

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna
Archivio istituzionale della ricerca

Propositional and Doxastic Justification: Their Relationship and a Questionable Supervenience Claim

This is the final peer-reviewed author's accepted manuscript (postprint) of the following publication:

Published Version:

Volpe, G. (2017). Propositional and Doxastic Justification: Their Relationship and a Questionable Supervenience Claim. Cham : Springer [10.1007/978-3-319-61046-7_2].

Availability:

This version is available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/11585/608583> since: 2020-03-16

Published:

DOI: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-61046-7_2

Terms of use:

Some rights reserved. The terms and conditions for the reuse of this version of the manuscript are specified in the publishing policy. For all terms of use and more information see the publisher's website.

This item was downloaded from IRIS Università di Bologna (<https://cris.unibo.it/>).
When citing, please refer to the published version.

(Article begins on next page)

This is the final peer-reviewed accepted manuscript of:

‘Propositional and Doxastic Justification: Their Relationship and a Questionable Supervenience Claim’, in B. Brożek et al. (eds.), *Supervenience and Normativity*, Law and Philosophy Library 120, Cham, Springer, 2017, pp. 25-48.

The final published version is available online at:

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-61046-7_2

Rights / License:

The terms and conditions for the reuse of this version of the manuscript are specified in the publishing policy. For all terms of use and more information see the publisher's website.

This item was downloaded from IRIS Università di Bologna (<https://cris.unibo.it/>)

When citing, please refer to the published version.

Propositional and Doxastic Justification: Their Relationship and a Questionable Supervenience Claim

Giorgio Volpe

Common epistemological wisdom has it that epistemic facts supervene on non-epistemic ones – which is usually thought to be just a particular instance of the general truth that evaluative facts supervene on non-evaluative ones (Turri 2010a). More specifically, it is widely held that facts concerning the epistemic justification of beliefs supervene on facts concerning beliefs' non-epistemic properties. It is not my purpose here to add to the literature on this topic: the issue with which I will be concerned has to do, rather, with the relationship between facts concerning one particular kind of epistemic justification, that is, *propositional* justification, and facts concerning people's doxastic states. For a number of contemporary epistemologists seem to believe that the basis upon which facts concerning propositional justification supervene only includes facts concerning the reasons or evidence to which agents have access – a suggestion that deserves closer scrutiny, if only because it is in tension with the way epistemic justification has been conceived in much traditional epistemology. The supervenience issue on which I propose to shed some light in this paper is then different from the issue that is at stake in familiar debates on epistemic supervenience. Moreover, I will address it in a slightly indirect way, by focussing on the question of the order of explanation between propositional and doxastic justification. By discussing a recent challenge to the answer that is usually given to this question I hope I will eventually put in an interesting perspective the specific issue concerning the supervenience basis of propositional justification that I am interested in in this paper.

The challenge I have in mind is posed by John Turri in his paper 'On the Relationship between Propositional and Doxastic Justification' (Turri 2010b). As I explain in Section 1, in that paper Turri offers two counterexamples to the 'orthodox' view that doxastic justification should be explained in terms of propositional justification and goes on to suggest that the order of explanation must be reversed: it is propositional justification that should be explained in terms

of doxastic justification, and not vice versa. Though I share Turri's feeling that there is something amiss with the way a number of contemporary epistemologists talk of propositional and doxastic justification, I do not believe he has put his finger on the real trouble. So in Section 2 I argue that his counterexamples fall short of refuting the orthodox view, but I also suggest that the conception of propositional justification with which the orthodox view (which I believe should be maintained) is often conjoined needs clarification. In Section 3 I observe that there are different degrees of idealization involved in judgments of propositional justification and emphasize that the type of justification that is at issue when we reach the higher degrees may be in a clear sense unavailable to the agent for which a proposition is said to possess it. In Section 4 I propose to distinguish what an agent is propositionally justified to believe *given his overall doxastic profile* from what an agent is propositionally justified to believe *irrespective of the evidentially idle features of his doxastic profile*, and argue that, whenever the former relation is at stake, an agent can be propositionally justified to believe a proposition p at time t only if it is reasonably easy for him to form a doxastically justified belief in p at t . It is most likely an awareness of this fact – or of some fact in the vicinity – that encourages the belief that propositional justification should be explained in terms of doxastic justification. But in Section 5 I argue that this fact, far from being evidence that the notion of doxastic justification is more fundamental than that of propositional justification, can be accounted for by advert-ing to the relationship that links the relevant sort of (epistemic) justification to (epistemic) responsibility. So I conclude that there is an important sense in which epistemic justification supervenes not merely on the agents' reasons or evidence, but on their overall doxastic profile.

1. Turri's criticism of the orthodox view

The distinction epistemologists have in mind when they oppose propositional to doxastic justification is reasonably clear.¹ *Propositional* justification pertains to *propositions*: it is the sort of justification enjoyed by a proposition when an agent is epistemically justified to believe it.² A proposition may enjoy this kind of justification even if the relevant agent does not believe it, or does not believe it on the basis of that which (propositionally) justifies it. By contrast, *doxastic* justification is justification of *beliefs*, which means that an agent can have a (doxastically) justified belief in a certain proposition only if he believes it. The usual story is that doxastic justification is the sort of justification enjoyed by a belief just in case (i) it is a belief in a proposition that is (propositionally) justified for the agent and (ii) it is held on the basis of

that which (propositionally) justifies its content. It is this story, not the underlying distinction, that Turri sets out to debunk in his paper.

To be sure, the target of his criticism is just one side of the biconditional, namely

(Basis) IF (i) p is propositionally justified for S in virtue of S's having reason(s) R and
(ii) S believes p on the basis of R, THEN S's belief that p is doxastically justified.³

(Turri 2010b, 314)

But of course, showing that Basis is false is sufficient to refute the overall picture.

As it will soon become clear, Turri assumes that reasons have propositional content. But nothing of what I have to say in this paper depends on this assumption, or on the assumption that reasons are the sort of thing that can be given, or cited, in defence of a claim. Moreover, although a reason that an agent can have and use as a basis for a belief is naturally regarded as something accessible from, or internal to, the agent's perspective on the world, only part of what I maintain in Section 5 is flatly inconsistent with externalist views of epistemic justification. Everything I say in this paper could in fact have been phrased more neutrally in terms of 'justification-makers' or 'justifiers'; but for ease of exposition, I follow Turri's lead and talk of reasons throughout.

Let's then consider his attack on the orthodox view. He introduces his point by noting that a doxastically justified belief is in some important respects like a well built deck. A carpenter, he observes, may be equipped with the finest tools and lumber, but if he puts them together in the wrong way, the result is bound to be disappointing: 'Merely having the right equipment for the job, and using it to perform the job, does not guarantee a job well done' (Turri 2010b, 315). Similarly for belief: merely having one or more reasons R that make p propositionally justified (for oneself) and using them as a basis for believing p does not guarantee a doxastically justified belief in p .

As I have already hinted at, Turri's criticism turns on two counterexamples, which are designed to put in sharp relief the importance of the way in which an agent makes use of his reasons. The first counterexample features two jurors, Miss Proper and Miss Improper, sitting in judgment of Mr Mansour (ibid., 315 f.). Both jurors know the following things:

- (P1) Mansour had a motive to kill the victim.
- (P2) Mansour had previously threatened to kill the victim.
- (P3) Multiple eyewitnesses place Mansour at the crime scene.

(P4) Mansour's fingerprints were all over the murder weapon.

Premises (P1-P4) make it overwhelmingly likely that <Mansour is guilty> is true.⁴ So <Mansour is guilty> is (propositionally) justified for both jurors, and as a matter of fact each of them comes to believe that Mansour is guilty as the result of an episode of conscious reasoning that features (P1-P4) essentially. However, the respective trains of thought follow significantly different routes. Miss Proper's reasoning is as follows:

(Proper Reasoning) (P1-P4) make it overwhelmingly likely that Mansour is guilty. (P1-P4) are true. Therefore, Mansour is guilty.

On the other hand, Miss Improper reasons like this:

(Improper Reasoning) The tea leaves say that (P1-P4) make it overwhelmingly likely that Mansour is guilty. (P1-P4) are true. Therefore, Mansour is guilty.

Although each juror bases her belief that Mansour is guilty on the reasons that make its content (propositionally) justified for her, it seems clear that only Miss Proper's belief is doxastically justified. Contra Basis, then, having one or more reasons R that make p propositionally justified (for oneself) and using them as a basis for one's believing p is not sufficient for having a (doxastically) justified belief in p .

This counterexample, notes Turri, is also fatal to a natural strengthening of Basis:

(Basis⁺) IF (i) p is propositionally justified for S in virtue of S's having reason(s) R and (ii) S believes p on the basis of R *as evidence for p*, THEN S's belief that p is doxastically justified.

(Turri 2010b, 314)

For both Miss Proper and Miss Improper treat (P1-P4) *as evidence* for the proposition that Mansour is guilty. Apparently, however, another way of strengthening Basis is more effective:

(Austere Basis) IF (i) p is propositionally justified for S in virtue of S's having reason(s) R and (ii) S believes p on the basis of R *and only R*, THEN S's belief that p is doxastically justified.

(Turri 2010b, 314)

Austere Basis is unscathed by Turri's first counterexample, which is why he goes on to tell his second story, featuring Mr Ponens and Mr F.A. Lacy (Turri 2010b, 317). Both characters know two things:

(P5) The Spurs will win if they play the Pistons.

(P6) The Spurs will play the Pistons.

From these two premises – and only from them – Mr Ponens and Mr F.A. Lacy draw the conclusion that the Spurs will win. But here again, the two characters form their beliefs by significantly different routes. While Mr Ponens gets to the conclusion that the Spurs will win by an application of *modus ponens*, Mr F.A. Lacy reaches it by an application of *modus profusus*, that is to say, by applying the rule that, for any p , q and r , allows to infer $\langle r \rangle$ from $\langle p$ and $q \rangle$. The intuition the counterexample is designed to fuel is of course that Lacy's belief, unlike Ponens', is doxastically unjustified, as it is reached by applying a rule of inference that is blatantly invalid. Contra Austere Basis, then, having one or more reasons R that make p (propositionally) justified (for oneself) and using them *and only them* as a basis for one's believing p is *not* sufficient for having a doxastically justified belief in p .

Turri emphasizes that his examples have nothing to do with the 'Gypsy-lawyer' cases that occur in many discussions of the epistemic basing relation and explains that his argument does not commit him to any definite view of the nature of such relation (ibid., 318 f.). The conclusion he wants to draw from his cases is just that Basis and its strengthenings miss

something *deep and important* about the relationship between propositional and doxastic justification. The way in which the subject performs, the manner in which she makes use of her reasons, fundamentally determines whether her belief is doxastically justified. Poor utilization of even the best reasons for believing p will prevent you from justifiedly believing or knowing that p .

(Turri 2010b, 317 f.)

Turri, however, does not stop here. For he takes his counterexamples to Basis and its strengthened versions to motivate a wholesale rejection of the orthodox view of the relationship between propositional and doxastic justification – a rejection that leads him to endorse the claim that it is propositional justification that should be explained in terms of doxastic justification, and not vice versa. His proposal does not amount to a specification of individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for propositional justification, but comes in the form of a less ambitious conditional:

(PJ) Necessarily, for all S , p , and t , if p is propositionally justified for S at t , then p is propositionally justified for S at t BECAUSE S currently possesses at least one means of coming to believe p such that, were S to believe p in one of those ways, S 's belief would thereby be doxastically justified.

(Turri 2010b, 320)

Turri's claim is in fact that the causal clause in the consequent of **PJ** specifies a condition which is both *necessary* and *explanatory* for propositional justification. Subsequent discussion (Turri 2010b, 320-323) makes it clear why he does not venture to say that the condition is also sufficient, offers a number of reasons that should command **PJ** to our attention, and introduces a deeper (if vaguer) principle that takes care of some possible counterexamples to **PJ**. It is not my purpose here to assess what Turri has to say on such matters: whatever the merits of **PJ** and of the deeper principle that lies behind it, I think something has gone wrong with his argument at an earlier stage, for the cases that are taken to motivate his own proposal fall short of providing a refutation of the orthodox view of the relationship between propositional and doxastic justification.

2. Why Turri's cases fail to refute the orthodox view

Turri's purported counterexamples turn on cases of inferential justification. So one might be tempted to discount them by arguing that, whenever inferential justification is at stake, the reasons in virtue of which a proposition is justified for an agent will obviously include the circumstance that the truth of certain premises entails, or renders overwhelmingly likely, the truth of the proposition in question. Thus, for example, one may be tempted to maintain that, if the proposition that the Spurs will win is justified for Mr Ponens, it cannot enjoy such a status merely in virtue of his knowing (or justifiedly believing) P5 (that the Spurs will win if

they play the Pistons) and P6 (that the Spurs will play the Pistons). If the proposition is justified for Mr Ponens, it must be so also in virtue of his knowing (or justifiedly believing) that it is the conclusion of a valid argument – an instance of *modus ponens* – that has P5 and P6 as its premises.⁵ If this claim is correct, Turri’s cases fail to refute Basis and its strengthenings because the beliefs of their heroes do not satisfy the antecedents of the relevant conditionals: Mr F.A. Lacy does not believe that the Spurs will win on the basis of all the reasons in virtue of which that proposition is justified for him – and Miss Improper does not believe that Mansour is guilty on the basis of all the reasons in virtue of which that proposition is justified for him.

Tempting as it is, this argumentative strategy invites the reply that the objection mixes up things of different kinds. One way of bringing out this point is to invoke the paradox of Achilles and the tortoise (Carroll 1895) with its moral that the inference rules employed in an argument should not be counted among the argument’s premises. But perhaps it is not inevitable to model the reasons in virtue of which a proposition is (inferentially) justified for an agent as premises of a (semi-)formal argument. So it may be instructive to look at the matter from a different angle.⁶ The relevant distinction will not be that between the premises of an argument and the rules of inference employed to reach its conclusion, but that between reasons and requirements of (subjective) rationality. For the *reasons* in virtue of which a proposition is justified for an agent seem to be one sort of thing, the logical and probabilistic *requirements* that rationality imposes on an agent’s (subjective) attitudes quite another. The distinction is due to Broome (1999),⁷ but here I will quote Niko Kolodny:

Normativity involves two kinds of relation. On the one hand, there is the relation of being a reason for. This is a relation between a fact and an attitude. On the other hand, there are relations specified by requirements of rationality. These are relations among a person’s attitudes, viewed in abstraction from the reasons for them.

(Kolodny 2005, 509)

There is of course an ongoing debate on the relationship between reasons and rational requirements: ‘reductionists’ maintain that the relation of *being a reason for* can be explained in terms of rationality, ‘nonreductionists’ deny it.⁸ For present purposes, it is not necessary to take a stand on this issue. Nor is it necessary to subscribe to the claim that reasons are *facts*. Many philosophers would regard them rather as *contents* available from an agent’s point of view on the world (and of course the representatives of a prominent epistemological tradition

have long been used to argue that ‘only a belief can justify another belief’). Be that as it may, one may concur with Turri that (propositional) justification is something that a proposition possesses, or lacks, for an agent at a time in virtue of the agent’s having one or more *reasons* to believe it.⁹ If that much is admitted, it is inevitable to sense something amiss with assimilating the requirements that rationality imposes on our doxastic attitudes in virtue of the logical and probabilistic relations that obtain among their contents (or among the levels of confidence with which these are held) to the reasons in virtue of which certain propositions are justified for a specific agent – for example, to return to Turri’s basketball case, with counting the *requirement* that one believe that the Spurs will win if one believes P5 and P6 among the *reasons* in virtue of which the proposition that the Spurs will win is justified for Mr Ponens and Mr F.A. Lacy. As soon as one recognizes the relevance of Broome’s distinction, it appears clear that, in an important sense, the existence of a valid argument from P5 and P6 to the proposition that the Spurs will win cannot be listed among the *reasons* in virtue of which this proposition is justified for our agents – which is apparently grist for Turri’s mill, because it supports the view that, after all, Mr F.A. Lacy *does* believe that the Spurs will win on the basis of all the reasons in virtue of which this proposition is justified for him.

Yet, a little reflection shows that taking seriously the distinction between reasons and requirements of rationality does not mandate the conclusion that Turri’s cases are fatal to Basis and its strengthenings. Even if such cases show, as he claims, that poor utilization of even the best reasons for believing a proposition will prevent an agent’s believing that proposition from being epistemically justified or an instance of knowledge, this admission only warrants the rejection of those formulations of the orthodox view that do not give due weight to the way reasons are used to support belief. Something strikes us as deeply inappropriate in the way Miss Improper and Mr F.A. Lacy handle the (good) reasons they have for believing the propositions they end up believing, and that makes us reject the claim that they are doxastically justified in believing those propositions. In itself, however, the fact that inappropriate utilization of the reasons that (propositionally) justify an agent to believe a proposition precludes the formation of a (doxastically) justified belief whose content is that proposition has no tendency to show that there is anything wrong with the usual view of the order of explanation between the two kinds of justification. The intuition elicited by Turri’s cases is just that one cannot form a doxastically justified belief by making inappropriate use of the reasons in virtue of which the belief’s content is justified, and this intuition is fully consistent with the view that doxastic justification should be explained in terms of propositional justification – that is, in terms of propositional justification *plus rationally appropriate belief-formation*.

There is, however, a difficulty to be addressed. The way Miss Improper and Mr F.A. Lacy handle their reasons certainly strikes us as rationally inappropriate, but in what exactly does the inappropriateness consist? It is not clear that they violate the requirements that rationality imposes on the way they use their respective reasons. On the face of it, neither of them can be accused of adopting a set of doxastic attitudes that is either logically or probabilistically inconsistent: each of them infers and comes to believe the conclusion that is rationally mandated by the premises they respectively know (or justifiedly believe). So what is it exactly that makes Miss Improper's and Mr F.A. Lacy's beliefs rationally inappropriate – inappropriate, that is, in the way that prevents a belief that is held on the basis of (all) the reasons that justify its content from being a doxastically justified belief?

If it is not sufficient for a belief to be *rationally appropriate* that it not be logically or probabilistically inconsistent with the agent's overall set of doxastic attitudes (or perhaps with the subset of that set that contains the doxastic attitudes with which it is most closely related), what else is required? Here are two possible answers. The first is that a rationally appropriate belief must, in addition, be held as a result of the exercise of a genuine probabilistic or logical competence: Miss Improper's and Mr F.A. Lacy's beliefs are rationally inappropriate because their hitting on the truth cannot be *attributed* to any such competence.¹⁰ This answer has an externalist ring to it. An internalist answer might be that a rationally appropriate belief must, in addition, result from a train of reasoning that is (or could be) justifiedly believed to be capable of transmitting the justification enjoyed by its premises to its conclusion: Miss Improper's and Mr F.A. Lacy's beliefs are rationally inappropriate because they are held as a result of trains of reasoning which are so defective that the epistemic status of their premises cannot justifiedly be believed to *transmit* to their conclusions.¹¹ There is no need, here, to adjudicate between these – or other – answers. For our purposes it is sufficient to have shown that there are at least two plausible accounts of the sort of inappropriateness that may prevent a belief that is held on the basis of all the reasons that justify its content from being a doxastically justified belief – two accounts that fit well in the framework provided by the distinction between reasons and requirements of rationality, but whose plausibility does not depend, ultimately, on endorsing that framework.

If these considerations are on the right track, the intuition elicited from Turri's cases, far from mandating a reversal in the order of explanation between doxastic and propositional justification, comes out as fully consistent – to tamper a bit with his formulations – both with the claim expressed by

(Rational Basis) IF (i) p is propositionally justified for S in virtue of S's having reason(s) R and (ii) S believes p in a rationally appropriate way on the basis of R, THEN S's belief in p is doxastically justified

and with the stronger tenet articulated by

(Rational Austere Basis) IF (i) p is propositionally justified for S in virtue of S's having reason(s) R and (ii) S believes p in a rationally appropriate way on the basis of R and only R, THEN S's belief in p is doxastically justified.

Rational appropriateness is more demanding than mere conformity to the requirements of rationality. But I have already made clear that I do not wish to commit myself to any specific account of rationally appropriate belief. So I happily acknowledge that Rational Basis and Rational Austere Basis provide at best the *structure* of the desired conditional: much will depend on the way the notion of rationally appropriate belief is fleshed out. In any case, the version of the orthodox view that results from conjoining Rational Austere Basis with its converse is clearly too strong – it is very rarely the case that we believe a proposition in a rationally appropriate way *only* for those reasons that justify it. On the face of it, Rational Basis looks more promising. But again, it is not my purpose here to work out a formulation that gets every detail exactly right. My point is just that the general idea that (specifications of) Rational Basis and Rational Austere Basis attempt to capture is not refuted by Turri's cases: such cases provide no compelling reason to give up the orthodox view of the order of explanation between propositional and doxastic justification.

3. Five ways of construing propositional justification

There is, I think, something potentially misleading in the way a number of contemporary epistemologists talk of propositional and doxastic justification, something which I suspect has been misdiagnosed by Turri as a reversal of the order of explanation between these two properties (or, rather, relations). In my view, the nub of the matter has less to do with the relationship between propositional and doxastic justification than with some features of the conception of propositional justification with which the orthodox view is frequently conjoined.

These features arise, I believe, from a tendency to consider propositional justification in abstraction from certain aspects of the epistemic situation of the specific agents for which prop-

ositions are said to be, or not to be, justified. The judgments of propositional justification that are formulated as a result of indulging in this tendency are, in themselves, perfectly legitimate; but the attendant idealization can lead to some serious confusion when it is not explicitly acknowledged or too hastily generalized. So I shall start this discussion by rehearsing the obvious point that saying that p is justified for S at t is just a convenient way of saying that S is justified *to believe* p at t – where of course the existence of the justification in question does not depend on S 's actually believing p at t .¹² Epistemic justification can be treated as a relation between a proposition, an agent and a time – the relation that holds between S , p and t just in case S is justified to believe p at t – only because there is some *attitude* that an agent can have (or fail to have) toward a proposition at a time. Various logical and probabilistic relations can obtain among propositions atemporally and irrespective of the doxastic states of any agent whatsoever, and sometimes the language of epistemic justification is used loosely to talk of such relations, but in the strict and proper sense that is in play when we employ sentences of the form ‘The proposition that p is justified for S at t ’, it is *believing* a proposition that is epistemically justified for an agent at a time. Propositions are inherently the contents of propositional attitudes, and it is hard to see how they could entertain any genuine relation with agents and times other than through the attitudes of which they are supposed to be the contents. Epistemic justification, then, is inherently justification *to believe* a proposition.¹³

Let us turn to the role of idealization in judgments of propositional justification. This is also a subject to which Turri pays his attention, for he builds his argument for the deeper principle that he maintains lies behind **PJ** on the intuitions elicited by two cases – Ron's case and Cedric's case – which he takes to show that our judgments of propositional justification involve idealizing to a typical intellectual performance either of a competent member of the agent's kind or of the specific agent that is in question.¹⁴ Here, however, I am more interested in distinguishing two different ways in which the various degrees of idealization involved in judgments of propositional justification may cause the justification that a proposition enjoys for an agent at a time to be unavailable to the agent in question. So I propose to address the issue from a different angle: I shall start by introducing a case which is in many respects similar to, but also significantly different from, Turri's first case, and then I will turn to a related claim concerning the rational availability of propositional justification which has found its way in recent epistemological literature.

The protagonist of the case I want to introduce is Peppe, an Italian political activist who is reflecting on how to overcome the current economic crisis. He knows both that Italy's leaving the euro would be a disaster,¹⁵ and that if Italy's leaving the euro would be a disaster, then Ita-

ly should not leave the euro. *Peppe* is, let us suppose, sufficiently familiar with *modus ponens*. However, he is currently under the effects of a drug that impairs his logical skills. As a consequence, *Peppe* will not exploit *modus ponens* to form the belief that Italy should not leave the euro (nor, for that matter, any other belief), but will defer to the outcome of an online survey asking the question, ‘Should Italy leave the euro?’ Now, we are inclined to think that, whatever the outcome of the survey, the proposition that Italy should not leave the euro is justified for *Peppe* even if he is currently incapable of forming a (doxastically) justified belief with that content. In forming this judgment, we abstract from his momentary logical disability. For, as *Turri* observes at the end of his discussion of the first of his own two cases, in idealized judgments of propositional justification we typically ‘have in mind a competent intellectual performance by a normal human adult, who doubtlessly would be able to competently and effortlessly reason his way to the relevant conclusion’ (ibid., 324).

Turri’s diagnosis is framed in terms of doxastic justification, but the point can be formulated equally well in terms of propositional justification. We have seen that, when we say that p is justified for S at t , what we mean is normally that

- (i) S is justified to believe p at t .

Substitution-instances of (i) typically express judgments of *concrete* propositional justification, i.e., judgments of propositional justification that do not abstract away from specific aspects of the agent’s epistemic situation – anyway, this is how I shall interpret them henceforth. Now, it should not be taken for granted that what is at stake when a proposition is said to be (or not to be) justified for an agent at a time is always concrete propositional justification. In some cases, especially when the agent in question displays some form of cognitive disability, when we say that p is justified for S at t what we are likely to mean is rather that

- (ii) *Any normal human reasoner* whose total evidence and overall doxastic profile are relevantly similar to S ’s total evidence and overall doxastic profile is justified to believe p at t ,

where of course the justification that any normal human reasoner that meets the relevant conditions is supposed to possess with respect to believing p at t is just the concrete sort of justification that is at issue in judgments expressed by substitution-instances of (i). Thus, the reason why we are inclined to say that the proposition that Italy should not leave the euro is justi-

fied for Peppe even if he is currently incapable of forming a (doxastically) justified belief with that content is precisely that *any normal human reasoner whose total evidence and overall doxastic profile are relevantly similar to Peppe's total evidence and overall doxastic profile* is justified to believe that proposition.

There is nothing wrong in the judgments about *moderately idealized* propositional justification expressed by the substitution-instances of (ii) – nor is there anything intrinsically objectionable in putting them concisely by saying that a certain proposition is (propositionally) justified for a specific agent at a given time. However, one should not be misled by this turn of phrase into believing that, in formulating such judgments, we are talking of a justification that the relevant agent can easily become aware of and use as the basis of a doxastically justified belief. As Peppe's case makes clear, *p*'s being justified for S at *t* in this moderately idealized sense is perfectly compatible with S's being incapable of recognising *p*'s justifiedness and of forming in a rationally appropriate way a (doxastically) justified belief in *p*. The type of justification that is at issue when we introduce this moderate degree of idealization may well be *unavailable for rationally appropriate belief-formation* to the relevant agent.

Now, someone might be inclined to regard the distinction between judgments of concrete propositional justification and judgments of moderately idealized propositional justification as spurious. Perhaps the reason why we are disposed to say that the proposition that Italy should not leave the euro is justified for Peppe is just that *all* judgments of propositional justification involve the moderate degree of idealization that is associated with ignoring the most blatant weaknesses or failings in the agents' cognitive abilities and powers. Perhaps it is precisely in terms of propositional justification of this moderately idealized sort that doxastic justification is to be explained. If this were the case, the conclusion of the last paragraph would apply across the board – there would be no unified species of propositional justification that one might be legitimately inclined to regard as inherently available, in virtue of its concreteness, for rationally appropriate belief-formation. As the ensuing discussion will make clear, I find the idea that there is just one variety of propositional justification unappealing. Here, however, I will not pause to criticize it in general terms. In the remaining part of this section I will single out some further varieties of propositional justification, each associated with an increasing degree of idealization; what follows will make it clear, I hope, that ignoring the differences that set apart such varieties of justification by focussing on just one of them is unlikely to provide philosophical illumination.

As I said, other reasons may be cited in support of the conclusion that the justification that a proposition enjoys for an agent at a time may on occasion be unavailable to the agent in ques-

tion. Some philosophers have suggested that this may happen not because of any weaknesses or failings of the agent's cognitive abilities and powers, but as a result of some specific doxastic attitudes the agent happens to have. The idea has been put forward by Jim Pryor and Martin Davies,¹⁶ who have argued in slightly different ways that the justification that a proposition has for an agent at a time can be *rationally unavailable* to the agent in question because of some unjustified beliefs or doubts he happens to have. Thus, Pryor writes that an agent 'can have some justification to believe p , but be unable to *rationally* believe p on the basis of that justification, because of some (unjustified) beliefs and doubts he also has' (2004, 365).¹⁷ And Davies maintains that if 'warranted doubt would undermine a warrant, W , to believe a proposition, P , then even an unwarranted doubt would make it rationally impossible for me to avail myself of W ' (2009, 367), preventing me from forming a *rationally based* belief in that proposition. Pryor's notion of rational belief and Davies' notion of rationally based belief have to do, ultimately, with the satisfaction of the logical and probabilistic requirements that rationality imposes on our doxastic attitudes, so they are logically weaker than the notion of rationally appropriate belief introduced at the end of Section 2. As a consequence, a justification that is *rationally unavailable* to an agent in Pryor's and Davies' sense will always be a justification that is *unavailable for rationally appropriate belief-formation* to that agent in my sense.

Now, a conspicuous feature of the judgments of propositional justification on which Pryor and Davies (but also Crispin Wright and Annalisa Coliva)¹⁸ focus their attention is that they abstract away not only from any weaknesses and failings in the agent's cognitive abilities and powers, but also from any 'doxastic mistakes' the agent may be making. Here, then, we seem to be faced with a further sense – or perhaps, as we shall presently see, with three further senses – in which a proposition may be said to be justified for an agent at a time. Let us say that an agent is an *unimpeded* reasoner if and only if he (i) is endowed with cognitive abilities and powers that are at least as strong as those of any normal human reasoner, (ii) does not believe any unjustified proposition and (iii) does not disbelieve any (adequately) justified proposition. (For the purpose of characterising unimpeded reasoners, talk of 'justified' and 'unjustified' propositions can be construed indifferently in terms of concrete or moderately idealized justification.) An unimpeded reasoner needn't be either logically or probabilistically omniscient; so there will typically be consequences of justified propositions that an unimpeded reasoner does not believe and contraries of justified propositions that an unimpeded reasoner fails to disbelieve.¹⁹ What is meant by saying that p is justified for S at t may then be that

- (iii) *Any unimpeded human reasoner* whose total evidence is relevantly similar to S's total evidence is justified to believe p at t ,

where again the justification that any unimpeded human reasoner that meets the relevant condition is supposed to possess with respect to believing p at t is just the concrete sort of justification that is at issue in judgments expressed by substitution-instances of (i).

A proposition may be said to be justified for an agent at a time in the sense captured by (iii) even if its justification is in a clear sense unavailable to the agent in question because of some doxastic mistakes he makes. However, the conception of propositional justification captured by (iii) abstracts away from the agent's mistaken beliefs and disbeliefs, not from the agent's mistaken *doubts*. Moreover, while an unimpeded reasoner needn't be either logically or probabilistically omniscient, different reasoners will have different levels of logical and probabilistic competence, and it is plausible to suppose that reasoners with higher levels of logical and probabilistic competence will have access to larger sets of reasons. So we need to consider (at least) two further degrees of idealization. What is meant by saying that p is justified for S at t may be that

- (iv) *Some human reasoner* whose total evidence is relevantly similar to S's total evidence is justified to believe p at t ,

or even that

- (v) A human reasoner whose total evidence were relevantly similar to S's total evidence *might be* justified to believe p at t .

(I spare the reader the usual explanation about the notion of justification that should be employed in understanding these formulations.)

If propositional justification is construed along the lines of (iv), for a proposition to be justified for an agent at a time it will suffice that there exist just one or two extraordinarily gifted human reasoners whose total evidence is relevantly similar to the agent's total evidence but whose cognitive abilities and powers far exceed those of the vast majority of their fellows, who are justified (in the most basic sense) to believe it. And if it is understood along the lines of (v), for a proposition to be justified for an agent at a time it will suffice that *it be possible* that a human reasoner whose total evidence is relevantly similar to the agent's total evidence

is justified (in the most basic sense) to believe it. It is arguably something very close to (v) that a number of recent epistemologists have in mind when they say that propositional justification is justification of propositions ‘in the abstract space of warrants’ (Davies 2009, 338; cf. Coliva 2010) or ‘in the abstract space of reasons’ (Coliva 2012, 326; 2015, 16).

Again, there is nothing intrinsically wrong in the increasingly idealized judgments of propositional justification articulated by the substitution-instances of (iii), (iv) and (v). But expressing such judgments by saying that a certain proposition is justified for an agent at a time may be rather misleading – at least if what is being done is not openly declared or made clear by the context. For again, one should not forget that p ’s being justified for S at t in the senses associated with such degrees of idealization is perfectly compatible with S ’s being incapable of recognising p ’s justifiedness and of forming in a rationally appropriate way a (doxastically) justified belief in p – even if S ’s cognitive abilities and powers display no particular weaknesses or failings. The type of justification that we are talking about when we reach such degrees of idealization may be in a clear sense *unavailable for rational belief-formation* to the relevant agent.

4. *Doxastically independent propositional justification?*

The claim that a proposition can be justified for an agent at a time even if its justification is unavailable to the agent in question because of certain (unjustified) beliefs or doubts he happens to have does not logically entail but naturally leads to the thought that which propositions an agent is justified to believe (as opposed to committed to believe by the requirements of rationality) is largely independent of his doxastic states.

I say ‘largely independent’ to allow for cases in which a doxastic state provides a reason to believe a proposition merely in virtue of the fact that the agent that is in that state knows or justifiedly believes that he is. Think, for instance, of situations in which an agent gains insight into his own psychological makeup by reflecting on the fact that he has certain beliefs (or disbeliefs, or doubts). It seems clear that in situations of this kind the agent is justified to believe the relevant proposition(s) precisely in virtue of his knowing or justifiedly believing that he is in certain doxastic states. However, the question raised in this section is not whether propositional justification is independent of the kind of reasons that doxastic states uncontroversially provide in such situations (which it obviously is not); rather, it is whether propositional justi-

fication is independent of the doxastic states that do not provide the agent who is in them with this kind of reasons.

The thought that which propositions an agent is justified to believe is (largely) independent of the agent's doxastic states is of course far from uncontroversial. For one thing, it is clearly inconsistent with many coherentist views of epistemic justification. For another, it sits uncomfortably with reductionist attempts to explain the relation of *being a reason for* in terms of the requirements of rationality. But it is a thought that is likely to attract those epistemologists who, like Pryor, Davies, Wright and Coliva, take pains to emphasize the independence of propositional justification (or of some subspecies of it) of what might be called the 'vagaries of belief'. Let us first consider an unrestricted version of the thought. According to this version, propositional justification is (largely) independent of the relevant agent's doxastic states *generally*:

(Unrestricted Doxastic Independence) Which propositions S is justified to believe at *t* is largely independent of the doxastic states S is in at *t* (or, for that matter, at any other time).

This principle might look attractive if the only way in which doxastic states provide agents with reasons for belief were the one that has been described and set aside a few lines earlier. However, if we are to explain along the usual lines how inferential justification is possible, we had better not rule out from the beginning the possibility that *justified* beliefs may furnish agents with reasons by contributing to the inferential justification of propositions that logically follow from, or are made overwhelmingly likely by, suitably related sets of premises. So I propose to focus on a weaker version of the thought. Let us say that a doxastic state is *evidentially idle* (for an agent at a time) just in case it *doesn't* contribute to the inferential justification of any proposition (for that agent at that time).²⁰ The weaker version of the thought can then be stated as follows:

(Doxastic Independence) Which propositions S is justified to believe at *t* is largely independent of the evidentially idle doxastic states S is in at *t* (or, for that matter, at any other time).

By restricting the relevant sort of independence to evidentially idle doxastic states, this formulation does not rule out the possibility that justified beliefs may influence which propositions

an agent is justified to believe by contributing to the inferential justification of some of them. However, it does rule out the possibility that an agent's *unjustified* beliefs and doubts may influence which propositions an agent is justified to believe – other, that is, than in the rather unexciting way that has been described a few paragraphs earlier.

Again, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with Doxastic Independence – as long as it is clear that it is meant to apply uniquely to the highly idealized varieties of propositional justification that are in play when judgments of propositional justification are cashed out in the terms articulated by the substitution-instances of (iii), (iv) or (v). The idea is simply that a human reasoner whose evidential situation were relevantly similar to S's evidential situation at t might have access to a wider range of reasons than are actually available to S at t – so that there is a sense in which it will be possible for a proposition to be justified for S at t even if its justification is unavailable for rational belief-formation to S because of some (unjustified) doxastic states he is in. However, it would be ill-advised to conclude that Doxastic Independence applies to *all* varieties of propositional justification, in particular to the mundane variety that is in play when sentences of the form ' p is justified for S at t ' are given their most natural reading. Ignoring the differences that set apart the varieties of propositional justification to which Doxastic Independence arguably applies from those to which it doesn't apply by assuming that when we say such things as that p is (or is not) justified for S at t we are always engaged in sophisticated exercises of idealization can be utterly misleading.

The main source of my dissatisfaction with the conception of propositional justification in terms of which the orthodox view of the relation between propositional and doxastic justification has frequently been fleshed out in recent years is then that it gives pride of place to varieties of propositional justification that are rather removed from the relations that are at issue in many situations in which we say that a proposition is (or is not) justified for an agent at a time. Putting the emphasis on such robustly idealized varieties of propositional justification may lead to hasty generalisations – in particular, it may prompt the conclusion that *all* varieties of propositional justification supervene only on the evidential situations of epistemic agents and not also on their overall doxastic profiles, including their evidentially idle doxastic states.²¹ This conclusion, however, seems to me to be unacceptable. For if p 's justification is unavailable for rational belief-formation to S at t , S will be unable to form on its basis a *doxastically justified* belief in p . And I want to press the intuition that, on a natural and central reading of (the substitution-instances of) ' p is justified for S at t ',

(EJ) S can be (propositionally) justified to believe p at t in virtue of S's having reason(s) R only if it is reasonably easy for S to form a (doxastically) justified belief in p at t

(if you like, only if there is a world which is easily available – in the relevant sense – to S in which S forms a doxastically justified belief in p at t). If the overall doxastic profile of S at t makes it *too difficult* for S to form a doxastically justified belief in p at t , then in a natural and important sense S cannot be said to be propositionally justified to believe p at t .

The intuition articulated by **EJ** coheres well with the view that epistemic justification is just a matter of logical or probabilistic relations between beliefs; for on this view there is apparently little point in talking of what an agent is propositionally justified to believe irrespective of his overall doxastic profile. However, it should be abundantly clear by now that this is not a view I am inclined to accept (nor, for that matter, am I inclined to accept the particular brand of justification-relativism that naturally goes hand in hand with it).²² My point is simply that if the doxastic states we happen to be in (even unjustified ones) affect the things that we can come to believe in a rationally appropriate way and so the things that can become the content of our doxastically justified beliefs, it is plausible to think that they also affect the things that, in a natural and important sense, we are *propositionally* justified to believe. So Doxastic Independence does not apply across the board.

To a certain extent, the issue is verbal. There are ways of talking of propositional justification that allow for the possibility that the justification a proposition enjoys for an agent at a time might be unavailable to the agent in question due to certain peculiarities of his overall doxastic profile. And there are ways of talking of propositional justification that do not allow for such a possibility. (The line may not be so sharp, but for present purposes we can ignore this complication.) So there are in fact two different notions of propositional justification that turn up and are sometimes confused with each other in recent epistemology: the notion of what an epistemic agent is (propositionally) justified to believe *irrespective of the evidentially idle features of his doxastic profile*, and the notion of what an epistemic agent is (propositionally) justified to believe *given his overall doxastic profile*.²³ **EJ** articulates a central feature of this latter notion – or so I maintain.

5. *The point of the notion of propositional justification*

Should we leave it at that? It might be thought that the notion of what an epistemic agent is propositionally justified to believe given his overall doxastic profile is more fundamental than the notion of what an epistemic agent is propositionally justified to believe irrespective of the evidentially idle features of his doxastic profile because it involves a lower degree of idealization (it does not abstract away from the agent's evidentially idle doxastic states). Moreover, taking the former notion as more fundamental might lead one to agree with Turri that propositional justification should be explained in terms of doxastic justification and not vice versa – if what explains p 's justifiedness for S at t is S 's currently possessing at least one means of forming a doxastically justified belief in p , then small wonder that S 's evidentially idle doxastic states at t may affect what S is propositionally justified to believe at t .

However, I think that **PJ** is mistaken, and not merely in the qualified sense that it is an approximation and a guide to some deeper and more general principle (Turri 2010b, 323-325). If p is (propositionally) justified for S at t , it is not, I claim, *because* S currently possesses at least one means of forming a (doxastically) justified belief in p . **EJ** stands on its own feet, and the fact that, on a rather natural construal of the notion of epistemic justification, S can be justified to believe p at t *only if* it is reasonably easy for S to form a justified belief in p at t should not be taken as evidence that the notion of doxastic justification is in any sense more fundamental than that of propositional justification.

It is possible, I think, to sketch an alternative account of why **EJ** holds – an account that explains why it does not hold unrestrictedly, but only relative to the sort of justification that supervenes on the agents' reasons *together* with their overall doxastic profile. My bid is that **EJ** holds with respect to this sort of justification because it is this sort of justification that occupies centre stage when the issue is whether it would be *epistemically responsible* for an agent to believe a certain proposition at a given time.²⁴ Epistemic responsibility is intrinsically related to the agent's perspective on the world – a person cannot be accused of being epistemically irresponsible for failing to form his doxastic attitudes in accordance with reasons to which he has no access. So it seems clear that, insofar as reflection on what one is propositionally justified to believe is meant to provide guidance for one's own epistemically responsible behaviour, the acknowledgment that there may be propositions that one is in a suitably idealized sense epistemically justified to believe, but whose justification is unavailable for rational belief-formation to oneself, is bound to be totally inconsequential.²⁵ For one's epistemically responsible behaviour can be guided by consideration of what one is propositionally jus-

tified to believe only in so far as the relevant epistemic evaluations are available to oneself in the overall doxastic state one happens to be in. So it seems plausible to conclude that any notion of justification that can be effectively employed to obtain guidance for one's own epistemically responsible behaviour will be the notion of a property (or relation) that displays the crucial feature articulated by **EJ**.

An objection that might be pressed against this line of reasoning is that it ignores the possibility that 'entitlements' which are ordinarily inaccessible to epistemic agents might play a guiding role with respect to the epistemically responsible behaviour of the agents that (unknowingly) possess them by affecting what such agents may be, in the relevant sense, propositionally justified to believe. Thus, for instance, Crispin Wright has argued that human agents are capable of acquiring perceptual justification for ordinary propositions concerning their environment in virtue of the fact that they are entitled to accept some very general presuppositions of thought about the external world, such as that there is indeed such a world, that perceptual experience provides us with largely reliable evidence about our surroundings, that we are not cleverly deluded brains in a vat, and so on (Wright 2004). Now, the existence of such entitlements is supposedly ignored by almost all the agents who possess them; so, if Wright's picture is correct, ordinary perceptual justification of propositions concerning the external world is made possible by the existence of justification of a type that is largely inaccessible to those who rely on it, thus providing an excellent example of the sort of case that may fuel the objection.

I find Wright's picture of the architecture of perceptual justification less than compelling. But even supposing, for the sake of argument, that it is correct, it is precisely because the entitlements hypothesized by Wright are admittedly inaccessible to most of the agents who possess them that acknowledging their existence poses no real threat to the claim that the sort of epistemic justification that must be considered when looking for guidance for one's own epistemically responsible behaviour must display the crucial feature articulated by **EJ**. If it is the mere *existence* of such entitlements, as opposed to their recognition, that makes it possible for the agents who possess them to acquire perceptual justification for ordinary propositions concerning their environment, it seems clear that such agents needn't bother about them in their efforts to behave in an epistemically responsible way. So the point that any notion of justification that can be effectively employed for the purpose of obtaining guidance for one's own epistemically responsible behaviour will be the notion of a property that displays the crucial feature articulated by **EJ** stands.

The notion of epistemic justification has of course been the focus of extensive discussion also for the theoretical purpose of analysing (propositional) *knowledge*. The assumption behind much work in this area is that justification is, as it were, by definition, that which has to be added to true belief to turn it into knowledge. This assumption, that places the theory of justified belief in service to the theory of knowledge, has prompted much confusion in the literature and is most likely detrimental to both theories (Foley 2005, 314 f.).²⁶ On the other hand, justification might well be necessary for knowledge (or at least for *reflective* knowledge), even if it is not that which confers epistemic status on true belief. Be that as it may, it seems clear that the notion of what an agent is propositionally justified to believe *irrespective of the evidentially idle features of his overall doxastic profile* cannot be more beneficial in the formulation of an analysis of knowledge than in obtaining guidance for epistemically responsible behaviour. For the type of epistemic justification that can plausibly be regarded as necessary for (reflective) knowledge is of course *doxastic* justification, and the kind of propositional justification that may belong (or fail to belong) to propositions for an agent irrespective of his evidentially idle doxastic states is too far divorced from doxastic justification to play a central role in the analysis of knowledge.²⁷

My tentative conclusion is then that the notion of what an epistemic agent is propositionally justified to believe irrespective of the evidentially idle features of his overall doxastic profile cannot be central either to guidance of epistemically responsible behaviour or to the analysis of knowledge. This of course does not mean that it cannot prove valuable in addressing other significant epistemological issues, such as, for instance, the architecture of epistemic justification, the conditions for the transmission of justification and many familiar sceptical paradoxes. But when it comes to the two issues that have been traditionally at the centre of epistemological inquiry, it seems clear that the crucial notion will be that of what an epistemic agent is propositionally justified to believe *given his overall doxastic profile* – a notion whose employment goes hand in hand with the assumption that the basis upon which facts concerning propositional justification supervene is not restricted to facts concerning the evidential situation of agents.

Acknowledgments

Earlier versions of this paper were presented at a philosophy of language conference held in Gargnano (Brescia) in June 2013 and at Cogito's Epistemology seminar (Bologna) in January

2014. Thanks to all present for discussion. I am especially grateful to Andrea Borghini, Delia Belleri, Annalisa Coliva, Elisabetta Lalumera, Sebastiano Moruzzi, Ernesto Napoli, Eugenio Orlandelli, Elisa Paganini, Michele Palmira, Marco Santambrogio, Giuseppe Spolaore and Luca Zanetti for many helpful comments and suggestions.

Notes

¹ The terminology is due to Firth (1978, 217 f.). Some writers, including Feldman & Conee (1985, 24), Feldman (2002, 46) and Pryor (2004, 365), talk of *well-founded* rather than of *doxastically justified* beliefs. Here, however, I shall follow the most common usage and stick to the latter phrase.

² Depending on circumstances, an agent may instead be justified to *disbelieve*, or to *withhold belief from*, a proposition. For simplicity, in what follows I will not discuss the justificational status of such attitudes, nor will I attend to the complications raised by considering degrees of belief, or different kinds of propositional attitudes, such as trust or acceptance. These omissions will not affect the thrust of the argument.

³ Turri keeps switching between formulations in which '*p*' appears to function as an objectual variable (as in 'S believes *p*') and formulations in which it occurs as a sentential variable, or perhaps a sentence letter (as in 'S's belief that *p*'). This oscillation doesn't cause any real harm, but in this paper I consistently adopt the former usage.

⁴ As usual, substitution-instances of '<*p*>' are used to abbreviate corresponding substitution-instances of 'the proposition that *p*'.

⁵ As I said in Section 1, it is natural to regard a reason that an agent can have and use as a basis for belief as something accessible from, or internal to, the agent's perspective on the world – which naturally leads to Turri's assumption that having reason(s) amounts to *knowing* (or *justifiedly believing*) certain facts or propositions. Here, however, nothing important depends on accepting an internalist construal of justifiers, and the argument of this paragraph could be easily reformulated in terms more acceptable to externalistically-minded philosophers.

⁶ Eugenio Orlandelli has tried to convince me, both in conversation and in correspondence, that Turri's cases appear to pose a challenge to the orthodox view only because they are set on the background of a misleading account of the nature of that in virtue of which a proposition may be inferentially justified for an agent. Orlandelli's alternative account may be sketched

by applying it to the basketball case. His view is, in a nutshell, that the proposition that the Spurs will win, far from being (propositionally) justified for Mr Ponens and Mr F.A. Lacy in virtue of their knowing (or justifiedly believing) P5 and P6, is justified for them in virtue of their being (propositionally) justified to believe *that it follows via modus ponens from P5 and P6*. Orlandelli's diagnosis is then that Lacy's belief that the Spurs will win fails to be doxastically justified precisely because it is not based on *that* justification. For reasons that will become apparent in due course, I doubt that this account of inferential justification is correct. In any case, it seems able to make sense of our intuitions concerning Turri's basketball case only on the assumption that Mr F.A. Lacy neither *knows* nor has a doxastically justified *belief* to the effect that the proposition that the Spurs will win follows via *modus ponens* from P5 and P6 – if he did, why would he employ *modus profusus* to draw the conclusion? This seems somewhat arbitrary, especially if one considers that in the more usual framework adopted by Turri it is possible to make the rather plausible claim that Mr F.A. Lacy knows (or justifiedly believes) the reasons in virtue of which the proposition that the Spurs will win is justified for him.

⁷ A related but not identical distinction between the 'vertical' relations that obtain between mental states and the world and the 'horizontal' relations that obtain among mental states is made by Zangwill (2005, 4).

⁸ For references to the debate, and a defence of nonreductionism, see Kolodny (2005, 510 f.).

⁹ As I said in Section 1, for the purposes of this paper it is not necessary to assume that the things that lend justification to propositions have propositional content, can be given or cited in defence of a claim, or are accessible from, or internal to, a specific agent's perspective on the world. What I think one should grant to Turri is then, in more neutral terms, that (propositional) justification is the epistemic status that a proposition may enjoy for an agent at a time in virtue of there being one or more justification-makers (justifiers) for the agent to believe it.

¹⁰ This idea was suggested to me by some related considerations made by Lalumera (2013). For the relevant notion of epistemic competence, see Sosa (2007, 22 ff.).

¹¹ For an overview of the literature on the transmission of justification and the ways in which it can fail, see Moretti & Piazza (2013). Miss Improper and Mr F.A. Lacy adopt ways of belief-formation that, employed on a regular basis, would almost inevitably lead them to believe logically inconsistent propositions. So one might also suggest that the former's belief about

Mansour and the latter's belief about the Spurs are irrational because they are formed by methods of belief-formation which are essentially flawed.

¹² To many speakers, saying that S is justified to believe p at t sounds significantly different from saying that S is justified *in believing* p at t . Bach (1985, 251) maintains that statements to the effect that someone is justified *in believing* a proposition at a time express claims of *personal*, as opposed to doxastic, justification, while Kvanvig & Menzel (1990, 240-247) argue that claims of personal justification are in fact logically equivalent to claims of doxastic justification. Be that as it may, it seems clear that the truth of statements to the effect that someone is justified *to believe*, unlike (possibly) that of statements to the effect that someone is justified *in believing*, a proposition at a time does not depend on the agent's actually believing the proposition at the relevant time.

¹³ As I said, for simplicity I ignore the complications raised by the possibility of considering degrees of belief or different kinds of doxastic and propositional attitudes, as they are immaterial to the problem under consideration.

¹⁴ Here is a brief description of the two cases. *Ron's case*. Ron knows both that invading Iran would be catastrophically stupid, and that if invading Iran would be catastrophically stupid, than the U.S. ought not to invade Iran. But although perfectly familiar with *modus ponens*, he will not exploit such pattern of reasoning to form the belief that the U.S. ought not to invade Iran because massive exposition to right-wing propaganda has made him incapable of believing that the U.S. ought not to invade *any* country, much less Iran. The intuition elicited by this case is meant to be that the proposition that the U.S. ought not to invade Iran is (propositionally) justified for Ron even if he is currently incapable of forming a (doxastically) justified belief in it. *Cedric's case*. Cedric is the most brilliant logician in the world: for any given proposition and any given set of axioms, he is able to discover with relative ease whether the former is a theorem of the latter by applying some clever algorithm he devised. The intuition elicited by this case is meant to be that the true proposition that (say) T is a theorem of A is (propositionally) justified for Cedric even if most competent human reasoners are obviously incapable of forming a (doxastically) justified belief in it. See Turri (2010b, 322-324).

¹⁵ If you do not believe that it would, just assume it for the sake of the example.

¹⁶ A similar idea is found in work by Crispin Wright, who takes a proposition to be 'rationally available' to an agent when it is 'consistent with what they believe' (Wright 2004, 181). See also Coliva (2015, 22).

¹⁷ Pryor's idea is, essentially, that an agent is prevented from forming a *rational* belief in *p* on certain grounds whenever he holds a belief in *q*, such that justification for *q* would undermine the justification those grounds give him for *p* (Pryor 2004, 364 f.; 2012, 285 f.). Pryor applies this idea to Moore's proof of an external world, whose failure is in his view merely dialectical, a consequence of the fact that whoever rejects its premises or even doubts whether they are true cannot rationally believe its – propositionally justified – conclusion. See Pryor (2004, 368-370; 2012, Section 5).

¹⁸ See the works cited in note 16.

¹⁹ Although there is a sense in which one is *rationally committed* to believe every implication of the propositions one believes (Volpe 2012, 323 f.), it is not the case that one is *justified* to believe every proposition that follows from the propositions that one justifiedly believes. This said, among the consequences of justified propositions that an unimpeded but not logically omniscient reasoner will inevitably fail to believe there will likely be some, even many, *justified* propositions – propositions he might easily have recognized to follow from (or, perhaps, to be made overwhelmingly likely by) propositions he is justified to believe. So an unimpeded reasoner will not be, in general, a reasoner who believes every proposition he is justified to believe (and who disbelieves every contrary of the propositions he is justified to believe).

²⁰ This is a technical notion: a doxastic state that provides a reason to believe a proposition merely in virtue of the fact that the agent that is in that state knows or justifiedly believes that he is will count as evidentially idle in this sense. Needless to say, whether a doxastic state is evidentially idle for an agent at a time will depend in part on the agent's level of logical and probabilistic competence.

²¹ The term 'evidential situation' is used to refer to the whole set of reasons possessed by an agent at a time, including the agent's evidentially non-idle beliefs.

²² What I have in mind is not the trivial claim that a proposition that is justified for an agent at a time may fail to be justified for another agent at the same time, or for the same agent at a different time (or that a proposition that is not justified for an agent at a time may be justified for another agent at the same time, or for the same agent at a different time). Nor is it just the claim that the doxastic states of an agent affect what the agent is justified to believe in the sense that a proposition that is justified for an agent at a time might fail to be so justified (or that a proposition that is not justified for an agent at a time might be so justified) if the agent's overall doxastic profile at that time were relevantly different. It is, rather, the claim that the

doxastic states of an agent affect what the agent is justified to believe in the sense that, had his overall doxastic profile been sufficiently different from the overall doxastic profile that he is in at some given time, an agent might have been justified to believe propositions that are *inconsistent* with the propositions he is actually justified to believe. Nothing of what I say in this paper commits me to subscribe to this form of justification-relativism.

²³ A third notion might be considered: that of what an epistemic agent is (propositionally) justified to believe *irrespective of his overall doxastic profile*. But this notion would be of any interest only if Unrestricted Doxastic Independence were true.

²⁴ One might venture the claim that, in a natural and important sense, an agent is epistemically justified to believe a proposition at a time *just in case* it is epistemically responsible for him to believe that proposition at that time. But for present purposes it is not necessary to defend this claim.

²⁵ The considerations sketched in this paragraph are reminiscent of a well-known line of argument employed in support of internalist conceptions of epistemic justification (see, e.g., Ginet 1975; BonJour 1985; Goldman 1999; Foley 2005; for criticism, Greco 2005, 260-262). Here, however, I am not concerned with presenting an argument in favour of such conceptions, but an explanation of why **EJ** holds – when it holds.

²⁶ To avoid confusion, Alvin Plantinga has proposed to refer to that which has to be added to true belief to turn it into knowledge as ‘warrant’ (Plantinga 1993). But his proposal has not gained wide currency.

²⁷ In Wright’s picture of the architecture of perceptual justification, the doxastic justification of many of our beliefs depends, as we have seen, on the existence of a type of propositional justification that is inaccessible to most of those who rely on it. Thus, if Wright’s picture were correct (which I doubt), the notion of what an epistemic agent is propositionally justified to believe irrespective of the evidentially idle features of his overall doxastic profile could well play a role in the analysis of knowledge. However, it would be at most an indirect role, for the general presuppositions of thought about the external world that Wright argues we are entitled to accept would never become, in his view, the content of beliefs that might count as instances of knowledge.

References

- BonJour, Laurence (1985). *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Broome, John (1999). 'Normative Requirements'. *Ratio*, 12, 398-419.
- Carroll, Lewis (1895). 'What the Tortoise Said to Achilles'. *Mind*, 4, 278-280.
- Coliva, Annalisa (2010). 'Moore's Proof and Martin Davies' Epistemic Projects'. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 88, 101-116.
- Coliva, Annalisa (2012). 'Liberals and Conservatives. Is There a Third (Wittgensteinian) Way?'. In Id. (ed.), *Mind, Meaning and Knowledge: Themes from the Philosophy of Crispin Wright*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 323-351.
- Coliva, Annalisa (2015). *Extended Rationality*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davies, Martin (2009). 'Two Purposes of Arguing and Two Epistemic Projects'. In Ravenscroft, Ian (ed.), *Mind, Ethics, and Conditionals: Themes from the Philosophy of Frank Jackson*. New York: Oxford University Press, 337-383.
- Feldman, Richard (2002). *Epistemology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Feldman, Richard & Conee, Earl (1985). 'Evidentialism'. *Philosophical Studies*, 48, 15-34.
- Firth, Roderick (1978). 'Are Epistemic Concepts Reducible to Ethical Concepts?'. In Goldman, Alvin I. and Kim Jaegwon (eds.), *Values and Morals: Essays in Honor of William Frankena, Charles Stevenson, and Richard Brandt*. Dordrecht: Reidel, 215-229.
- Foley, Richard (2005). 'Justified Belief as Responsible Belief'. In Steup, Matthias and Sosa, Ernest (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 313-326.
- Ginet, Carl (1975). *Knowledge, Perception and Memory*. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Greco, John (2005). 'Justification Is not Internal'. In Steup, Matthias and Sosa, Ernest (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 257-270.
- Goldman, Alvin I. (1999). 'Internalism Exposed'. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 96, 271-293.
- Kolodny, Niko (2005). 'Why Be Rational?'. *Mind*, 114, 509-563.
- Kvanvig, Jonathan & Menzel, Christopher (1990). 'The Basic Notion of Justification'. *Philosophical Studies*, 59: 235-261.
- Lalumera, Elisabetta (2013). 'Doxastic Justification and the Competence Condition'. Ms.
- Moretti, Luca & Piazza, Tommaso (2013). 'Transmission of Justification and Warrant'. In Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013 Edi-

- tion), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/transmission-justification-warrant/>>.
- Plantinga, Alvin (1993). *Warrant: The Current Debate*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pryor, James (2004). 'What's Wrong with Moore's Argument?'. *Philosophical Issues*, 14, 349-378.
- Pryor, James (2012). 'When Warrant Transmits'. In Coliva, Annalisa (ed.), *Mind, Meaning, and Knowledge: Themes from the Philosophy of Crispin Wright*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 269-303.
- Sosa, Ernest (2007). *A Virtue Epistemology*. Vol. 1: *Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Turri, John (2010a). 'Epistemic Supervenience'. In Dancy, Jonathan, Sosa, Ernest and Steup Matthias (eds.), *A Companion to Epistemology*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 340-343.
- Turri, John (2010b). 'On the Relationship between Propositional and Doxastic Justification'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 80, 312-326.
- Volpe, Giorgio (2012). 'Cornerstones: You'd better Believe Them', *Synthese*, 189, 317-336.
- Wright, Crispin (2004). 'Warrant for Nothing (and Foundations for Free)?', *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, 78, 167-212.
- Zangwill, Nick (2005). 'The Normativity of the Mental', *Philosophical Explorations*, 8, 1-19.