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A Tale of Two Doctrines

Moral Encroachment and Doxastic Wronging

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In this chapter, I argue that morality might bear on belief in *at least* two conceptually distinct ways. The first is that morality might bear on belief by bearing on questions of justification. The claim that it does is the doctrine of *moral encroachment*. The second is that morality might bear on belief given the central role belief plays in mediating, and thereby constituting, our relationships with one another. The claim that it does is the doctrine of *doxastic wronging*. Though conceptually distinct, the two doctrines overlap in important ways. This chapter provides clarification on the relationship between the two, providing reasons throughout that we should accept both.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, in section 1, I present and defend the doctrine of moral encroachment, demonstrating how it stems from commitments about the role of morality in justification. Second, in section 2, I present and defend the doctrine of doxastic wronging, demonstrating how it stems from commitments about the role of morality in forming our interpersonal relationships. In section 3, I end by discussing the relationship between the two, presenting views that occupy all positions in logical space: those that accept both moral encroachment and doxastic wronging, those that accept just one of these doctrines, and those that accept neither. Ultimately, I suggest, the combination is to be preferred.

1. Moral Encroachment

Moral encroachment is the view that moral considerations bear on the justification of belief. Critics of moral encroachment claim that moral considerations do not bear in any way on justification. Rather, justification involves only *purely epistemic*

(i.e. non-moral) considerations.[1] To answer the critic, arguments for moral encroachment must establish that moral considerations are necessary for the justification of at least some beliefs. So, let's see how that is to be done.

Belief aims at truth. However, often we get things wrong. Nonetheless, there are ways our beliefs can be better or worse, even when the truth of the matter eludes us, by being justified or unjustified. A traditional view of justification is evidentialism. According to evidentialism, what you should epistemically believe is a function of the evidence.[2] Although evidence cannot guarantee truth, it's the kind of thing that is *truth conducive* (i.e. it raises the likelihood of truth). For example, whether a drug is an effective treatment is not a matter settled by your particular interests or practical matters—for instance, stock prices or a desire for a quick cure. What would settle the matter is purely epistemic considerations. According to evidentialists, evidence, for example, of the effectiveness of the drug, is one such purely epistemic consideration. As a result, we arrive at what has often been called *purism* regarding justification and belief: that what you should epistemically believe is *solely* a function of the evidence.[3]

The purist decree to abide by only one's evidence makes belief formation impossible.[4] This is because the evidence alone underdetermines what one should believe. This has become widely known as the underdetermination problem. To see this, consider the following case:

Given the appearance of some distinctive dark, winged shapes, moving across my visual field, what should I believe? That visual evidence, joined with other factors, may license me to believe propositions such as:

(1) There are things moving through the air in front of me.
(2) There are birds flying in front of me.
(3) There are jackdaws flying in front of me.
(4) At least three jackdaws exist.

Which proposition I do believe will depend on, among other things: how my perceptual abilities have developed (e.g. have I learned to discriminate different

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[1] The two aims of this chapter make adopting terminology difficult. One aim is to elucidate how moral concepts and epistemic concepts come apart in theorizing about the demands of morality on belief. Seemingly at odds with this is the other aim of the chapter, which is to argue that the set of considerations picked out by moral and epistemic concepts might be one and the same. To keep ideas distinct, I do my best to flag where uses of concepts like 'justification' and 'epistemic' are to the exclusion of the moral or practical by insertion of "pure" or its cognates.

[2] See Feldman and Conee (1985) for the canonical statement of this view.

[3] This presentation of purism is simplified for the ease of exposition. Purism isn't a single thesis. The simplification adopted here is standard in many discussions of moral encroachment (see, e.g. Bolinger 2020). In what follows, I'll consider more sophisticated versions of purism in turn.

[4] Compare this to Antony's (2001, 2006, 2016) criticisms of Dragnet Objectivity. See also, Johnson (forthcoming) and Stanley (2016). Thanks to Gabbrielle Johnson for drawing my attention to these conceptual connections.

kinds of bird on the wing?); the background information I happen to have (e.g. do I know what a jackdaw is?); and my particular interests at that moment (e.g. what do I want to know or do now?).   (Nelson 2010, 87)

More is needed to determine whether you should believe (1), (2), (3), or (4). The evidence alone doesn't settle that question. Similarly, as Sarah Paul and Jennifer Morton (2018a, 2018b) have argued, from the view of purely epistemic consider-ations, there is not a uniquely best evidential policy to have. There are multiple evidential policies that are rationally permissible for a given thinker to have from the point of view of purely evidential considerations. Thus, one might think the more that is needed include moral and practical considerations. This is what Berislav Marušić and Stephen White (2018, 112) gesture at when they say, "if there is more than one epistemically legitimate route to belief, there is space for morality to do some work."

However, we can reject this naïve version of purism without adopting moral encroachment, i.e. the claim that moral considerations must bear on the justifica-tion of at least some beliefs. This is because we can avoid the underdetermination problem without giving up on the spirit of purism by bringing in additional non-evidential, but purely *epistemic* (e.g. truth-conducive) resources to determine what we may permissibly believe.[5]

This brings us to a more plausible version of purism, let's call it *purism**. According to purism*: what you should believe is a function of only purely epi-stemic considerations that may very well extend beyond the merely evidential but are crucially still neither moral nor practical.[6] For example, consider the relevant alternatives approach in epistemology.[7] Such a view has played an important role in explaining the grip that skepticism can have on us. Our evidence alone cannot settle skeptical worries because our evidence is consistent with the possibility that we are being radically deceived by a simulated reality (notice that this is a version of the underdetermination worry). In answering the skeptic, the relevant alterna-tive theorist's interest is in spelling out the epistemic grounds on which we can determine what relevant alternatives we may permissibly ignore to ensure that skeptical hypotheses are among them.

This view has recently been used by Georgi Gardiner (2018, forthcoming) to provide an alternative explanation of the cases that purport to establish moral

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[5] Thanks to Gabbrielle Johnson for raising this concern.

[6] This progression from purism to purism* has important structural similarities to progressions in thought about the value-free ideal in philosophy of science. The value-free ideal is often mistakenly regarded as the claim that values have no place in scientific inquiry. In actuality, the ideal allows that some virtues enter into scientific inference, so long as those virtues are epistemic, i.e. truth conducive. As Douglas (2016, 611), suggests, we should really regard it as the "epistemic-virtues-only-in-scientific-inference ideal." See Johnson (forthcoming) for discussion. And thanks to Gabbrielle Johnson for drawing my attention to these similarities.

[7] See, e.g. Dretske (1970); Stine (1976); Lewis (1996) among others.

encroachment. Insofar as relevant alternatives are taken to be determined by purely epistemic considerations, this view is a version of purism*. For reasons that follow, I think that even this even more sophisticated defense of the view fails to exclude moral considerations.

The case common to almost all accounts of moral encroachment centers on the Cosmos Club, where John Hope Franklin is mistaken for a staff member.[8] Of relevance to the case is that John Hope Franklin was the club's first black member and at the time, still only one of a handful of black members, whereas almost all of the club's staff members were black. Notice that given the demographics of the club, that someone is black makes it *very likely* that they are a staff member. Returning to the naïve version of *purism*, such demographic evidence alone would be sufficient to justify forming the belief that John Hope Franklin is a staff member. Proponents of moral encroachment, on the other hand, have denied that we should draw this conclusion on the basis of demographic evidence alone.[9] Rather, they claim that we must also take into consideration various moral and ethical features of this scenario. For example, we might take into consideration the moral implications of mistaking one of the few black club members for a staff member, a paradigmatically racist move.

Gardiner claims that this move from evidence alone being insufficient to the necessity of moral and ethical considerations is too quick. Again, a denial of purism does not entail moral encroachment because there are non-evidential epistemic considerations that can be brought to bear. For Gardiner, those non-evidential epistemic considerations include considerations of the relevant alternatives. By drawing on the relevant alternatives framework outlined above, she defends a version of purism* against moral encroachment. Her claim is that the feature in the case that explains the epistemic failure of the woman who mistakes John Hope Franklin for a staff member is her failure to consider a relevant alternative, namely, that John Hope Franklin is a club member. Truth, after all, renders an alternative relevant, as does whether the error possibility is a common source of error. Relevant alternatives, thus, are truth conducive because they tend us towards a more accurate understanding without appeal to moral considerations, and thus they are purely epistemic.

In order to defend moral encroachment against purism*, it is necessary to establish either that these epistemic considerations alone are (still) insufficient for settling what to believe, or that these epistemic considerations themselves are not

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[8] The original case is from Gendler (2011), but it features as the motivating case for various accounts of moral encroachment.

[9] Moral encroachment theorists differ on precisely what is objectionable in this case, i.e. whether it's the belief formation (Moss 2018a, 2018b) or whether it's the belief itself (Basu 2019a, 2019c). See Bolinger 2020 for an overview of the varieties of moral encroachment. What's important for the view as presented here is that morality bears on whether or not one's belief that John Hope Franklin is a staff member is a justified belief. Thanks to Brian Kim for pushing to be clear about this point.

purely epistemic. I intend to defend moral encroachment in each of these ways. To do so, it helps to turn to a parallel debate in philosophy of science concerning the value-free ideal.[10]

Just as we have been debating the role of ethical and moral considerations in settling the question of what to believe, philosophers of science have long debated the role of ethical and moral considerations in settling the question of which scientific hypothesis to accept. Philosophers of science similarly recognize that the problem of underdetermination necessitates the use of some extra-evidential considerations in settling these questions. However, their extra-evidential considerations come in the form of scientific virtues, for example virtues such simplicity, consistency, breadth, etc.[11] A version of purism* that emerges in this discussion claims that whatever virtues scientists adopt, they ought to be only virtues that are purely epistemic. This has become known as *the value-free ideal.*

Feminist philosophers of science have introduced two argumentative strategies against the value-free ideal. These include arguments from demarcation and arguments from inductive risk.[12] Borrowing and adapting for our purposes, I present versions of each to leverage moral encroachment over purism*.

First, a version of demarcation. Consider again Gardiner's relevant alternative framework and the claim that all that is needed to avoid epistemic error in cases like the Cosmos Club is to properly settle which relevant alternatives ought to be under consideration. A common way of determining whether an alternative is in fact relevant is whether it is a common source of error. The problem with this account, however, is that it neglects how common sources of error are themselves a reflection of moral features of our environment. For example, it is *not*, in the context of the Cosmos Club, a common source of error to mistake a black person as a staff member, because the case takes place in a time when racial discrimination at the club renders a black person more likely to be a staff member. The alternative, where a black person in the Cosmos Club is a club member, is remote enough to merit dismissing it as irrelevant.

The defender of the relevant alternatives will likely respond that the possibility that John Hope Franklin is not a staff member achieves the status of being among the relevant alternatives simply by dint of being true.[13] A problem with

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[10] Much of framing here is inspired by discussions with Gabbrielle Johnson, who pointed me to the similarities between the two traditions and echoes analoguous points in Johnson (forthcoming).

[11] See Kuhn (1977); Douglas (2016); and Johnson (forthcoming).

[12] Prominent instances of the first are presented in Longino (1995, 1996), whereas prominent instances of the second are presented in Douglas (2000, 2003). Again, see Douglas (2016) and Johnson (forthcoming) for further discussion.

[13] But notice how little this response does to help us with our initial problem of skepticism that relevant alternatives were supposed to answer. If the fact that the error possibility obtained renders it relevant, then as the skeptic likes to warn us, we can't rule out that the error possibility that we're all being radically deceived obtains. Thus, by the skeptic's light, it's always a relevant alternative that you might be a brain in a vat.

this approach is its inefficacy in an equally problematic case in which it is true that John Hope Franklin is a staff member. Surely, we would still want the alternative that he is a club member to be among the relevant alternatives under consideration. This is due to our moral considerations of the case, namely that it would be racist to not consider that alternative. Thus, we see morality playing a role in determining what the relevant alternatives are, as well as being reflected in the common sources of error we're meant to avoid.[14] This demonstrates the demarcation argument because it demonstrates the impossibility of teasing apart these extra-evidential considerations from the moral values that they result from and reflect.[15]

Second, an argumentative strategy using a version of inductive risk. This argument against purism* again adopts the strategy of claiming that extra-evidential epistemic considerations alone are insufficient for settling the question of whether to believe *p*. The general spirit of this argument claims that we are limited agents for whom uncertainty is inevitable. The risk of being wrong is ineliminable, and given this risk, morality must enter into our epistemic deliberations regarding whether the risk is worth it.

This argument has a historic precursor in Richard Rudner. In his seminal paper, "The Scientist qua Scientist Makes Value Judgements", he notes that "our decision regarding the evidence and respecting how strong is 'strong enough', is going to be a function of the *importance*, in the typically ethical sense, of making a mistake in accepting or rejecting the hypothesis."[16] Rudner gives the example of requiring a relativity high degree of confirmation or confidence with regard to the safety of a drug containing a lethal ingredient versus the not-as-high level of confirmation or confidence required for whether a machine stamping belt buckles is defective. The relevant difference between the two cases is, of course, the grave moral consequences of getting wrong the drug dosage and the relatively light moral consequences of getting wrong the defectiveness of the machine. Inductive risk arguments have likewise been iterated in the literature on pragmatic encroachment.[17] Proponents of pragmatic encroachment, like their moral counterparts,

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[14] See Johnson (forthcoming) for this interpretation of Longino's (1995, 1996) demarcation argument, namely that epistemic considerations are unwitting value proxies.

[15] There could be additional ways—beyond common sources of error and truth—to establish the relevant alternative that John Hope Franklin is a club member, e.g. Lewis's rule of salience. What I suspect, though I don't have room to argue for here, is that any such rule that attempts to make this case while excluding the moral considerations will fail to make good on what I take to be an independent claim about the case: that the best explanation for why John Hope Franklin is a club member is a relevant alternative, even in cases where he's not, is that it'd be racist to ignore this alternative. Thanks to Brian Kim for raising this objection.

[16] Rudner (1953, 2), emphasis in original.

[17] See, e.g. Fantl and McGrath 2002, 2009; Stanley 2005; Schroeder 2012; Ross and Schroeder 2014, among others. To the best of my knowledge, Kukla (2015) is the first to point out the similarities between discussions of inductive risk in philosophy of science and pragmatic encroachment. See also Stanley (2016). Thanks again to Gabbrielle Johnson for drawing my attention to the connections between these traditions.

aim to establish that epistemic considerations alone are insufficient to establish knowledge, justification, epistemic rationality, etc. Pragmatic encroachers argue, unsurprisingly, that what is missing is the need to attend to various practical considerations before such epistemic matters can be settled. Moral encroachment extends the argument to include moral considerations.[18] Notice, however, that Rudner's original case is one lobbying for moral considerations, not mere practical ones.[19] So, the original argument from inductive risk is an argument for moral encroachment.

In addition to this sort of argument, there are two further moral risks to consider. The aforementioned inductive risk argument alone is enough to undermine purism* and instead establish moral encroachment as a general thesis. I end this section by noting the diversity of moral considerations that might enter into the evaluation of inductive risk and thereby lead to different varieties of moral encroachment.[20]

An area of exploration that I find particularly intriguing are possible forms of inductive risk arguments in the realm of belief that have been obfuscated by the discipline's focus on the scientific context and its pragmatic analogues. Particularly, heretofore theories of inductive risk have focused naturally on the risk of drawing *false* conclusions, of getting things wrong. An unexplored kind of inductive risk that I conjecture we ought also to consider is that which comes from *getting things right*.

I'm not confident that such cases where risk stems from accuracy are possible, but here I'd like to briefly explore the possibility by discussing violations of privacy that occur when we infelicitously form true beliefs about others.[21]

What is the right to privacy? As Judith Jarvis Thomson (1975, 295) notes, "[p]erhaps the most striking thing about the right to privacy is that nobody seems to have any very clear idea what it is." As she goes on to note, despite the fact that nobody seems to have a clear idea of what the right to privacy is, we nonetheless have strong intuitions about cases in which we'd say a right to privacy has been violated. Consider a standard case of privacy violation: someone breaking into your house and not only stealing your TV, but sticking around to rummage through your personal belongings, read through your love letters, scroll through

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[18] It is not obvious why this construal of moral encroachment is at odds with sophisticated invariantist frameworks that require a higher grade of knowledge for actions with high stakes. See, e.g. Reed (2010). So long as high-stakes scenarios can be determined in part by moral considerations, the invariant framework seems congenial to the approach advocated for here. Unfortunately, a comprehensive comparison of the two approaches is beyond the scope of this discussion, but thanks to Jennifer Lackey for pressing me to think about the relationship between the two.

[19] I'm forced to omit discussion of a variety of purist responses to this line of thought. For a prominent response to Rudner, see Levi (1960).

[20] For instance, I and others have elsewhere made the argument that perpetuating injustice is one such consideration. See Bolinger (2020) for a survey of the varieties of moral encroachment.

[21] See also Hunter (2018).

your search history, etc. As Thomson (1975, 299) notes, "the burglar's merely looking around in that way might make the episode feel worse than it otherwise would have done." There is something about another person attending to these private things about us that makes the rights violation indisputable.

That the burglar's coming to know these facts about you constitutes a violation of privacy makes clear that we run at least some risk in coming to believe facts about others. Just as we keep our love letters hidden away, we keep parts of ourselves hidden away from others.[22] In other words, we would prefer that others do not form true beliefs with regard to these private affairs. In fact, I believe that we run this risk merely in forming true beliefs about others, irrespective of whether we ourselves took the prying steps necessary for the unsanctioned release of that information. To see this, consider the case of doxing.[23] Doxing, as David Douglas (2016, 199) notes, "is the intentional public release onto the Internet of personal information about an individual by a third party, often with the intent to humiliate, threaten, intimidate, or punish the identified individual." Doxing is often done for a variety of motives, ranging from the desire to expose wrongdoing to cyber stalking and harassment. Key to doxing is that it makes private information about the person public. As Douglas notes, when a victim is doxed, merely entering the victim's name into a search engine may end up revealing the victim's private details. Part of the harm of doxing is the kind of epistemic terror that is inflicted on the victim of the doxing, thus risk of the privacy violation is irreducibly intertwined with moral consequence. This consequence follows regardless of whether the searcher was the doxer. It does not obviously follow, however, if the information gleaned is false. Thus, weirdly, it seems the non-doxer runs an inductive risk in *getting things right*, not wrong. This, I maintain, is a risk that one needs to take into consideration when deliberating about whether to believe p.[24]

To recap, we've responded to the main obstacle to moral encroachment by demonstrating challenges that neither purism nor purism* can overcome unless they grant that moral considerations must bear on the justification of at least some beliefs. First, we saw the impossibility of teasing apart extra-evidential

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[22] Similarly, on Marmor's (2015) explanation of the right to privacy, he notes that we have an interest in shaping and/or controlling how we appear to others. Thanks to Renée Bolinger for discussion on this point. Furthermore, there is a connection here to Dembroff and Saint-Croix's (2019) work on agential identity and the interests we have that other people respect our identity, which I will return to in the discussion of holding in section 2.

[23] Thanks to Amy Flowerree for suggesting this case. Examples such as these begin to broach cases of doxastic wronging. For instance, in discussion Cat Saint-Croix suggested that the right to be forgotten would be an example of a right to privacy that concerns what other people think of you. Another example might be the right to be known, as discussed by Jennifer Lackey (in progress).

[24] As Brian Kim has pointed out to me, there are many ways we can mess up here and not all of them have to do with belief formation. As I've argued, you can go wrong by forming the true belief, but you can also go wrong by making information available, thereby making it possible for others to form justified true beliefs. One can also go wrong by making certain inquiries or questions salient to oneself and others. In Basu (in progress), I suggest that this last wrong is one that philosophers are particularly susceptible to when theorizing about others.

considerations from the moral values that they result from and reflect. Second, we discussed a variety of types of moral consideration that get into evaluations of inductive risk: that forming some belief might eventuate in bodily harm to others, that we might perpetuate patterns of injustice, that we might violate a person's privacy, etc. On the face of it, I see no reason to regard these as rivals. I don't believe that there's only one kind of moral consideration that should go into the evaluation of inductive risk.[25] Ultimately, the question of what moral considerations matter will be settled by first-order moral theories. For example, if one held a first-order moral theory that hypothesized that beliefs themselves could be wrong in various ways, this would be one sort of consideration that likely gets in. This is precisely the theory of doxastic wronging, which I turn to next.

2. Doxastic Wronging

In section 1, we explored the extent to which morality bears on belief in virtue of belief's constitutive aim of truth. Aiming at truth led us to justification, and in justification, we saw the need for morality. In this section of the chapter, I want to set aside issues of justification to highlight another conceptually distinct avenue by which morality bears on belief.

Although it's right that beliefs aim at truth, they do so only in virtue of having intentional content that represents the world as being a certain way. This content provides a perspectival mode of presentation that mediates our relations to the external environment. This mediation is central to Frank Ramsey's (1929 (1990), 146) idea that beliefs subserve the function of navigation: they are the "map by which we steer." Not only do beliefs about the arrangement of space around us allow us to navigate the world more generally, so too do beliefs about people help us to navigate our *social* world. It is in virtue of belief's *committing* us to this content—content that represents, in the case of beliefs about another person, perspectival claims about that individual's status in the world—that I conjecture solidifies belief's moral standing. By mediating our interpersonal relations to others, our beliefs about others bear moral weight. Doxastic wronging is the thesis that beliefs, in virtue of this standing, can sometimes themselves be the source of moral wrongdoing.

Consider Grace, from the hit Netflix show, *Grace and Frankie*. During an interview, Grace reveals some beliefs she holds about her daughters, Brianna and

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[25]   Some discussions of moral encroachment countenance only one kind of moral risk. Sarah Moss's (2018a, 2018b) account of moral encroachment is motivated by the risks of beliefs, and she doesn't think that moral encroachment can be properly motivated from the costs of the belief itself. I believe this erroneously gives the impression that moral encroachment comes in just one flavor. I myself have intimated as much by discussing doxastic wronging to the exclusion of other morally relevant considerations in Basu (2019a). I regret not being more careful. For careful discussion, see Bolinger (2020).

Mallory. She believes Brianna has run the family company into the ground; she also neither believes that Mallory is the smart daughter nor that she has made good use of her degree (that Grace paid for). Later, as her daughters pack up their desks, Grace is confused by why her daughters are upset with her but is willing to apologize for having said what she did. As Mallory naturally points out, "It's not that you said all those terrible things, it's that you actually believed them." Here Mallory makes clear an overwhelmingly intuitive point: the source of the wronging is not in what was said, but in the belief itself.

This exchange demonstrates three hallmarks of doxastic wronging: (1) doxastic wrongs are directed; (2) doxastic wrongs are committed by beliefs rather than the consequences of acting on a belief; and (3) doxastic wrongs are wrongs in virtue of the content of what is believed.[26] Grace's belief demonstrates all three of these features. First, her belief is directed: that is, she doesn't merely do wrong, she does wrong to her daughters. Second, the wrong she commits is one of belief, not of word or deed. Third, and perhaps most fundamentally, the wrong she commits is a wrong in virtue of the content of what she believes.

Elaborating on these in reverse order, I again take it that a belief's having the representational content that it does is essential to its moral standing (hallmark 3). The content represents her daughters as standing in a particular relation to the properties she attributes to them. For example, her belief about Brianna relates Brianna to attributes like being a bad CEO. Naturally, her daughters have a legitimate complaint about the picture that content paints of them. There are many features that factor into whether complaints on beliefs are legitimate that I will go on to elaborate, but for now, I take Brianna and Mallory's case to be an uncontroversial one.

However, beliefs are constituted not only by representational content, but also in placing the bearers of those beliefs in a particular relation to that content, namely one of committing to its being true (hallmark 2). Propositional attitudes involve both propositions (representational contents) and attitudes (relations to the contents). Beliefs are committal mental states; they involve committing the subject to the truth of the representational content. This is why beliefs can wrong: the representational content, together with that commitment, constitute a wrong in the belief itself, and not in any particular consequences that come from the belief. For example, if Grace merely said the relevant propositions, but wasn't committed to the content's being true (perhaps she thought lying would save the company), presumably her daughters would rightly feel differently. They might be upset that she lied, and suspicious of why she chose those particular lies, but these would be different complaints. Moreover, if she held a different attitude towards

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[26] For an introduction to these hallmarks, see Basu and Schroeder (2019, 181). There, Schroeder and I enumerate the hallmarks. However, the analysis to follow is novel and illustrates the extent to which my views on the subject have evolved. Thanks to Gabbrielle Johnson for many insights central to this analysis.

the relevant proposition, for example, if she doubted or denied or feared the way the content represented her daughters, it seems that there would be no complaint at all.[27] Thus, it's in the belief itself—that her mother was committed to the particular content that she was—that her daughters were wronged.[28]

And finally, it is with respect to belief's being directed at others, and thereby, how beliefs relate us to others, that we are at greatest risk of wronging (hallmark 1). Let me turn to that now. As Rae Langton (1992, 486) notes,

> We don't simply observe people as we might observe planets, we don't simply treat them as things to be sought out when they can be of use to us, and avoid when they are a nuisance. We are, as Strawson says, involved.

In short, when it comes to people, there's a different way of going about things. Further, this different way of going about things concerns not only how we treat them through our actions or our words, but also how we consider them in thought. As Marušić and White (2018, 100) have similarly argued, when it comes to persons, the core Kantian idea that underpins the idea of the categorical imperative is the following: "that our way of relating to people is categorically different from our way of relating to objects." Persons, as ends-in-themselves, are not to be regarded or related to in the same way one relates to objects.

Once you accept this general intuition, you might begin to wonder how we can capture this different way in which we ought to relate to others. As I've argued previously (see Basu 2019b), this *being involved* that Langton attributes to Strawson (1962) is the recognition that others' attitudes and intentions towards us are important in a way that's distinctive to the kind of things that we are, and that our treatment of others should reflect that importance. We are, each of us, in virtue of being social beings, vulnerable, and we depend upon others for our self-esteem and self-respect. Respect and esteem, however, are not mere matters of how we're treated in word or deed, but also a matter of how we're treated in thought. The implication of this (quite minimal) Kantian and Strawsonian picture is that people should figure in both our theoretical and practical reasoning in a way that is different from objects.[29] We care how we feature in the thoughts of

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[27] The relationship between attitude, content, and doxastic wronging is complex. I discuss these points briefly at the end of the chapter, but ultimately leave the project of working out the complexities for future work (see n. 32).

[28] I have elsewhere provided extensive arguments against the view that the wrong lies in the risk of acting on the belief (see Basu 2019a, 2019c).

[29] I say "quite minimal" here because you don't need to be a fully fledged Kantian to accept this picture; all you must accept is that people are different from mere objects and whatever it is that makes them different requires treating people differently from mere things. Even a consequentialist would accept this characterization of persons and our obligations to them, but perhaps they would extend it wider to anything capable of happiness or pain and say that those things should be treated differently than things that do not experience happiness or pain.

other people and we want to be regarded in their thoughts in *the right way*; that is, doxastic wrongs are failures to regard people in the right way.

Another way of capturing belief's role in mediating our relations to others that I quite like is found in Hilde Lindemann's (2016) discussion of *holding*. Lindemann argues that given the kind of things that we are, there is a general moral obligation of *holding others in personhood* that extends to the attitudes we hold of one another. I take it that we can understand some doxastic wrongs as stemming from holding failures. The centerpiece of Lindemann's theory of holding is that our identities are pieces of narrative construction that are constituted in part by others' beliefs about us (as well as our beliefs about ourselves), and thus, we fundamentally depend on others. Holding, when done well, "supports an individual in the creation and maintenance of a personal identity that allows her to flourish personally and in her interactions with others."[30] Holding, when done badly, can be destructive. Doxastic wronging, then, captures the harmful or defective narratives that result in our beliefs concerning others.

Thus, given the kind of thing that we are, there is a moral obligation to hold others well. The point I wish to emphasize here is that we have *both* a moral and a doxastic responsibility of holding one another. It matters how we hold others in our thought. The beliefs we have, after all, are constitutive of our relationships. This is made obvious by the role our beliefs play in contributing to the narratives of others. And as I've begun to argue in some new work, this is especially so in cases of parent–child relationships, like that of Grace and her daughters.[31] When Grace thinks that Mallory isn't the smart one or that Mallory has never done anything useful with her degree, Grace is neither creating nor maintaining a personal identity that would allow Mallory to flourish. We are especially vulnerable to our parents in this way. And, as I noted earlier, we are, each of us, in virtue of being social beings, vulnerable in our dependence on others for our self-esteem and self-respect.

In a manner similar to the Kantian and Strawsonian picture I have been outlining, Lindemann suggests that "[w]e can think of requirements and prohibitions of this sort as falling under the general heading of an impersonally authoritative obligation to treat persons in a manner consonant with their value."[32] Consider Lindemann's example of W. Elliott's experience as a medical student. Elliot receives advice from a doctor who refers to one of his patients as "a plant", and

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[30] Lindemann (2016, x).

[31] As I discuss in Basu (in progress), the first hallmark of doxastic wronging provides resources for a view on which different relationships to others might result in different moral demands of the states themselves. There is something about relationships, especially our close relationships, that makes them a particularly rich space for all kinds of *attitudinal* wrongs more generally. However, it is unclear whether it is the closeness of the relationship that affects the degree to which we're wronged, or whether it is the relationships themselves that change the *kinds* of wrongs that can be inflicted. I cannot say anything to resolve this thorny issue at this time, but I leave it to explore in future work.

[32] Lindemann (2016, 23–4).

who claims Elliot's job is to make sure "the plant" is watered. As Lindemann notes, this is no way to treat a person. The patient is likely incapable of recognizing that the doctor is referring to her in that dehumanizing way. But, crucially, what wrongs her is to be thought of in this way, "because it pushes her outside the human community."[33]

In sum, if our identities are narratively constituted through our interactions (belief, word, actions, all of it) with others, it follows that there is a moral obligation to hold others well.[34] To reiterate, I take it that we can understand some doxastic wrongs as stemming from holding failures. Holding failures bear the three hallmarks of doxastic wrongs. First, holding failures are directed. Second, the failure is committed by the belief itself, not the consequences of the belief in action. Third, the failure is wrong in virtue of what is believed; that is, the patient has a legitimate complaint about the picture that content—the content that represents her as non-human, as a plant—paints of her. Ultimately, what these examples demonstrate is that we owe people more care in thought.

3. The Relationship between Moral Encroachment and Doxastic Wronging

At this point, I've explained two conceptually distinct ways in which morality might bear on belief. The first is that morality might bear on belief by bearing on questions of justification. The claim that it in fact does is moral encroachment. The second is that morality might bear on belief given the central role belief plays in mediating, and thereby constituting, our relationships with one another. The claim that it in fact does is doxastic wronging. Though conceptually distinct, the two overlap in important ways. I take it that it is within this overlap that confusions about the relationship between the two doctrines have emerged.

Overlap between the two doctrines occurs because moral encroachment opens the door for first-order moral theories to play a role in justification. Because doxastic wronging is a first-order moral theory about the nature of wrongdoing via belief, it naturally is a candidate for the kind of consideration that bears on justification. In other words, if you hold moral encroachment and you hold doxastic wronging, then you believe that doxastic wrongs bear on the evaluation of justification for belief.[35] Alternative to the combination of the two views, one could

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[33] ibid.

[34] There are likely limitations on holding; for instance, there are likely some narrative identities that we shouldn't engage in this kind of holding with respect to. For more on this point, see Dembroff and Saint-Croix (2019), in particular 589–92. One might wonder to what extent it is necessary to take on the heavyweight metaphysical claims about identity here. Although I'm sympathetic to the identity-constituting narrative picture, I expect it is enough merely that these narratives exist and we are invested in them. Thanks to Maegan Fairchild for raising this question.

[35] This is what I argue in Basu (2019a).

hold either moral encroachment or doxastic wronging, but not both. For example, you might think moral encroachment is right for reasons provided by Rudner, but since doxastic wronging is not among your first-order moral theories, the sorts of moral considerations that enter into evaluations of justification will be limited to traditional first-order moral considerations, for example, allegiances to consequentialism (as Rudner himself adopts). Likewise, you might think doxastic wronging is right for reasons provided in section 2, but deny moral encroachment, and thereby think that questions of justification will be limited to traditional epistemic considerations, for example, traditional allegiances to purism (or purism*). And, of course, you might reject both theses, in which case you will think questions of both justification and interpersonal relations can be settled without reference to how morality bears on belief at all.

To get clear on these distinctions, it will help to discuss an oft-cited criticism of the combination of the two views. This is the redundancy objection. This objection has been put in several different ways.[36] Here's one way to put the objection: Marušić and White (2018, 99) argue that these considerations regarding adjustments of one's evidential threshold as suggested by moral encroachment don't seem sufficient to fully address what is morally significant about the case motivating moral encroachment. Thus, we're left with the following question: "[w]hat normative work is morality left to do if it is conceived of as merely a derivative of the epistemic permissions and prohibitions?"

By keeping doxastic wronging and moral encroachment separate, we can make clear that when you meet the higher evidential threshold in morally risky cases you may be epistemically, but not morally, off the hook. For example, if we consider Rudner's scientist again, the moral risks of killing lots of people set the bar for confirmation or confidence extremely high. And we can imagine the case playing out in one of two ways. First, the drug doesn't kill anyone and obviously no moral wrong is done. Alternatively, the drug kills a lot of people. What do we want to say in this case? It seems odd to say that no moral wrong is done; after all, people have died. Perhaps what we want to say is that the scientists did all that they could epistemically, thus they are epistemically off the hook, but not morally.

Note that the same applies in cases where we combine moral encroachment and doxastic wronging. The complicating feature of these cases, however, is that it is in the formation of the belief itself that we run a risk of wronging. No matter how complicating this feature is, it seems to me that doesn't change what we want to say. Moral encroachment demands only that we do our best epistemically by adjusting our evidential thresholds according to moral considerations. Moral

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[36] See, e.g. Begby (2018) and Gardiner (2018), who notice this point when they argue that if a belief is genuinely wrong, then the moral questions shouldn't disappear after the question of justification is settled. This is right. Once we make clear that doxastic wronging and moral encroachment are conceptually distinct theses, it's obvious that doxastic wrongs don't reduce to failures to take into account moral considerations when evaluating justification.

encroachment does not exonerate any and all wrongdoing that comes to fruition when we believe, even if we've properly adjusted our evidential thresholds. Once we're clear about the difference between the two kinds of moral constraints on belief, and where they intervene on our doxastic lives, then the redundancy worry dissolves.[37]

Failing to keep these distinct can result in the kind of problem that Osborne (forthcoming, 5) notes, when he suggests that some versions of moral encroachment result in "our ultimate doxastic obligation [being] to our evidence." It's true that our ultimate epistemic-doxastic obligation is to our evidence, properly adjusted in light of moral considerations, but our ultimate moral-doxastic obligations exist independently.

By keeping these two doctrines separate, we can also demonstrate how there are prominent views that already accept one doctrine, while rejecting the other. Doxastic partiality views seem to me to push us to accepting doxastic wronging while rejecting moral encroachment. For example, Sarah Stroud (2006) and Simon Keller (2004) argue that we have special responsibilities to our friends that require a kind of doxastic partiality; that is, we should not be neutral with regard to how we respond to evidence about our friends. But note that this non-neutrality doesn't entail moral encroachment. For Stroud and Keller, these aren't questions of justification, since they occur after justification has been settled (in the traditional, purist sort of way).

Similarly, Berislav Marušić (2015) argues that when it comes to beliefs about what we will do in the future, the stance we take to such beliefs is importantly different from the stance we take towards other beliefs. When it comes to what you will do in the future, you should believe against the evidence because whether you succeed is up to you. In this way, his view is similar to Stroud and Keller. Further, those who are partial to us, such as our friends, lovers, our spouse, etc. would be wronging us if they didn't also believe against the evidence. In virtue of being close to you, they should exhibit a similar kind of doxastic partiality.

In fact, Marušić takes it a step further by noting cases where it would be wrong to even be attending to these questions of evidence, evidential weight, justification, etc. To illustrate one such case, imagine that you are standing at the altar and are about to make your wedding vows. These vows include the promise to spend the rest of your life with your spouse-to-be. However, let's suppose that the best evidence there is suggests that 50 per cent of marriages end in divorce.[38] That puts your odds of spending the rest of your life with your spouse-to-be at chance. You've no reason to think you two are any different from any other couple that has stood where you now stand. You have no previous track record of marriage from which to draw on either. You are in every way just plain ordinary. So, now

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[37] Thanks to Maegan Fairchild for helping me get clear on this point.
[38] This statistic is outdated, but let's assume it for the purpose of this example.

what should you do and what should you believe? Can you make a sincere promise to your spouse-to-be that you'll spend the rest of your life with them? As Marušić notes, in such a case it'd be somewhat perverse to say, "I'll be with you the rest of my life, but there is a significant chance I won't," even though saying that does reflect the weight of your evidence. Here, what morality demands is not only that you believe, but also that you disregard the evidence entirely. To say what you need to say in this case—that you will spend the rest of your life with them and only them—requires believing against the evidence.

Because doxastic wronging can't be reduced to moral encroachment, nor vice versa, one risk of accepting doxastic wronging (whether or not you accept moral encroachment) is that we are potentially led to cases of conflict between the moral and the epistemic. This is natural because, as I've outlined, there are two sources of demands on belief. One is justification, the other (in accepting doxastic wronging) is morality. Crucially, because these are distinct, the demands can pull in different directions. How worried about this should we be? According to Jennifer Saul, at least somewhat. As she notes, accounts that pit morality against epistemic rationality fit "exceptionally well with the right-wing narratives of politically correct thought-police attempting to prevent people from facing up to difficult truths; and of the over-emotional left, which really needs to be corrected by the sound common sense of the right. Anything that props up these narratives runs the risk of working against the cause of social justice."[39] That is, it seems a bad consequence of a view if, say, opposition to racism (what is morally required) leads one into epistemic irrationality.[40]

I think that the worry can be mitigated by adopting moral encroachment. What Saul's quote demands is coordination between the moral and the epistemic, which is what moral encroachment provides. After all, having adequate justification is justification properly responsive to moral stakes. That being so epistemically responsive could nonetheless result in a moral wrong occurring is a possibility. But I don't find this worrisome. We constantly have to choose between many conflicting demands. As Keller (2018, 34) notes, "the demands of human life are varied and conflicting, and the standards that apply to belief formation are varied and conflicting too."[41]

In closing, I want to make some exploratory remarks about other ways the two doctrines can be pulled apart. That we can have cases of moral encroachment that don't include doxastic wronging at all is evident. That we can have cases of doxastic wronging that don't include moral encroachment is less evident.

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[39] Saul (2018, 238–9). For further defense of the no-conflict view that I'm now walking back, see Basu (2020).

[40] This is the central puzzle in Basu (2019c).

[41] See also Burge's (2003, 509–10) discussion of the independence of various functional norms on belief formation, e.g. to aim at truth, to guide behavior, and to contribute to survival.

Is there any token belief that triggers the demands of doxastic wronging, but not moral encroachment? It seems to me that if we accept both doctrines, then any token belief that runs the risk of doxastic wronging (notably, a belief about others) will trigger the demands of moral encroachment. I take it that doxastic wronging is a broader thesis than moral encroachment because there are doxastic states that aren't within the purview of theories of justification. Thus, it stands to reason that we can pull the two apart in a particular case by considering these sorts of doxastic states.

Recall the three hallmarks of doxastic wronging: (1) doxastic wrongs are directed; (2) doxastic wrongs are committed by beliefs, rather than the consequences of acting on a belief; and (3) doxastic wrongs are wrongs in virtue of the content of what is believed. Notice that all three of these hallmarks leave open that other mental states might fall under doxastic wronging. Belief is a committal mental state, but so are other mental states, for example, perception and, loosely, desire. This has prompted me to begin to explore whether the concept of doxastic wrongs extends to these other kinds of states. Initially, it seems to me plausible that it does. Focusing first on desire, a mother's desire that her gay daughter marry a man seems to me to exhibit the same features that resulted in wronging in the belief case. Her desire has a particular problematic representational content (hallmark 3) and puts the mother in a committal relation to that content, namely to its becoming true (hallmark 2). It also seems to meet hallmark 1 by being directed at her daughter, and thereby contributing to a destructive narrative.

Further, we again see reason to keep doxastic wronging and moral encroachment distinct. Moral encroachment wouldn't be relevant in these further cases of doxastic wronging because other mental states such as perceptions and desires don't function to be justified by the evidence at all. That is, morality can't bear on the justification of these states because justification itself arguably doesn't apply to these states. In summary, moral encroachment and doxastic wronging are not only conceptually distinct views, but also views that plausibly apply independently to token psychological state formation.[42]

Hopefully, what I've done is clarified the relationship between two doctrines in order to demonstrate the two distinct ways that morality might come to bear on belief. The first, concerning justification, leads us to moral encroachment. The second, concerning belief's role in our interpersonal relationships, leads us to doxastic wronging. With this, I maintain what I've said in previous work: when it comes to what we should believe, morality's got bite. What I've failed to elucidate up to this point is the extent to which that bite is multifaceted and nuanced. To provide a complete catalogue of the intersections of morality and belief would

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[42] That is, at least not in the ordinary way assumed in discussions of justification. Though see Siegel (2015) and Jenkin (2020) for views that explore the applicability of epistemic justification to these other mental states.

extend well beyond the current corpus. But what I hope to have made the case for here is just how thoroughly morality permeates our lives, including aspects of which we initially believed to be beyond its purview. It might be daunting to consider just how many demands morality makes on us, but a brief glimpse at the world should suggest that maybe we're undercounting the wrongs of which we're capable.

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