6. JUSTIFICATION: IT NEED NOT CAUSE BUT IT MUST BE ACCESSIBLE

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ABSTRACT. This paper argues that a fact which constitutes part of a subject's being justified in adopting an action or a belief at a particular time need not be part of what induced the subject to adopt that action or belief but it must be something to which the subject had immediate access. It argues that similar points hold for justification of the involuntary acquisition of a belief and for the justification of continuing a belief (actively or dispositionally).

We apply the notion of justification to both actions and beliefs. I take justification, in either application, to be a normative--i.e., an ought-implicating--notion. If a certain action of mine was not justified, then it is an action that I ought not to have performed; if an action I contemplate performing on a certain occasion would not be justified were I to perform it on that occasion then I ought not to perform it. An unjustified action is one such that the agent's performing it is a transgression for which the agent deserves reproach or criticism. A justified action, on the other hand, is simply one that is not unjustified, one of which it is not true that the agent ought not to have done it, one for which the agent deserves no criticism or reproach. Similarly with justified and unjustified beliefs: an unjustified belief is one that the believer ought not to hold and a justified belief is simply one of which it is not true that the believer ought not to hold it, for holding which the believer deserves no reproach or criticism.

There can be no doubt that we do have and regularly apply to actions and beliefs such a normative notion of justification. "You ought not to have leaped then; you should have looked before you leaped." "You ought not to have believed the bank would be open; you should have stopped to think whether it is a holiday." It is this normative notion I am here interested in. If there are any other, non-normative notions of justification that apply to actions or beliefs, I am not talking about them. (I confess that to me the phrase "non-normative notion of justification" sounds like a contradiction in terms.)
Besides speaking of actions and beliefs as justified, we speak of them as **rationally** justified and we speak of actions as **morally** justified. Neither of these latter notions coincides exactly with justification *simpliciter*. An action or belief that one could not help performing or having, is simply on that account, justified: it does not merit reproach; but it need not be rationally justified. An action that harmed only the agent could be morally justified without being rationally justified (assuming that morality is concerned only with choices that affect the welfare of others) or justified *simpliciter*. If an action is justified then it is morally justified, but the converse implication does not hold. If an action or a belief is rationally justified then it is justified, but the converse implication does not hold. However, an action's or belief's being justified *simpliciter* implies that it is either rationally justified or else one that the subject could not help performing or having.

I wish to make two points about the notion of justification as it applies both to action and to belief, a negative point and a positive point. My two points depend on the fact that the notion of justification we are talking about is normative, but they contribute nothing to explicating the norms or canons of any sort of justification. They are concerned with a different aspect of the matter. They can be put in one sentence: a fact which constitutes part of a subject's being justified in adopting an action or a belief at a particular time need not be part of what induced the subject to adopt that action or belief then, but it must be something to which the subject then had immediate access. I will discuss these points first as they apply to action and then as they apply to belief.

In speaking of a person's acting in a certain way at a certain time, I mean to include under that description, not only actions that involve voluntary exertion of the body, but also mental acts of **deciding** to act in certain ways in the future, i.e., mental acts of **adopting intentions** with respect to future action (where the content of these intentions may be categorical or conditional, concerned with a particular future occasion or with a general policy for action in certain kinds of situation). When a person is justified in acting in a certain way at a certain time, there will be a set of facts about the person that minimally suffices to make it the case that the person is at that time justified in so acting. Let us say that the facts belonging to this set together constitute the person's justification for the action.

The first point I want to make about such facts is a negative one: it is **not** the case that, in order for some facts about a person to be a person's justification for acting in a certain way at a particular time, those facts (or some part of them) must contribute to causing the person to act in that way then: making a contribution to justifying an action does not entail making a contribution to causing it. A fact can be part of what constitutes a person's justification for an action without its being true that the person so acts because, or partly because, of that fact. What I am here denying has been affirmed or assumed by many philosophers but for no good reason as far as I can see.
II.

We have seen that for a fact about a person to be part of what justifies that person in a particular action it is not necessary for it to play a role in causing the action. What is necessary instead, however, is that it be a fact to which the subject had immediate access, one in her field of awareness (whether or not she was attending to it), at the time when the action was (at least partly) justified by it. The fact need not have actually led or induced or influenced the subject to adopt the action at the time in question, but it must have been, as it were, so placed that it could have then done so had the subject been so disposed; it must then have been "in the subject's ken". If someone claims to be justified in her action at a particular time on the basis of facts which were then in her ken, we can accept that claim even if those facts were not part of what led her to adopt the action. But we cannot accept someone's claim to have been justified at the time in adopting the action if she bases that claim on facts which were not then in her ken.

Suppose that S for selfish reasons performed an action that had some bad consequences for others that S foresaw at the time but that S's action also had good consequences for others that outweighed the bad ones. If S was completely unaware at the time that the good consequences would occur, lacked any active belief that they would, then it would be absurd for S to claim later that at the time she chose the action she was justified in doing so by the fact that it would have those good consequences. But, if at the time of choosing the action S was aware of the good consequences, did have an active and justified belief that they would occur, then her claim to be justified at the time in light of that belief is perfectly acceptable (even if she acknowledges that she would have chosen the same way without that justification). What does the justifying in this case is not merely the fact that the good consequences would ensue but rather S's having immediate access to that fact, its being in her field of awareness at the time.

My claim is that, although it is not required for a fact to contribute to making a person justified at a given time in then choosing a certain action that the fact contribute to causing the action, it is required that the fact be in the person's field of awareness at that time. For this claim I offer the following argument.

If S was at a particular time justified in then choosing to act in a certain way, then anyone whose field of awareness is just like S's was then must likewise be justified in choosing to act in that way. Necessarily, no matter how the situations might otherwise differ, if what is immediately accessible to the subjects is exactly the same then the same actions are currently justified (or unjustified) for them. If this were not so, then it would be in principle possible for a person's situation to change from one justifying her then choosing a certain action to one not justifying her then choosing such an action (or to change in the reverse direction) without that person being able to detect the change. But surely that is not an intelligible possibility. If at a given time S would be right in thinking that she is currently justified in then acting a certain way and over a certain interval thereafter the world does not change in any way that S could detect just by attending to the appropriate part of what is in her field of awareness, then it must be that S would continue to be right in thinking that she is currently justified in acting in that way; for nothing has happened to give S reason to think that the situation has changed in that respect, nothing has happened that could cause her to change her view on that point, nothing has happened that she ought to have adjusted her view to.

If a person ought to be guided by certain sorts of facts in deciding at a given time what then to do, then it must be that she can then be guided by such facts. But she could not be then guided by facts to which she does not then have immediate access. (Analogously, it cannot be the case that at a certain moment one ought to have pushed a certain button if at that moment one could not reach that button; though of course it could be that at some earlier point one ought to have taken steps that would have put one within reach of the button at the crucial moment.) Therefore, whatever facts she ought then to be guided by, whatever facts determine whether she then ought not to act in a certain way, must be facts then in her field of awareness. It cannot essentially depend on any fact that it would take any new observation or inference or any effort of thought or recall for her to become aware of. It can essentially depend only on such things as her currently active beliefs and memory impressions and other features of her current conscious experience, such as her current sensations (perceptual and others).

This conclusion has been disputed. Alston (1986) asserts that often when one asks whether or not one is justified in acting in a certain way, one is not asking about only what one is then aware of or what is then immediately accessible to one. He writes:

Often I have to engage in considerable research to determine whether a proposed action is justified. If it is a question of whether I would be justified in making a certain decision as department chairman without consulting the executive committee or the department as a whole, I cannot ascertain this just by reflection, unless I have thoroughly internalized the relevant rules, regulations, by-laws, and so on. Most likely I will have to do some research. Would I be legally justified in deducting the cost of a computer on my income tax return? I had better look up the IRS regulations and not just engage in careful reflection. The situation is similar with respect to more strictly moral justification. Would I be morally justified in resigning my professorship as late as April 12 in order to accept a position elsewhere for the following fall? This depends, inter alia, on how much inconvenience this would cause my present department, what faculty resources there are already on hand for taking up the slack, how likely it is that a suitable temporary replacement could be secured for the coming fall; and so on. There is no guarantee that all these matters are available to me just on simple reflection. 7

I think this objection is confused. When we take the question "Am I justified in acting in such-and-such a way?" to depend on facts we are not now aware of and need to undertake investigation or cogitation to become aware of, then, obviously, the question we have in mind is not the question "Am I at this moment justified in now undertaking
this action?" But it is only this question that I claim must be answered by the facts as to what the person is aware of at the time. And this question, in the sorts of cases Alston cites, seems to be answered negatively: the facts as to what the agent is then aware of entail that he does not, at the time the question is about, know enough (about considerations that would be relevant to justifying the action if he knew them) to be justified in then going ahead with the action.

The question Alston is talking about is instead (as much of his own phrasing suggests) the question, "Would I be justified in this action if I knew as much about the relevant facts as I could and should know before undertaking it?" The point I am making does not entail that this question must be answered by what is currently in my field of awareness.

Consider an example. Suppose that S returns to his room late in the evening and, without stopping to think about whether his roommate might be asleep in the room, turns on the light and awakens his roommate. Let us suppose that S was not justified in then turning on the light. Alston appears to countenance the following sort of explanation of this fact: S was not justified in turning on the light because he would have become aware of good reason not to do so if he had stopped to think about or investigate the question. It seems to me, however, that this statement, taken literally, is not even so much as a possible explanation of why S ought not to have turned on the light.

It may be easy to confuse this statement with, or use it loosely to express, what on my view is a possible explanation, namely, the following. S was not justified in turning on the light because S was not then aware of good reason to deny that he would become aware of a good reason not to turn it on (such as his roommate's being asleep in the room) if he were to pause to think about or investigate whether there might be such reason (and he was not then aware of any good reason not to pause to think or investigate). What was in S's field of awareness about his situation at the time did not justify his assuming that no untoward consequences were likely enough to be worth checking on before going ahead with the action. In such cases, of actions with unforeseen unfortunate consequences, the issue of whether the action was justified or reproachable always turns, not on what the agent would have become aware of had he made certain efforts, but on whether he was justified in not making such efforts by what he was aware of. In some cases, the appropriate general principle may be that one is at a particular moment justified in then going ahead with a given action if what one is aware of offers no reason to think (i.e., unless one is aware of reason to think) that investigation might turn up reason against it. In other cases, the appropriate principle might be the more cautious one that one is not justified in going ahead unless what one is aware of offers reason to think that investigation would not turn up reason against it.

This means that S who was not justified in turning on the light, though temporarily forgetting that his roommate might be there, must nevertheless either have had in his field of awareness something that should have given him pause or else failed to have in it anything that would have justified him in not pausing to consider. His field of awareness must have differed in some relevant way from that of R who has no roommate and who, unlike S, was justified in going ahead and turning on the light without stopping to think whether it might disturb someone already in the room. It must be the case either that S's knowledge that he has a roommate had an effect on his current field of awareness, gave it an aspect, that should have led S to stop and think, or else that R's knowledge that she has no roommate had an effect on her awareness, gave it an aspect, that was needed for it to be ok for her not to stop and think. The most plausible answer to the question why R but not S was justified in not stopping to think is that R but not S had at least a dim awareness that turning on the light would have no untoward consequences. In any case, if S's state of mind, with respect to what was immediately accessible to him, were in no relevant way different from R's then S could not, any more than R, be justly chided for failing to stop and think. (But in that case S might still be justly chided for not having earlier taken steps to ensure that he would at such times as this actively recall having a roommate.)

Let me remark here that the facts in the subject's field of awareness, within which I claim the subject's justification must lie, exclude, not only facts the subject has no belief about at the time, but also beliefs the subject has that are then only dispositional and not active, that would take some recalling to bring to active memory. In previous writings, where I maintained that the facts that can justify must be directly recognizable or accessible, I thought of such facts as including inactive beliefs that the subject could bring to active memory merely by reflection on the appropriate question. I now think that was wrong. I failed to carry my argument to its logical conclusion. If what the subject is not aware of and would become aware of only if she were to carry out some investigation cannot contribute essentially to her being justified, then neither can what she is not aware of but would become aware of only if she were to try to recall what she knows that is relevant.

That the latter belongs in the same bag with the former is confirmed by the following observation. Our attitude of reproach towards a case where the subject would have become aware of reason not to act if only she had paused to recollect is like our attitude towards a case where the subject would have become aware of reason not to act if only she had made certain investigations (and where we base our reproach on the fact that she was then unaware of good reason to think otherwise). And it is very different from our attitude towards a case where the subject acted despite being aware of good reason not to. In the latter case we regard the subject as guilty of a different kind of fault and a more serious one: there the action is starkly irrational or immoral—it flies in the face of reason or morality—but in either of the other cases it does not do that but is merely thoughtless or heedless.

III.

Let us turn now from justification of choosing to act in a certain way to justification of choosing to believe a certain thing, of voluntarily adopting a certain belief. Of course, not all beliefs one has are voluntarily adopted. Some of our beliefs we come to have without being able to help doing so. But in a not insignificant range of cases we come to believe something by choosing, in light of what we are aware of, to believe it.
Precisely the same points I have made about the justification of action hold also for the justification of adopting a belief. For a fact to contribute to making me justified at a particular time in then adopting a certain belief, it is not necessary that it be part of what causes me to adopt the belief, but it is necessary that it be something in my field of awareness at that time so that it could induce me to adopt the belief should I be disposed to be influenced by it.

Suppose, for example, that S knows that (a) certain medical tests she has undergone indicate, with 95% reliability, that she has a certain serious and incurable disease. She then has a reason, a strong reason, to believe that she does in fact have the disease. But she also has a reason not to believe that she does, a non-evidentiary reason, namely, the extreme disagreeableness of such a belief. A person in such circumstances need not be compelled by either of these reasons, need not either believe she has the disease without being able to help so believing or withhold believing she has it without being able to help doing that. A person in such circumstances may be in a position to choose whether or not to believe she has the disease (and I suspect that this is the position many of us would in fact be in).

Now consider a person in such a position who knows that the test results are excellent evidence that she has the disease but who refuses to believe that she has it—she clings to the hope that she might be one of the 5% of false positives. She does this, that is, until she learns that the astrological signs indicate that she has acquired a serious disease, whereupon, having faith in astrology, she begins to believe that she has the disease. So the situation is that she would not believe she has a serious disease if she had only the good reason for doing so (the evidence of the medical tests), but she would believe this if she had only the bad reason (the astrological signs) for doing so. Thus, it is not for the good reason but only for the bad reason that she believes it; it because of her awareness of what the astrological signs say and not because of her awareness of the significance of the results of the medical tests that she believes it; it is solely the former that explains her believing it, the latter is not even part of the explanation. Nevertheless, the fact that she is aware that there is good reason for believing it justifies her in believing it: she could turn aside any suggestion that she in her current circumstances ought not to believe such a thing by citing that good reason she then has for believing it. Her being aware of a good reason for believing it justifies her in believing it, even though it played no part in inducing her to believe it.

There is, of course, something for which she can be faulted here, namely, her being willing to believe she has a serious disease even if she had only the bad reason; but that unjustified, reproach-worthy disposition is to be distinguished from her choosing to believe this in the actual circumstances, which is not reproachable, since those circumstances include her awareness of a perfectly good reason for believing it. (Some might say that she, or her rationality, should also be criticized for her not being willing to believe it if she had only the good reason, but I am less sure of that because the special depressing quality of this particular belief seems to me to have some weight as a rational consideration against adopting it.)

The fact of her awareness of the good reason for adopting the belief need not contribute to causing her to adopt it in order to contribute to making her then justified in doing so. But, as with the justification of action, it does need to be such that she could then have weighed it in her decision had she been of a mind not to believe unless justified, that is, it does need to be something to which she then had immediate access. The argument we gave for this claim in the case of action works as well in this case. Given that the field of awareness for X at time i is exactly the same as that for Y at time j, what X is justified in deciding to believe at time i must be exactly the same as what Y is justified in deciding to believe at time j. Nothing logically independent of the items in their fields of awareness can make a difference as to what beliefs they are then justified in adopting, as long as those items are all the same.

When a person adopts the belief that she will have time to mail her package before the post office closes, temporarily forgetting that today is a holiday, we should not say, Alston style, that what makes her unjustified in adopting that belief is the fact that she would recall that today is a holiday if she stopped to think (or would find out that it is if she made suitable inquiries). Rather, we should say that, if she ought not to have adopted the belief, it is because she was not aware of good reason to think that she would not bring to mind an obstacle if she were to stop and think (and she was not aware of any good reason to stop and think).

IV.

So the justification of voluntary adoption of belief is just like the justification of voluntary action in the two respects I am here concerned with. What about the justification of involuntary acquisition of belief?

Many belief acquisitions are involuntary. For instance, many of our beliefs as to what we currently perceive we acquire involuntarily. If I suddenly have an auditory experience as if hearing a loud explosion, that will, in ordinary circumstances, result immediately in my believing that I have heard a loud explosion without my having had any choice about whether, in light of that experience, to believe this. The experience immediately compels the belief. In the circumstances, I could not have helped being led to that belief by that experience. Of course, one can imagine non-ordinary circumstances where such an experience would not thus compel the belief, for example, the circumstance that I am aware that I have had recent auditory experiences as if hearing a loud explosion that have turned out to be illusions, so I hesitate before believing I have heard an explosion to consider whether this experience might not be of that illusory kind. But in normal circumstances, such an experience will leave us unable to refrain from acquiring the perceptual belief. Similar observations will hold for a great many of the perceptual beliefs we acquire in the ordinary course of experience: that I see or hear or feel this or that sort of object or event or situation.

Other sorts of beliefs are also acquired involuntarily. Extreme emotions—for example, of fear and panic, jealousy, love, or hate—may compel involuntary beliefs about the object of the emotion. Doubtless it is possible, at least in principle, that
drugs or special sorts of operations on a subject's brain could compel a subject to believe certain things.

Many of our fundamental beliefs in general propositions about how things work were early ingrained in us by our culture in such a way that we can hardly be said to have voluntarily adopted them. It is not clear either that there is much sense in saying that they were acquired involuntarily, insofar as there is no dateable event of their acquisition. And for those of our beliefs that are innate, "hardwired" into our minds, it is wrong to say that they were acquired, voluntarily or involuntarily. I will discuss innate beliefs and those gained through cultural indoctrination in the last section, which concerns justification of maintaining beliefs.

There is a sense in which any involuntary acquisition of a belief clearly is justified, i.e., not unjustified. The subject cannot be justly reproached or criticized for acquiring the belief—she cannot rightly be told that she ought not to have adopted the belief—if she could not help doing so. But there is another sense in which we may want to question whether the subject was justified in adopting the belief even while we realize that it was adopted involuntarily.

It is appropriate and typical to express this second question by asking whether adopting the belief was rationally justified. What we really have in mind in asking such a question could, I think, be less misleadingly, or less puzzlingly, expressed by the question, "If the subject had a choice about adopting this belief, would she have been justified in doing so?" Once we see that this is what is meant by such a question of justification about an involuntary acquisition of a belief, we see that it raises no new problems for the points I am concerned with in this paper. For the answer to this counterfactual conditional question, like the answer to the corresponding categorical question about a voluntary adoption of a belief, must be determined entirely by what the subject had immediate access to at the time in question. The question must be: would what was in the subject's field of awareness at the time have justified her in then adopting the belief if she had had any choice in the matter? For many involuntary beliefs, doubtless most of our ordinary perceptual beliefs that are involuntarily acquired, the answer to this question will be yes. For some involuntary beliefs, it will be no. Consider, for example, the sort of case where, because of his extreme hatred of B, A is unable to help believing the worst about B's motives in a certain action, even though A is aware of little or no evidence that would, on a disinterested view, support the derogatory belief; it is in this sort of case and for that sort of reason that we are apt to say that a person's involuntary belief was not rationally justified.

V.

Finally, let us consider the matter of being justified at a given time in then continuing to hold a belief one already has. The cases here can be divided into two sorts: the belief already possessed is, at the time under consideration, active in the person's conscious thinking and the person can be said to be then justified (or not) in then actively believing the thing in question; or the belief is not active at the time but only dispositional, but the person can nevertheless be said to be then justified in having the belief. Let's take the case of active belief first. For most instances of a belief that is active in a person's thinking at a given time it will not be the case that the person is just then adopting that belief. Rather it is a belief the person already possessed which is activated on the particular occasion. The person has for some time believed such-and-such but has not for all that time been actively thinking it; she breaks into actively thinking it as it becomes relevant to her current conscious operations. She is not then adopting the belief but rather continuing in it. And this can be either voluntary or involuntary: she can be either able or unable then to cease holding the belief.

Our two points are as cogent for such active continuing to believe as they are for adopting a belief. First, the facts making the person then justified in actively believing such-and-such, or that would justify her in this if she could help doing so, need not contribute to causing the person then to continue believing, need not be part of what then sustains the belief in the person. The example of S's adopting the belief that she has a certain serious and incurable disease can be adapted in an obvious way to make the point: on some later occasion S actively continues her belief that she has the disease; though her then remembering the test results does not help to cause her then continuing the belief (only her remembering what the astrological signs said does that), it does justify her in then continuing it.

Second, the facts essential to making a person justified at a given time in then actively continuing a belief (or that would make her justified if she could help doing so) must be ones in the person's field of awareness at the time. The argument we gave for this point in connection with the adoption of belief obviously applies as well here. Because "ought" implies "can," the facts that determine whether a person ought not at a given time to actively continue a belief must be facts to which the person then had immediate access, so that she could then take account of them in choosing whether to continue the belief or not.

We should note that there is an important way that the active holding of a belief already possessed can be justified that is not relevant to the adoption of a new belief. This is the subject's seeming to remember that she has come to know the thing in question. The person need not seem to remember how she came to know it, need not seem to remember what her original justification for the belief was, only that she did come to know it in some way or other. There are many cases where we are not currently aware of our original justification, or of anything that would justify us in now adopting the belief anew, but we are justified in actively continuing the belief by our current awareness of this sort of memory impression (together with the absence of awareness of any reason to doubt). This is true, for example, of much of what one knows about one's native language.

We should also note a special sort of case here where the subject is not only justified by being unable to give up the belief in question but also rationally justified by the fact that, even if she were able to give it up she would be justified in not doing so by the facts as to what she is and is not aware of: she is not aware of reason to give it up if she could and she is aware of significant reason for not giving it up even if she could. This condition might be satisfied by a belief where the pressure that renders
the subject unable to give it up, and also the reason not to give it up even if she could, comes from the weight of other beliefs in the subject's belief structure that this belief helps to support. Plausible candidates for beliefs of this sort might be, for instance, that the earth has existed for many years past, that solid objects do not go in and out of existence instantaneously, that bodily pains are usually caused by bodily disturbances, that other human beings have conscious minds like one's own. Such a belief might be innate or developed in such a way that there was never a point at which the person adopted it with justification, and it might be such that it does not seem to the subject that she remembers having come to know the thing in question but rather it seems to her that she has always believed it (or believed it for as long as she can remember). For many beliefs of this sort, the subject is aware of no incentive to give up the belief that compares with the incentive to keep it that is given by its 'hinge' status in the structure of her beliefs.  

Finally, let us consider the case of inactive, dispositional beliefs. These will comprise all but a few of the beliefs that a person has at any given time. Most of the things I believe are not things I am using in my current thinking, not things I am now consciously thinking to be so, not things I am now in any way aware of believing. Nevertheless I do currently believe these things; I do currently possess these beliefs, at least as dispositions to active belief should occasion arise.

What can we say about inactive, merely dispositional belief that will be consonant with our two points about active belief? Take the second, positive point first. Obviously, it would be wrong to say that the facts justifying an inactive belief at a given time must be ones then in the subject's field of awareness. When the belief is inactive and merely dispositional then so may be the justification. What it is appropriate to say is this: a dispositional belief that a person possessed at a given time was then justified only if it was connected to certain other dispositions in such a way that, had the belief then been activated (in a way that did not interfere with those connections), the belief would have then been justified in the way that active beliefs are justified, i.e., by a fact or facts which would then, upon activation of the belief, have been in the subject's field of awareness. (Typically, such a fact will be its seeming to her that she remembers that she learned the thing in question.)

On the first, negative point, we can say that, as long as this counterfactual conditional fact obtains, the person is justified in the dispositional belief, whether or not that fact contributes to sustaining it. For it will then be the case that, if the person were to consider the question whether she should give up the belief (if she could), she would be justified in thinking that she should maintain it. And that is surely sufficient for her to be justified in having the dispositional belief: she is, as it were, dispositionally justified in having it.  

ENDNOTES

1 Beliefs are not always acquired by voluntary adoption. I will explain later, in section IV, how my points apply to the involuntary acquisition of belief.

2 A set of facts is minimally sufficient for the truth of p if and only if the proposition that set of facts obtains—call this proposition m—entails p and any proposition entailing p that is weaker than m (i.e., is entailed by but does not entail m) is equivalent to some proposition of the form m or q. (It would not do for this definition to require merely that there is no proposition weaker than m that entails p, for this would not allow for the possibility that there is some other condition, not equivalent to m, that is also minimally sufficient for the truth of p.)

3 For instance, Alston (1987, pp. 1-2) treats the proposition I am denying as something to be taken for granted. Audi (1985) argues that reasons an agent has contribute to making her action rational only if they contribute to causing the action.

4 This is similar to an example in Audi (1985).

5 To see a desire or belief one has as a reason for acting in a certain way requires more conceptual sophistication than a dog, or probably even a chimpanzee, has, but not more than a normal four of five year old human child has. Being capable of seeing ones beliefs, desires, etc. as reasons for the actions or beliefs for which they

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are reasons strikes me as necessary for being one whose actions or beliefs can sensibly be appraised as justified or not.

6 To say that S declined for reason (b), because she believed that refereeing the paper would be unprofitable and disagreeable work, is to say that in declining S intended thereby to satisfy her desire to avoid this piece of unprofitable and disagreeable work. And this in turn (as Bratman 1987, pp. 155-160, suggests) is equivalent to saying that S was committed to satisfying that desire at least to the extent that she would have declined even if she had had no other reason to do so (if, for example, she came to think that refereeing the manuscript would not interfere with other worthy projects) or, if declining the invitation somehow threatened not to avoid this piece of disagreeable work, she would regard this as threatening to frustrate her intention and calling either for alternative plans to the same end or for abandoning the intention. By the same token, to say that S's declining was not because she believed (a) is to say that it is not the case that in declining she intended thereby to keep open the possibility of her doing the other worthy project, it is not the case that she was committed, in the ways described, to keeping that possibility open.


8 I am indebted to Susan Feagin for remarks that led me to the points made in this paragraph.

9 Ginet (1975), Ch. 3, Sec. 4; and Ginet (1983), Secs. III and IV.

10 Alston (1988, pp. 295-6, n. 18) suggests that in the statement that the subject would (or would not) be justified in adopting the belief if she'd had a choice, the counterfactual condition is so farfetched (he likens it to supposing we had voluntary control of the secretion of our gastric juices) that the statement cannot be interpreted straightforwardly but must be taken to express (if anything at all) an evaluation that would be less misleadingly expressed in quite different, non-normative terms (such as in terms of whether the belief would be beneficial or not). It seems to me, to the contrary, that the counterfactual condition is not anywhere near so outlandish. There are enough actual situations in which we do have a choice about what to believe (or at any rate it seems to us that we do) that we know quite well what this is like; and there is no reason to think it metaphysically impossible that the situation of the compelled believer should be the same as far as facts relevant to her justification are concerned but different in the respect that her belief is not compelled. The case seems to me to be analogous to one where we say of an action which the agent could not help doing (for example, a compulsive action) that it was irrational and imply thereby that, if the agent could have helped it, she would not have been justified in doing it.

11 In using the word "hinge" here I have in mind Wittgenstein's remark, in On Certainty 341, that "...the questions that we raise and our doubts depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn."