irreversibility. Even when it really matters, disinformed people do not change their minds in accordance with better evidence.

To show this, I develop the notion of Doxastic-Affiliative beliefs (DABs). DABs are beliefs that represent a proposition and at the same time constitute group-belonging. For instance, believing that the Earth is flat is constitutive of belonging in the Flatearther's community. These beliefs become crucial especially when their meaning is rigorously defined (for instance in particularly vigilant religious groups), and in those cases in which group-belonging is particularly important (e.g. in situations of stress, in crisis, and in the face of loneliness). Because of these psychological facts, manipulating DABs may allow one to change how and what people believe in, in ways much broader than the DABs themselves.

If a group-leader or an influential subgroup start manipulating the DABs of a given community, and including the belief that some people or patterns of evidence are DABs – "believe in them or leave!" – what follows is that arguing in accordance with (or against) those experts or patterns becomes markers of in-group/out-group membership. As social psychology extensively shows, we treat our in-group epistemically better than our out-group. Furthermore, due to the fear of ostracism associated with rejecting a DAB, giving up on some experts or evidential patterns becomes a psychological barrier.

Therefore, disinformation should be considered in terms of its effects on how a target group perceives and processes evidence, especially expert testimony. In a slogan: disinformation is the systematic undermining of the objectivity of evidence. If you believe in this expert, that means you are not with me, you are not in my group. This view explains not only disinformation in the current age, but also why conspiracy theories would emerge in the particular contexts they now do (they give a kind of sceptical scenario to defeat every evidence from the out-group). It further places front and centre the importance of polarisation to epistemology (Broncano-Berrocal & Carter (2021), and the importance of rethinking the phenomena of resisting to evidence (Simion 2024). Additionally, by focusing on the impact of disinformers

in the evidential environment, theories such as Neil Levy's *Bad Beliefs* (2022), in which bad believers are not irrational, gain extra plausibility.

I conclude that this unificatory capacity is further reason to change how we think about disinformation, if we wish to explore what is novel in the epistemological landscape of social media.

A Unified Approach to the Rationality of Attitudes

Franz Dietrich

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Many disciplines claim to address 'rationality', including philosophy, logic, and rational choice theory. Yet they often understand rationality differently, and apply it either to actions or to attitudes. This talk focuses on the rationality of (intentional) attitudes, in the widest possible sense covering beliefs, values, intentions, and so on. When is someone's set of attitudes 'rational'? As we will argue, despite the appearance, a unified approach to the rationality of attitudes is possible. We present an abstract model of rationality that focuses on structural properties of attitudes and their rationality. Intuitively, rationality requires coherence between your attitudes. More precisely, we define three 'logical' conditions on attitudes: consistency, completeness, and closedness. They parallel the familiar logical conditions on beliefs, but contrast with standard rationality conditions like preference transitivity. We then establish a formal correspondence between our logical conditions and standard rationality conditions. Addressing John Broome's programme 'rationality through reasoning', we formally characterize how you can (not) become more logical by reasoning. Our analysis connects rationality with logic, and enables logical talk about multi-attitude psychology.

Good Moves: A Risk-Theoretic Account of Telic Know-How

J. Adam Carter
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I defend a new account of telic know-how, what I call the Good Moves (GM) account. To know how to complete a telic task T is to possess a stable, trainable disposition to select and sequence good moves across T's state space, where a move is good just in case it robustly reduces the risk of task-failure across a neighbourhood of nearby contexts. The GM account reconstructs the intellectualism / anti-intellectualism dispute as a dispute over two distinct functional roles within a single disposition: an underwriting role (occupied by propositional and quasi-propositional representations) and a manifestation role (occupied by motor and perceptual systems). Their relative weight shifts systematically with three structural parameters of the task environment (namely, the volatility, alignment, and precision of a task) which together yield a taxonomy of practical domains from routine/friendly to hostile. The view builds an anti-luck condition into the unit of action itself in such a way as to dispose of Gettier-style worries at the source; it accommodates gradability and context-sensitivity without multiplying kinds of know-how and, further, grounds two empirically familiar grades of practical credit, one Watsonian (attributability) and one Aristotelian (accountability).

Reasons: Motivating, Normative, and Perverse

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There is a general agreement that we can speak of motivating and normative reasons. However, whether this reflects a deep metaphysical distinction between two different kinds of reasons is a matter of substantive discussion. Until quite recently, the 'Identity Thesis' – stating that motivation and justification are just two roles played by one unified class of reasons – used to be either adopted or rejected without any further argument, but nowadays more and more focused discussion is going on (Alvarez 2010, Mantel 2018). One of the most pressing objections to the 'Identity Thesis' concerns error cases, i.e. scenarios in which the agent performs an action because of a false belief. One intuitive interpretation of such cases is that the agent acts for a motivating reason, but not for a normative one. This idea is generalized to the 'good' cases, of which it is said that there is a normative reason corresponding, though not identical, to the motivating one. Regarding this argument,

defenders of the 'Identity Thesis' have proposed several responses. However, what has been overlooked is that there is a particular kind of error – distinctively practical one – which poses a challenge for deniers of the 'Identity Thesis'.

Those who reject this thesis often accept that in addition to the cases of purely factual mistakes, there are also error cases in which the agent has a false belief about the normative relation between some genuine fact and the action (Mantel 2018, Singh 2019). In addition to such an errors, one can point to the cases of perverse motivation, in which a thought that something counts against the action motivates the agent to perform this exact action. Unlike standard mistakes, a practical error of perverse motivation consists in the agent having a (true) belief about some normative relation but acting in a directly opposed way. While the psychological possibility of such motivation is debatable, it seems that it is not conceptually incoherent. Against this background, I will argue that the rejection of the 'Identity Thesis' undercuts any principled argument for denying the existence of an even more questionable phenomenon – one of 'perverse reasons' (Orsi 2021).

Perverse motivation is especially problematic for those who argue that distinguishing motivating from normative reasons allows one to maintain that (motivating) reasons-explanation is the constitutive explanation of action, i.e. that one's behaviour counts as an action only if there exists a motivating reason for which it was performed (Smith 1994, Mantel 2018). This implies that the existence of perverse motivation is equivalent to the existence of perverse reasons. It is so, since the action performed because of one's perverse motivation would be the one performed for their perverse reason, constituting a source of such motivation. However, perverse reasons would lack essential characteristics of any genuine reasons. Meanwhile, the proponent of the 'Identity Thesis' can allow for the existence of perverse motivation, accounting for the wide variety of the sources of human action, without being committed to the existence of perverse reasons.

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Epistemology Without Morals

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Contemporary epistemology uses a lot of concepts whose first home is in moral philosophy: for example trust, responsibility or duty. In this talk, I will argue that this has gone too far, and much of epistemology would be better off without moral concepts.

Implicit Bias as a Problem of Practical Reasoning

Lieke Asma
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Scholars in the field of implicit bias have mostly focused on the mental state that supposedly explains biased behavior: is it an association, unconscious belief, or a patchy endorsement (see Levy, 2015)? This reveals a theoretical perspective on implicit bias: the focus is on the world-to-mind direction of fit (see, e.g., Searle 2003), i.e., how the mind learns from the world. This perspective is widely adopted in the field, for example when scholars suggest that we should change the world in order to change our biases (see, e.g., Antony, 2016; Huebner, 2016).

Implicit bias, however, is in first instance a *practical* problem. The issue is how we *treat* people, whether we discriminate, disadvantage, and harm them, in virtue of their membership of a certain social group. After all, even if statistically speaking it is justified to have a certain belief, for example to believe that most women are or want to be mothers, to assume that a specific woman is a mother or wants to be is harmful. Moreover, it is also harmful to attempt to change the world to prevent persons from having this belief. The problem, thus, cannot be solved within the theoretical domain, but involves practical questions about *how to act*.

Adopting this practical perspective reveals that, rather than ascribing a mental copy with similar content to agents, implicit bias can be the result of decision rules that are not inherently discriminatory. One example is affinity bias, where agents tend to prefer people that are similar to them (e.g., Rivera, 2015). Even if an agent does not have biases about members of certain social groups, deciding on the basis of affinity can still lead to (implicit) discrimination. Another example is a recent study on sentencing, which shows that persons with an immigration background and lower education receive harsher punishments (Van der Burgh, Heilbron, & Kootstra, 2024). Interviews with judges suggest that this may be because lower-class convicts typically have

less to lose, for example a job or a family. Also here, the decision rule – being mild to convicts that do have something to lose – is not about immigration background or lower education per se, but leads to discrimination because of the interaction between decision rule and correlations in reality.

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What Should Skeptics Say About Doxastic Wronging?

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A number of philosophers have recently defended the *doxastic wronging thesis*, that is, the claim that our beliefs can wrong others merely in virtue of their *content*. Consider:

> DRINKING: Suppose that after several unsuccessful attempts to get over my alcohol problem I have now been sober for several months. Tonight I manage to stay away from drinking even after the visiting colloquium speaker spills wine on my arm, forcing me to smell alcohol for the whole evening... But when I get home, my wife smells the alcohol on me and concludes that I have fallen off of the wagon. If I see the look in her eye, I will rightly be upset – her belief wrongs me. (Schroeder, 2021, p. 185)

The case has three features that suggest that my wife has *morally wronged me* by believing that I fell off the wagon: it seems appropriate (i) for my wife to apologize to me for this belief, and not just actions downstream of the belief, (ii) for my wife to feel something like *guilt* for the belief itself, and (iii) for me to feel *wounded* by my wife's belief. Cases like DRINKING play an important role in motivating *radical moral encroachment*, the view that the epistemic status of our beliefs can be affected by moral features of the *content* of our beliefs.[1]

However, many philosophers reject the doxastic wronging thesis. In this paper, I address the following question: *if* skeptics about doxastic wronging are right, what should they say about cases like DRINKING? These cases have intuitive force. As a result, skeptics should provide an *error theory* for them. These cases have three key features. It seems appropriate (1) for some agent A to *apologize* to another agent B for believing p, (2) for A to feel something like *guilt* for believing p, and (3) for B to feel *wounded* by A's believing p. Skeptics about doxastic wronging should explain away our intuition that A wrongs B by believing p, despite (1)-(3).

I argue that moderates should interpret cases like DRINKING as cases where it is rational for an agent to feel *agent-regret* for their beliefs.[2] Agent-regret is a kind of first-personal regret for faultless actions and attitudes that often comes along with reparative obligations. This interpretation explains why it is appropriate for A to apologize to B for believing that p, for A to feel something like guilt for believing that p, and for B to feel wounded by A's believing that p *without* entailing that A wrongs B by believing that p. This provides moderates with a powerful error theory. Since agent-regret shares many features with *remorse* – regret for genuine wrongdoing – it is easy to mistakenly judge that it is appropriate for an agent to feel remorse for ϕ-ing when it is appropriate for them to feel agent-regret for ϕ-ing. This is a common mistake. So, it is not surprising that we may be making it in our judgments about the cases that motivate the doxastic wronging thesis.

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Praising Failure: Can Failure be Successful?

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My interest in this talk are failed attempts and particularly can we describe failure in success terms. The concepts of knowing how and competence are related to successful, skilful performances which are successful *because* skilfully performed (e.g. Sosa's aptness (2007: 87; 2021: 18). It is granted that competence does not require that one is successful in every attempt (Ryle, 2009 [1949]: 17; Sosa, 2021: 45). A skilful marksman can fail to hit the bull's eye for a variety of environmental conditions (e.g. strong wind). It is not denied that in such failed attempts the marksman still manifests a certain kind of skill even when the attempt itself is non-successful. What is denied however is that failure can be described in success terms or that one can "fail successfully". A person cannot solve an anagram incorrectly or win a race unsuccessfully (Ryle, 2009 [1949]: 114). What can be further questioned is if failed attempts can ever be praiseworthy. If praise goes to the winner, the one who did not win the race would not be considered praiseworthy.

I argue that there are cases where failure can constitute success and that a certain sort of failed attempts deserves praiseworthiness. There is an important distinction to be made between two varieties of failure: lack of competence and failure to manifest competence on a given occasion that is excused. To use Ryle's example (Ibid.), in the first case we say that one can't calculate, i.e. that one does not possess knowledge how to do that. Regarding failure of the second kind, we say that one miscalculated by presuming that the agent possesses the relevant competence but failed to manifest it.

It is easy to see why excused failures can be praiseworthy under some description. If a skilful marksman fails to hit the bull's eye because of bad weather conditions we can still say "Oh, such a bad luck, however it was a great shot!". However, it would be a mistake to regard such failures as successful under any description. That is why I am interested in failures of a different kind. I suggest that there is a third kind of failure that Ryle's distinction misses. I focus on cases where one is *learning how* to do something, but is still

in the process of acquiring the relevant competence (i.e. cases where one still can't calculate but is learning how to calculate and fails). I argue that failure while learning how to do something can manifest skill, can be praiseworthy and can be regarded as successes under some description. My first argument builds on Carlotta Pavese's (2017; forthcoming) claim that skill is a gradable adjective. While examining a different problem regarding creditability, Pavese also focuses on cases of learning how and contends that "some behaviour might exercise a skill (to some degree), without counting as skilled or skilful in a context" (Pavese, forthcoming: 6). My second argument builds on the examination of blameworthiness of failed attempts in the philosophy of law (Yaffe, 2010; Donnelly-Lazarov, 2015).

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Higher-Order Evidence in Non-Ideal Epistemology

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One of the prominent projects in contemporary epistemology has been to provide an account of how to deal with evidence of epistemic failure. Such evidence, commonly referred to as higher-order evidence in epistemology (Horowitz 2025), is abundant. We disagree with people who have the same information and reasoning abilities as we do. Psychological research also reveals that we exhibit a range of cognitive biases, from a preference for confirming information (Nickerson 1998) to making simple logical and probabilistic errors (Kahneman and Tversky 1979).

Many epistemologists agree that, at least intuitively, higher-order evidence is important – it puts pressure on us to revise our beliefs. However, accounting for its role in a coherent picture of epistemic rationality proves to be a challenging task. In essence, taking higher-order evidence into account can pose a puzzle. On the one hand, higher-order evidence should make us less certain that our belief in question was rationally formed. On the other hand, our first-order evidence still supports this belief to the same degree. This implies that we should believe both "p" and "I should not believe that p." Most epistemologists find this hard to stomach.

One of the solutions to this puzzle suggested in the literature argues that our reactions to first- and higher-order evidence are guided by different kinds of norms. Lasonen-Aarnio (2014) suggested that it might be unreasonable to ignore higher-order evidence, but it is not epistemically irrational. DiPaolo (2019) provides a more specific account, arguing that norms of higher-order evidence are norms of compensation, which kick in when certain conditions required by standard norms of rationality are not fulfilled. These accounts are promising, but we find them somewhat ad hoc. Although they rely on existing distinctions, these distinctions are typically introduced to deal with this problem specifically and, as such, do not connect to a broader account of epistemic normativity.

In this paper, we aim to improve on this by demonstrating how the role of higher-order evidence can be explained within the context of non-ideal epistemology. Non-ideal epistemology, as characterized by McKenna (2023) and emphasized in the work of Thorstad (2024b, 2024a) on the relationship between bounded rationality and epistemology, is an approach to addressing first-order epistemological questions that aims to avoid various types of idealizations prevalent in standard epistemological theorizing. Instead of focusing on principles that would lead to favourable outcomes in ideal circumstances, it tries to formulate norms to improve our epistemic conditions in real-world situations.

Higher-order evidence can be naturally interpreted within the framework of non-ideal epistemology. While such evidence presents problems for ideally rational epistemic agents, it benefits non-ideal ones by helping them correct their mistakes and thus improve their epistemic position. However, one worry remains: both Horowitz (2019) and Heine (2025) have argued that considering higher-order evidence leads to predictably less accurate beliefs. The bulk of this paper argues against this claim.

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The Fragility of Epistemic Communities: Authority, Trust and Conspiracy Theories

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People often think the best way to avoid conspiracy theories is to trust the official story of events offered by experts and authorities. With the social turn in epistemology, it is argued that since knowledge is socially distributed, individuals are not well placed to challenge official accounts; and rejecting them for alternative explanations is seen as irrational. Yet this exclusion from epistemic networks exposes their fragility, risking producing echo chambers—social structures where alternative, outside voices are actively undermined and discredited, while amplifying members' credibility. Thus, if we wish to optimize our epistemic environment, and not fall for unwarranted conspiracy theories, we face a dilemma: questioning epistemic authorities risks isolation from shared knowledge, while remaining within echo chambers restricts access to alternative perspectives. I offer two possible solutions to the

dilemma: i) to consider reasoning as a socially evolved practice and expect people to track the reliability of their sources and adjust their trust accordingly, and ii) to rethink the structure of epistemic authority on conspiracy theories.

Doxastic Self-Sabotage

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Many philosophers believe that, for any proposition, sufficient reflection licenses at least one of belief, disbelief, or suspension of judgment. This paper challenges that assumption. I argue that there exist rare but coherent cases – *self-undermining doxastic predicaments* – in which even a perfectly rational agent cannot rationally occupy any of the three standard doxastic attitudes, no matter how much time, evidence, or higher-order reflection is available.

The argument develops a class of cases inspired by William James's discussion of belief-dependent truths and by David Velleman's analysis of self-fulfilling belief. Whereas Jamesian and Vellemanian cases are typically taken to show that pragmatic considerations can permissibly be tipping factors when theoretical leeway is abundant, I focus on the mirror image: situations in which the truth-value or epistemic appropriateness of a proposition is always and everywhere undermined by the agent's own doxastic stance. In these cases, believing renders the proposition false, disbelieving renders it true, and (most controversially) suspension of judgment becomes epistemically inappropriate once the agent recognizes the role that suspension itself plays in determining the outcome.

Such scenarios generate a genuine *theoretical* dilemma. They force a choice between what Turri calls two widely endorsed principles: **Optimism**, the claim that at least one of the three standard doxastic attitudes (belief, disbelief, suspension) is always rationally permitted given sufficient consideration, and **Triad**, the claim that belief, disbelief, and suspension exhaust the space of doxastic options. I argue that the conjunction of these principles is untenable. More strongly, I contend that the difficulty cannot be resolved by appeal to mixed strategies, probabilistic credences, or higher-order evidence. Any attitude the agent recognizes herself as taking predictably undercuts its own epistemic justification.

The upshot is revisionary. Either we must accept the existence of a fourth doxastic posture—such as a form of meta-suspension or withdrawal – or we must accept that there are propositions with respect to which rationality issues no verdict at all. On either horn, the traditional picture of theoretical rationality collapses. In contrast with familiar cases of ignorance or evidential

symmetry, these predicaments show that even ideal rational deliberation can rationally fail to terminate in the ways we expect.

The paper concludes by situating these results within recent work on higher-order evidence, pragmatic encroachment, and doxastic voluntarism, and by suggesting that the limits revealed here mark a deep point of contact between theoretical and practical reason.

The Road to Damascus: The Rationality of Sudden Political Flips

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A number of high-profile people seem to have moved from the left to the right quite suddenly. Often, they do not just go right; they go right and bananas: accepting bizarre conspiracy theories and other such beliefs. I argue that this phenomenon can be basically rational, with the person pivoting from left to right on the fulcrum provided by a belief to which they are strongly committed and on which their side initially splits. This account explains how people go bananas while remaining rational and remaining concerned with evidence. The evidence to which they respond is provided by testimony. The pivot belief provides them with reasons to place much heavier weight on the testimony of the right, their former opponents, than on their own former side.

Group Agency and Process Requirements of Rationality

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In this paper, I investigate the connection between process requirements of rationality and the conditions for group agency. State requirements of rationality ban states in which the agent has conflicting attitudes. But we judge that an agent is rational or irrational not only in virtue of the state he is in at a given time, but also in virtue of how the agent transitions from one state to another over time. Imagine an agent holding two conflicting beliefs is struck by lightning and consequently drops one of the conflicting beliefs. The process by which the agent achieved coherence is not rational. Process requirements concern how the agent is to form, retain, or revise one's attitudes to avoid or escape such conflict-states (Kolodny 2005).

Procedural collectivists restrict group agency to organized groups such as states, corporations or universities and claim that the mark of collective agency is rational decision-making (e.g., List & Pettit, 2011). These views explicate group agency in terms of an accepted collective decision-making procedure that enables the group to adopt representational and motivational attitudes and intervene in the world while robustly satisfying standards of theoretical and practical rationality. However, the focus lies predominantly on state requirements, and the significance of process requirements for group agency and collective rationality is not considered. This is important in two respects.

First, concerning the *conditions* for group agency, I argue that if a group is to perform robustly as an agent, the group must *be able* to satisfy all process requirements of rationality. Merely satisfying state requirements does not suffice for rational agency, because coherence within a system may be either a fluke or maintained/imposed by external forces. Moreover, a self-correcting reasoning agent can give evidence of agency while violating state requirements. I explore the consequences of this for the relevant group abilities, possible organizational structures, and decision-making procedures. I show that groups with functionally explicit aggregation functions (e.g., majority voting) can count as agents as long some degree of feedback is available to the group, because they *can* in principle satisfy the process requirements.

Second, I focus on whether most group agents *are* routinely rational. I argue that *if* groups are indeed routinely rational and conform to process requirements, then we must accept two claims about belief attribution and group reasoning. For groups to resolve conflicts rationally rather than by sheer luck, the group must reason in a broad sense from the content of one attitude to dropping, revising, or adopting the other attitude. However, few group agents always reason explicitly in this manner. Moreover, very few group agents employ their formal aggregation function to adopt relevant beliefs about their evidence or own rationality. Thus, if group agents indeed routinely conform to process requirements, then (a) in terms of reasoning, we must accept that there is a group-level analogue of implicit reasoning (cf. Kolodny 2005); and (b) in terms of belief attribution, we must accept a bottom-up approach with respect to uncontested beliefs implicitly accepted by most or all members.

The Normative Turn in Metaphysics: Amie Thomasson and the Collapse of the Theoretical-Practical Divide

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According to the traditional view, the metaphysician's task is purely theoretical: to describe the fundamental structure of reality as it is, independent of human interests. By contrast, the work of Amie Thomasson – most notably her defense of "easy ontology" and her conception of metaphysics as conceptual engineering – presents a seemingly compelling case for the erosion of the Kantian distinction between theoretical and practical rationality.

In this paper, we show how Thomasson's deflationary approach to metaphysics effectively relocates metaphysical inquiry from the domain of pure theoretical rationality to the domain of practical reason. According to Thomasson, existence questions are answered by a combination of "application conditions" (conceptual/linguistic rules) and empirical facts. If the rules for using the term "table" are met by a certain arrangement of atoms, the existence of the table follows analytically.

Consequently, the "hard" work of metaphysics is not a theoretical search for deep truths about the world, but rather a normative and practical (metalinguistic) negotiation over our conceptual framework. In Thomasson's view, many metaphysical disputes can, and should, be resolved by performing the right kind of conceptual engineering. This shift transforms the metaphysician into a conceptual engineer.

We are going to explore three key ways Thomasson's philosophy bridges the theoretical-practical divide in metaphysics: (1) metametaphysical deflationism and the reduction of ontological inquiry to the practical application of linguistic norms; (2) metaphysics as conceptual engineering, where the choice of a conceptual scheme is guided by practical goals, values, and the functions we need our language to perform; and (3) the normative dimension of metaphysics, where "theoretical" rationality in metaphysics is inextricably tied to "practical" reason – specifically, the normative task of deciding how we ought to categorize the world.

Finally, by critically assessing Thomasson's rejection of "heavyweight" metaphysics and her neopragmatist reconceptualisation of the field, we identify some significant weaknesses in her overall project and argue in favour of a more traditional conception of metaphysics as a genuinely theoretical enterprise.

A Dilemma for Entitlement Theory

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"Entitlement theory" denotes a family of anti-skeptical strategies that posit various forms of unearned and non-evidential justification for accepting *hinges*, that is, a set of propositions that allegedly make our epistemic practices possible (Wittgenstein 1969: 341–3). Examples include "There is an external world," "My eyes are functioning properly right now," and "The things I am currently perceiving have not been extensively disguised to conceal their true nature" (Wright 2004: 190; 2014: 215). According to Crispin Wright, this form of justification derives from the fact that accepting hinges promotes a subject's attainment of epistemic goals such as forming true beliefs, answering questions competently, and engaging in rational deliberation. Critics have argued that entitlement theory fails as an anti-skeptical strategy because it provides, at best, a pragmatic response to the skeptical argument (Coliva 2015; Jenkins 2007; Moretti and Pedersen 2021; Pritchard 2005). Yet this pragmatic response is consistent with the skeptical claim that we lack epistemic justification not only for hinges but also for ordinary propositions. In response, Wright (2012: 484; 2014: 239) has suggested that we should abandon the traditional view of epistemic reasons as solely evidence-based and instead expand the domain of epistemic reasons to include any considerations derived from a subject's epistemic goals. Since entitlement theory explicitly appeals to a subject's epistemic goals, it does not merely offer a pragmatic antiskeptical response.

In this paper, I argue that Wright's expansive conception of epistemic rationality faces a fatal dilemma. I begin with a novel reconstruction of the underdetermination argument for radical skepticism. This reconstruction has two distinctive features. First, it identifies underdetermination as a plausible source of the requirement that anti-skeptical justification derive from a source independent of experience. Second, it explains why, given certain plausible views about *a priori* justification, it is tempting to search for an independent source of nonevidential and unearned justification. I then identify a problematic principle that underlies the skeptic's claim that our experiential reasons are underdetermined. Roughly, if a subject in a skeptical scenario is guaranteed to have exactly the same experiential reasons as a subject in nonskeptical circumstances, then the subject's experiential reasons are underdetermined. Finally, I derive the dilemma. If one accepts the problematic principle, then introducing hinges does not solve the underdetermination problem, since a subject in a skeptical scenario would also accept the very same hinges. If one rejects the problematic principle, there are no good reasons to think that one's experiences are underdetermined and, consequently, no reason to search

for an independent source of non-evidential and unearned justification. Either way, we need not abandon the traditional view of epistemic reasons as solely based on evidence.

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Can Testimony Generate Knowledge-How

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In this talk, I investigate *whether testimony can generate knowledge-how.* According to an influential view in the epistemology of testimony – Lackey's "Schoolteacher", speaker who does not know that p nevertheless enables hearer to come to know that p by telling them that p. In this case, it is shown that *testimony can generate propositional knowledge.* Based on this picture, I examine whether an analogous case obtains for knowledge-how.

My start point is Poston's "Nolan's Curveball". In this case, the hearer comes to know how to A from what speaker said in the nonsense way, who lacks knowledge-how to A. I argue that we should treat this as a case in

which hearer acquires new knowledge-how from speaker's testimony, rather than merely enjoying a piece of lucky success.

However, it might be said that this is not really a case in which testimony generates any new knowledge-how. This is because Lackey's case speaker, although she herself believes ¬P, nevertheless transmits to hearer the true information that P. By contrast, in the Poston's case, speaker does not transmit any true information to hearer.

To accommodate the concern, I present a refined case. In this variant, the speaker reliably transmits correct instructions to hearer, while neither believing those instructions nor possessing the corresponding practical competence. The hearer nevertheless comes to know how to perform the action. This revised case shows that even where the speaker is not merely talking nonsense, testimony can still generate knowledge-how.

Furthermore, to reinforce the claim in above, I appeal to *epistemic luck – in particular, environmental epistemic luck*. In appealing to this epistemic luck, we can prove that knowledge-how I mentioned in those examples is genuine species of knowledge-how. Given that this case involves knowledge-how that is resilient in the face of environmental epistemic luck—because hearer's success manifests a robust achievement would persist across nearby possible worlds, and environmental epistemic luck undermines only propositional knowledge, not knowledge-how, we should argue that knowledge-how which hearers acquire from speaker's testimony is *genuine* knowledge-how.

Finally, I highlight a structural difference between propositional knowledge and knowledge-how. Certain kinds of knowledge-how display a "vine-like" profile: once an agent acquires knowledge-how to perform a given action, they thereby occupy a position from which they can, by appropriate exploration, acquire further pieces of knowledge-how. By contrast, isolated items of propositional knowledge lack this character. In conclusion, these considerations suggest that testimony can indeed generate knowledge-how. This result, I propose, exerts pressure on both intellectualist and anti-intellectualist accounts about knowledge-how. For intellectualists, my conclusion enables them to draw comparisons between the generation of propositional knowledge and of knowledge-how through testimony. For anti-intellectualists, it provides new data for the existence of genuine, irreducible knowledge-how.

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Judgment as the Unifying Core of Rationality: Rethinking the Divide between Theoretical and Practical Reason in Kant

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Kant famously codified the division between theoretical and practical philosophy by distinguishing the realm of natural necessity from the kingdom of moral ends. This distinction, central to his critical project, is often taken to imply a deep structural split within rationality itself. Theoretical reason appears confined to cognition of nature under laws, while practical reason legislates independently in the moral domain. This paper argues that, despite explicitly instituting this division, Kant ultimately overcomes it by grounding both theoretical and practical rationality in a single, unified capacity: judgment (*Urteilskraft*) (Pollok 2017; Makkreel 2015).

The paper's central thesis is that judgment is not a merely mediating or auxiliary faculty in Kant's system, but the fundamental form of rational activity as such. While Kant distinguishes different kinds of judgments – most notably determining and reflective judgments – these distinctions do not fragment rational agency. Rather, they articulate different modes of operation of one and the same judgmental capacity, each governed by distinct principles and standards of justification (Longuenesse 1998; Makkreel 2002). Rationality, on this view, is neither exhausted by theoretical cognition nor reducible to practical legislation, but is enacted through judgment as a spontaneous, first-person activity that underlies both moral psychology and moral action (Pollok 2017).

The argument proceeds by reconstructing Kant's critical account of rational faculties with a focus on the role of judgment. Even in the context of theoretical cognition, understanding and reason operate through judgmental forms: concepts gain epistemic significance only insofar as they are articulated in judgments that claim validity. Judgment thus constitutes the basic locus of normativity, making rational claims assessable, communicable, and corrigible. This judgment-centered account allows for a conception of rational unity at the level of agency, within which cognitive commitments, moral motivation, and deliberation about action can be understood as internally connected rather than compartmentalized (Pollok 2017).

The paper then turns to Kant's account of reflective judgment, as developed in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, to show how rational orientation exceeds the boundaries of mere constitutive cognition. Reflective judgment introduces a new mode of rational agency that is neither strictly theoretical nor directly practical, yet indispensable for making sense of human experience as a whole. By allowing agents to relate particulars to universals without fixed concepts, reflective judgment provides a framework in

which moral psychology –understood as the integration of moral motivation, self-assessment, and normative orientation – enables the agent to orient her overall moral experience. (Makkreel 2002; Makkreel 2015).

On this basis, the paper argues that Kant's philosophy contains a conception of rational unity beneath its architectonic distinctions. Although Kant formally separates theoretical and practical domains, he relies throughout on judgment as the shared activity that renders cognition, moral motivation, and moral action intelligible within a single rational framework. Theoretical and practical reason are thus best understood not as rival or isolated faculties, but as differentiated expressions of a judgment-centered rational capacity operative across distinct domains of rational life (Longuenesse 2005).

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Standpoints and Spect-Actors: Social Epistemology, Normativity, and the Performing Arts

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Despite much work in analytic social epistemology and in the performing arts, relatively little systematic attention has been paid to their interrelation. For example, mention of the performing arts is absent from key overviews on central topics in social epistemology. This paper will focus on 'Theatre of the Oppressed' (TO), which was first developed in the 1970s by Augusto Boal. TO is a participatory theatre practice that gives oppressed groups theatrical tools to generate knowledge of oppression and promote social change. But

despite its wide use, TO has received relatively little theoretical attention. This paper will argue both that part of TO's value can be illuminated using theoretical resources such as hermeneutical injustice, standpoint theory, adaptive preferences, and Nguyen's work on games. And likewise, reflection on TO both highlights and offers answers to overlooked questions in social epistemology. For example, many philosophers have argued for the importance of consciousness-raising and developing conceptual resources to combat hermeneutical injustice, but little has been said about how best to do this. I'll argue that non-verbal techniques such as TO's 'image theatre' are invaluable, and that bodily communication must play a key role. As such, social epistemology and epistemologically-driven arts practices can and should work together to understand and bring about political change.

Does 'Why?' Objectify Agency? A Defence of Anscombe's *Intention*

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Elizabeth Anscombe defines intentional actions as those to which "a certain sense of the question 'Why?' is given application" (I, 9). Recently, Anton Ford (2017) has challenged her proposal to understand intentional actions in terms of the question 'Why?'. Anscombe proposes to define intentional actions in terms of how they are explained (ibid., 219). This, Ford contends, threatens disastrous consequences for our understanding of human action: a focus on action explanation leads us to privilege the standpoint of those who *observe*, and demand explanation for, intentional actions; leading us to neglect the standpoint of the agent herself as she carries out her action, forcing us to *objectify* human agency (ibid., 228-230). As a corrective, he suggests that we focus on the question 'How?', rather than 'Why?', bringing into view an agent's order of *calculation* about what to do, and revealing "the structure of what one thinks insofar as one is acting." (ibid., 227)

I present a reply to Ford's worry on Anscombe's behalf. I draw on some resources from Anscombe's account of practical truth to argue that, for Anscombe, we develop practical rationality by aiming to act in a way that is practically true; where acting in a way that is practically true is acting in a way that satisfies the description 'doing well' (PT, 152). To do that, I suggest, one must grasp why some action satisfies the description 'doing well', which means that a practically rational agent must be interested in why some action should be performed, as well as how to perform it. To that extent, the question 'Why?' does reveal the structure of what one thinks insofar as one is

acting, for Anscombe; so, her focus on the question 'Why?' does not objectify agency.

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The Norm of Assertion Is Not Epistemic

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In this paper I argue that the norm of assertion is not epistemic. That is, it is not of the form: "one must: assert p only if one stands in epistemic relation R to p". This includes many proposals discussed in the literature such as the *knowledge norm* (Williamson 1996), the *belief norm* (Hindriks 2007, Mandelkern & Dorst 2022), the *certainty norm* (Stanley 2008), etc. I draw on Schroeder's (2021) distinction between ϕ-ing right and ϕ-ing well – a generalization of the Kantian distinction between doing the right thing and acting with moral worth. Applying this distinction to the case of assertion gives rise to the notion of *asserting well* – asserting permissibly with the right kind of motivation.

With this notion at hand the argument proceeds in two parts. First, I demonstrate that if the norm of assertion is epistemic then asserting well requires one to be motivated to assert by facts about one's mental states. I argue that the content of a norm for ϕ-ing places constraints on the types of motivating reasons required for ϕ-ing well, such that if the content of a norm is epistemic, then to act well, at least *some* of the agent's motivating reasons must be facts about their mental states.

In the second part, I argue that asserting well cannot require the asserter to be motivated by facts about their mental states, and therefore the norm of assertion is not epistemic. I provide two arguments for this claim. First, I demonstrate that some failures to be motivated by facts about one's mental states are normatively unproblematic and do not have the properties of failing to act well. Second, I argue that facts about one's mental states are neither objective nor subjective reasons to assert.

Finally, the argument suggests a new criterion for assessing norms of assertion – whether they give rise to well-behaved standards for asserting well. I consider how this criterion may be used to suggest a positive account of assertion, and provide a preliminary argument in favor of the truth norm "one must: assert p only if p".

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