Please quote the published version
Grodniewicz, J. P. (2022). The justification of comprehension-based beliefs. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, *13*(1), 109–126. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13164-021-00575-0

The justification of comprehension-based beliefs

J.P. Grodniewicz
(j.grodniewicz@gmail.com)

Abstract

What justifies our beliefs about what other people say (henceforth, *comprehension-based beliefs*)? According to *epistemic inferentialism*, the justification of comprehension-based beliefs depends on the justification of other beliefs, e.g., beliefs about what words the speaker uttered or even what sounds they produced. According to *epistemic non-inferentialism*, the justification of comprehension-based beliefs does not depend on the justification of other beliefs. This paper offers a new defense of epistemic non-inferentialism. First, I discuss three counterexamples to epistemic non-inferentialism provided recently by Brendan Balcerak Jackson (2019) ("Against the perceptual model of utterance comprehension", *Philosophical Studies* 176:387–405). I argue that only one of Balcerak Jackson's counterexamples is effective, and that it is effective against only one version of epistemic non-inferentialism, viz. *language comprehension dogmatism*. Second, I propose an alternative version of epistemic non-inferentialism, viz. *comprehension-process reliabilism,* which is immune to these counterexamples. I conclude that we should follow Balcerak Jackson in his rejection of language comprehension dogmatism but not all the way to the endorsement of epistemic inferentialism. Comprehension-process reliabilism is superior to both these alternatives.

Keywords: language comprehension, immediate justification, phenomenal conservatism, process reliabilism, etiological function, defeaters

1. Introduction

My friend Ruth and I have a chat over coffee. Thanks to my ability to understand what Ruth says, during our conversation I acquire two types of beliefs. First, I acquire beliefs that Ruth said so and so, e.g., that Ruth said that it's a full moon tonight. Let us call them *comprehension-based beliefs.* Second, I acquire beliefs about the world based on the things that Ruth asserted, e.g., that it's a full moon tonight. Let us call the second type of beliefs *testimony-based beliefs*. This paper is devoted to comprehension-based beliefs; more specifically, to the issue of their justification.[1]

A view about comprehension-based beliefs which has attracted considerable attention in the recent philosophical literature is the so-called *perceptual model* (cf. Fricker 2003; Pettit 2010; Brogaard 2018, 2019). It is relatively easy to identify the intuition behind the perceptual model: comprehension is in important respects similar to perception, and thus comprehension-based beliefs are somehow similar to perceptual beliefs. Unfortunately, it is much more difficult to spell out the details of the perceptual model. Different authors have different opinions regarding what exactly accounts for the similarity between comprehension and perception. Additionally, it is not always clear whether the perceptual model is a view about cognition (i.e., the view that the process of formation of comprehension-based beliefs is similar to the process of formation of perceptual beliefs), epistemology (i.e., the view that the structure of justification of comprehension-based beliefs is similar to this of perceptual beliefs), or both.

For these reasons, in my current discussion, I will abandon the label *perceptual model* in favor of more precise categories. When it comes to the epistemology of comprehension-based beliefs, the perceptual model is often contrasted with an inferential model. Therefore, I will use the name *epistemic inferentialism* for the view that justification of the comprehension-based beliefs is *non-immediate*, i.e., that it depends on the justification of other beliefs, e.g., beliefs about what words the speaker uttered or even what sounds they produced. Respectively, I will call *epistemic non-inferentialism* the view according to which justification of comprehension-based beliefs is *immediate* and *does not* depend on the justification of other beliefs.[2]

[1] By restricting my topic in this way, I leave a lot of interesting questions aside. One important question concerns the manner in which comprehension-based beliefs and testimony-based beliefs are related to each other. I address it in Author XXXXa.

[2] Cf. Pryor (2005), Goldman (2008).

In his recent paper, Brendan Balcerak Jackson (2019) offers a critique of what he calls *perceptual model*. In fact, he criticizes a version of epistemic non-inferentialism: *language comprehension dogmatism* (or simply *dogmatism*). He puts forward three counterexamples designed to show that dogmatism fails to explain our intuitions about the justification of comprehension-based beliefs. The same task, according to Balcerak Jackson, is easily fulfilled by epistemic inferentialism. Crucially, Balcerak Jackson claims that his counterexamples constitute an abductive argument for epistemic inferentialism:

> Taken collectively, the cases present a very strong abductive argument for concluding that the hearer's justification for her belief about what is said typically depends on her justification for believing that the speaker has uttered a particular sentence. If so then her justification is not immediate, contrary to what the perceptual model claims. (2019, 402)

This argument has an important flaw (which, I believe, results at least in part from the fact that Balcerak Jackson falls prey to the ambiguity of the term *perceptual model*). In a nutshell, Balcerak Jackson mistakenly takes his arguments against *a particular version of* epistemic non-inferentialism (i.e., language comprehension dogmatism) to provide an abductive support for the view that justification of comprehension-based beliefs is inferential.

In this paper, I argue, first, that Balcerak Jackson's critique is far less damaging to dogmatism than he thinks. Only one of his three counterexamples poses a serious threat to the theory. Second, I present another version of epistemic non-inferentialism, *comprehension-process reliabilism*, which resists all the counterexamples. Therefore, despite what Balcerak Jackson suggests, his critique does not provide motivation for inferentialism. At most, it helps us choose between alternative versions of epistemic non-inferentialism.

I proceed as follows. In Section 2, I introduce language comprehension dogmatism. In Section 3, I present Balcerak Jackson's counterexamples and discuss to what extent are they effective against this view. In Section 4, I outline comprehension-process reliabilism: a version of epistemic non-inferentialism immune to Balcerak Jackson's counterexamples.

2. Language comprehension dogmatism

Balcerak Jackson presents Fricker's (2003) view as a prototypical non-inferentialist position. According to Fricker, language comprehension gives rise to conscious representational states

of *quasi-perception*, which confer prima facie justification on beliefs about what other people say.[3] Balcerak Jackson quotes Fricker:

> When a hearer quasi-perceives that someone is saying that p to her, this is how things seem to her objectively to be, no less… Taking her aural experience at face value, that is what she would judge to be the case… Thus a quasi-perception of the content and force of a heard utterance is, by its intrinsic nature, a prima facie though defeasible ground for belief. (Fricker 2003, 341)[4]

A more recent version of this view is developed by Berit Brogaard (2018). In her own words:

> ...our experiences of what is said immediately justify our beliefs about what is said without any reliance on further belief or theorizing, at least in the absence of defeaters. So, in the absence of defeaters, our beliefs about the meanings of utterances are justified. (Brogaard 2018, 2969)

I will use *language comprehension dogmatism* as an umbrella term for both these theories.[5] Language comprehension dogmatism is thus the view according to which quasi-perceptions provide an immediate prima facie justification for comprehension-based beliefs. The justification is *immediate* in that *it is not* based on the justification of any other beliefs.[6] It is *prima facie* in the standard Pollockian sense (Pollock 1986) of being good unless defeated. There are two kinds of defeaters: *undercutting* defeaters target a subject's grounds for believing in a given proposition, e.g., the evidential connection between a seeming and the relevant belief; *rebutting* defeaters, on the other hand, are reasons to believe in the negation of the proposition or some other proposition incompatible with it. For example, I would have an undercutting defeater for a perceptual belief that I see a sheep if I knew that I have just taken a drug that is likely to cause visual hallucinations. I would have a rebutting defeater for the same belief, if I were told by the owner of the animal that it is actually a dog, which, when its fur

[3] Fricker's quasi-perceptions are similar to phenomenal seemings produced by visual perception. I will use *quasi-perceptions* and *seemings* interchangeably to refer to all kinds of conscious experiential states taken to be immediately justificatory for comprehension-based beliefs.

[4] Notably, according to Fricker, quasi-perceptions represent both the content and the illocutionary force of the comprehended utterance. This creates further complications that are way too heavyweight to be addressed in this essay. I will point out just one of them in Section 3.1, because it contaminates an element of Balcerak Jackson's argumentation.

[5] Although in the next section I will discuss some of their idiosyncrasies.

[6] Including the belief that one's language comprehension faculty is reliable (cf. Pryor 2005; Steup 2018).

gets long, looks very much like a sheep. According to dogmatism, unless a hearer[7] is in possession of a defeater of one or the other type, their belief that it was said that *p* is justified if it seems to them that what was said was that *p*. A reader familiar with the debate about perceptual justification will immediately recognize similarities to Huemer's *phenomenal conservatism*:

> *Phenomenal conservatism:* If it seems to S as if p, then, in the absence of defeaters, S thereby has at least some degree of justification for believing that p. (Huemer 2007, 30)

Just like phenomenal conservatism, language comprehension dogmatism is a non-doxastic theory of justification, i.e., it rejects the claim that justification of comprehension-based beliefs has to depend on justification of other beliefs. It is, however, an *evidentialist* theory; seeming states provide evidential support for beliefs about what a speaker said.[8] Thus, in both phenomenal conservatism and language comprehension dogmatism beliefs are, at least prima facie, evidentially justified by non-doxastic states.

Before moving forward, let us briefly examine whether seemings of what was said are in fact non-doxastic states. A fairly standard way of deciding whether a state is non-doxastic is by testing it against the background of a known illusion. Even if we know that the lines in the Müller-Lyer optical illusion are equally long (e.g., we examined them using a precise ruler) they still seem to differ in length. The seeming does not go away when confronted with a strongly justified belief that the lines are equally long. Assuming that it is rational to modify a false belief in the light of such glaring counter-evidence, we conclude that the representational state presenting the lines as unequal is not a belief. Rather, it is a non-doxastic seeming.[9]

---

[7] A broader story about language comprehension will include also comprehension of written text and, plausibly, other types of linguistic inputs (e.g., sign language). For simplicity, in this essay, I will follow Balcerak Jackson in focusing on comprehension of spoken utterances and thus use *hearer* instead of the more medium-neutral *receiver*.

[8] In Section 4, I outline a competitive non-evidentialist version of non-inferentialism about the justification of comprehension-based beliefs.

[9] Even though this is arguably the mainstream view about the nature of experiential states, it is not the only one. On Kathrin Glüer's (2009) account, experiential states are beliefs, but ones with phenomenal contents, e.g., x *looks* F, x *sounds* G, etc. On this account, the subject experiencing the Müller-Lyer illusion simultaneously believes: (i) *that the lines are of the same length* and (ii) *that the lines look to be of different length*. The contents of these two beliefs are not contradictory, and the beliefs can be held simultaneously by a rational subject. Nevertheless, since my main targets in the current discussion are the views of dogmatists and Balcerak Jackson, below, I will follow them in assuming that experiential states are not beliefs.

Can we think about a parallel situation in language comprehension? Brogaard (2018, 2975-2976) gives a great example. On the internet one can find tons of videos of cats making noises that sound as if they were saying "I love you!" None of us, except maybe a few over-the-top cat enthusiasts, believe that cats can say "I love you!"[10] Yet the seeming that they do so remains immune to our belief. Therefore, seemings of what was said pass the test for being non-doxastic. Given that epistemic inferentialism claims that *all* comprehension-based beliefs are justified by inferential relations between beliefs, dogmatism is an obvious example of epistemic non-inferentialism.

3. Balcerak Jackson's abductive argument for epistemic inferentialism

As I mentioned in the introduction, Balcerak Jackson offers three counterexamples to dogmatism, which he takes to constitute an abductive argument for epistemic inferentialism. Let us first see whether Balcerak Jackson's counterexamples undermine dogmatism. Each of them is designed to reveal a different flaw in this theory. The first one is supposed to show that dogmatism can only *assume*, but cannot really *explain* why and how the prima facie justification provided by quasi-perceptions can be defeated. The second is supposed to show that, in certain situations, our background beliefs might actually justify a belief that someone *must have uttered some other sentence* than the one whose meaning we have quasi-perceived. The point of the third counterexample is to show that in the clairvoyant-style cases language comprehension dogmatism wrongly predicts that a hearer is justified in believing that what was said was that *p*, as long as it seems to them that what was said was that *p*.

3.1 Rabbits, habits, and minimal pairs

It will be useful for the discussion to quote Balcerak Jackson's counterexamples at length.

> **Rabbit Habit**
>
> Ordinary competent English hearer Hans hears speaker Sven produce what sounds to him like an utterance of the following sentence:
>
> (2) I have too many bad rabbits.
>
> As it happens, Hans is being treated for a certain illness, and his doctor has warned him that the medication he is taking frequently has the curious side effect that patients

[10] Even though they can be *trained* to produce these sounds it still would not count as *saying*.

> regularly confuse [h] and [r] sounds in others' speech. This means, for example, that for someone taking the medication there is a high likelihood that an utterance of 'habit' will sound like an utterance of 'rabbit' and vice versa. (Balcerak Jackson 2019, 391)

Intuitively Hans is not justified in believing that Sven has said that he has too many bad rabbits. But why? An answer available to an epistemic inferentialist is that: (i) Hans has a justified belief that he is likely to misperceive [h] and [r], which in turn (ii) justifies his belief that Sven did not *utter the word* "rabbit" at the end of his utterance of (2), which finally (iii) defeats the justification for Hans's belief that Sven *said* that he has too many bad rabbits. Obviously, a supporter of epistemic non-inferentialism cannot appeal to such inferential links between different doxastic states.

It is stipulated in Rabbit Habit that Hans has a quasi-perception of what was said in (2). According to dogmatism, this quasi-perception is prima facie justificatory for his belief about what Sven said. Since it is justified only prima facie, it might be defeated. However, Balcerak Jackson argues: "What the perceptual model [dogmatism] needs to explain is how the information that Hans has from his doctor manages to defeat the prima facie justification provided by his quasi-perception." (2019, 392). According to him, dogmatism does not offer such an *explanation*.

I think this is false. There *is* a simple and natural explanation of defeat in Rabbit Habit available to a dogmatist: the doctor's warning is a reason for Hans to doubt the reliability of his language comprehension faculty, and thus it undercuts the evidential support between the seeming that Sven said so and so and Hans's comprehension-based belief—it serves as an undercutting defeater. In principle, we could end the discussion about Rabbit Habit here and move on to the next counterexample. However, Balcerak Jackson is not satisfied with this answer. Let us see why.[11]

Balcerak Jackson invites us to compare Rabbit Habit with a case in which the doctor says that the medication Hans is taking is likely to affect his perception of voice pitch or accent. If the warning in Rabbit Habit undermined Hans's trust in the reliability of his language comprehension faculty, this one should as well. Yet, according to Balcerak Jackson, if the doctor's warning concerned voice pitch or accent, we would still be inclined to take Hans to

[11] Readers who share my conviction that this simple and natural explanation is available to dogmatists can move straight to Section 3.2. In the remainder of this section, I discuss and reject Balcerak Jackson's reasons to think that this explanation is not satisfactory.

be justified in his beliefs about what is said: "*Neither of these warnings would have had any effect at all* on Hans's justification for his belief about what was said." (Balcerak Jackson 2019, 392, *emphasis mine*).

This, I take it, is the core of Balcerak Jackson's challenge. According to him, it is not enough to explain why a warning about possible misperception of the speaker's utterance defeats the prima facie justification of comprehension-based beliefs. A dogmatist has to explain why some such warnings (about the confusion of phonemes) do, while others (about misperception of voice pitch or accent) do not.

I think that Balcerak Jackson is simply mistaken in assuming that a warning about misperception of voice pitch or accent would not defeat the justification of comprehension-based beliefs. In fact, it would have the exact same effect on Hans's justification as the warning about possible confusion of phonemes; it would be an undercutting defeater.

What might have created a (false!) impression that there is something special about the misperception of phonemes is that Rabbit Habit is built around a minimal pair. English words "rabbit" and "habit", just like "pin" and "bin", "pen" and "pan," constitute a minimal pair, i.e., a pair of words which differ in only one phonological element. In consequence, a misperception of the phoneme [h] as [r] results not only in that it does not seem to Hans that Sven said that he has too many bad habits but that *it seems to him* that Sven said that he has too many bad rabbits. Moreover, "rabbit" and "habit" are of the same grammatical category. "I have too many bad rabbits," even if potentially unexpected in the context of the conversation, is a grammatically correct English sentence.

Imagine now that what Sven says is "I am happy" or "It starts to rot." I guess that Balcerak Jackson would not be inclined to argue that it is a challenge for a dogmatist to explain why Hans is not justified in believing that Sven said that he is *reppy* or that it *starts to hot*, respectively. Therefore, it is not the misperception of phonemes *per se* that makes Rabbit Habit tricky, but the fact that "rabbit" and "habit" constitute a minimal pair and that "I have too many bad rabbits" is a grammatically correct English sentence.[12] But even this feature does not reveal

[12] An additional weakness of Balcerak Jackson's case is that there is another occurrence of a "suspect" phoneme ([h]) in "I have too many bad habits." How can Hans be sure that Sven did not want to say "I rav too many bad rabbits" thinking (mistakenly!) that the word "rav" (rhymes with "have") means to kill in rage?

anything special about the misperception of phonemes because we can build similar "minimal pair" examples around the misperception of voice pitch and accent.

Starting with the misperception of voice pitch. Balcerak Jackson very explicitly characterizes comprehension-based beliefs as beliefs about *both* the content and the force of heard utterances (2019, 387). I think that this characterization is exactly right. When we say that Hans understood what Sven said, we mean that Hans grasped both the content of Sven's utterance and the fact that the content was conveyed with a given force, e.g., assertorically, erotetically, etc. However, taking the force into consideration reveals a weakness of Balcerak Jackson's argument. Intonation (i.e., the variation of pitch) often works in spoken English as a force marker. The rising intonation marks asking or interrogating: "You just walked in without knocking?", while the falling intonation marks assertion: "You just walked in without knocking." Therefore, if the doctor "had instead warned Hans that he is likely to misperceive the pitch of other people's voices" (Balcerak Jackson, 2019, 392), Hans would not be justified in believing that Sven *said/asserted* that he has too many bad habits (by uttering "I have to many bad ↘habits" with falling intonation) instead of *asking* whether he has too many bad habits (by uttering "I have too many bad ↗habits?" with rising intonation or "↗I have too many bad ↘habits?" with rising and falling intonation).

Similarly, with the misperception of accent. For example, a hearer who misperceives "special" as "spatial" due to a drug-induced failure "to compensate for the tensing of lax vowels characteristic of speech in southeast Ohio" (Bond 2005, 298) would not be justified in believing, e.g., that their sister said that she has a spatial task for them.

To sum up. Claiming that the misperception of phonemes is somehow special and requires a separate explanation, Balcerak Jackson guided us to a long detour. But we are back to where we started. All that is important from the perspective of the dogmatist theory of defeat is that the hearer is warned about the unreliability of their language comprehension faculty, and thus they have an undercutting defeater for their comprehension-based beliefs. If one has such a defeater, it does not matter that they have a seeming as if the speaker said something meaningful, e.g., "I have too many bad rabbits." The defeater undercuts the evidential support between the seeming and the comprehension-based belief. Thus, dogmatism *can* explain why Hans is not justified in believing that Sven said that he has too many bad rabbits.

It is important to highlight, that this explanation of defeat is general, i.e., applicable to all cases in which a hearer has been warned (by a credible source) about the unreliability of their language comprehension faculty, and not restricted only to some specific cases or types of utterances.[13] It is general because it depends on the very mechanism of the formation of comprehension-based beliefs. According to non-inferentialism, upon comprehending an utterance, a hearer does not know whether the particular kind of misperception-tendency they have been warned about affected the particular episode of comprehension (because the comprehension-based beliefs are not formed by way of inference from explicit beliefs about, for example, phonetic and prosodic properties of the utterance). All the hearer knows is that the misperception-tendency *might have* affected this episode of comprehension. To make sure that it has not, they would have to consciously focus on questions concerning their specific misperception-tendency, e.g., whether sounds [r] and [h] appeared in the utterance they comprehended, and thus whether the particular episode of comprehension was contaminated. However, according to non-inferentialism, this is by no means the standard way of obtaining justification of comprehension-based beliefs.[14]

3.2 He must have said "coat"

Let us now take a look at the second counterexample offered by Balcerak Jackson.

> **New Goat**
>
> Helena and Sven are in conversation, when it seems to Helena that Sven utters the following:
>
> (4) I just bought a new goat.
>
> Helena is initially puzzled by Sven's utterance. It seems to her that Sven has said that he just bought a new goat. But this would be a bizarre thing for him to say. (He hates goats, and he lives in a small city apartment that doesn't allow pets.) But Helena has every indication that Sven is speaking sincerely and honestly, and not ironically or metaphorically. All in all, Helena has very strong reason to believe that Sven did not, in

[13] I am grateful to the editors for encouraging me to clarify this.

[14] Nevertheless, if a hearer follows such a non-standard (inferential) route, I think, they may obtain the ultima facie justification, in cases in which they concluded that the utterance they comprehended did not contain the elements they are likely to misperceive, or that it did not affect grasping the force and content of the comprehended utterance. Non-inferentialism does not rule out the existence of such an inferential route. It is just *not* how we typically process language.

> fact, say that he had just bought a new goat, and so she concludes that she must have misheard him; perhaps she mistook an utterance of 'coat' for an utterance of 'goat'. (Balcerak Jackson 2019, 400)

Crucially, Balcerak Jackson stipulates, that in this case, Helena has a strong defeater for the belief that Sven said that he had bought a new goat: "if it is not already plausible from the above description, the case can be modified as necessary. (Perhaps the conversation takes place in front of dozens of attentive and reliable witnesses, all of whom sincerely assure Helena that Sven did not say that he had bought a new goat.)" (Balcerak Jackson 2019, 400). Therefore, the task is *not* to explain why her belief that Sven said that he had just bought a new goat is defeated. The actual task is to explain why "in this case there is another belief for which Helena *does* have justification, namely the belief that Sven must have uttered some other sentence than (4)." (Balcerak Jackson 2019, 400; *emphasis in the original*).

Contrary to Balcerak Jackson, I do not take New Goat to be problematic for dogmatism (or any other version of epistemic non-inferentialism, for that matter). Obviously, epistemic non-inferentialism *does not* claim that *every* justified belief about what other people say is justified non-inferentially.[15] The claim is that comprehension-based beliefs of a competent language speaker, formed through the exercise of their language comprehension faculty, are *typically* justified immediately. In New Goat, Helena's belief that Sven said that he had just bought a new goat was prima facie immediately justified by her seeming. However, as stipulated, the justification was rebutted. Believing that Sven *did not* say that he had just bought a new goat (but curious about what he said), Helena further *inferred* that he must have said something that sounds similar but makes more sense in the present context. She concluded that he must have said that he had just bought a new coat. A supporter of epistemic non-inferentialism can readily agree that justification for the belief about *what Sven must have said is* non-immediate, i.e., inferential.[16]

---

[15] For example, imagine that my friend is on the phone with his girlfriend and I hear him say "How can you say I'm needy?" I form a justified belief that my friend's girlfriend said that he is needy. Justification of this belief is obviously inferential.

[16] What is interesting about this case is the "initial puzzlement" that Helena experiences upon hearing Sven's utterance. Of course, this is just an element of Balcerak Jackson's description of the New Goat scenario; nevertheless, I think that this description is quite realistic and highlights a noteworthy phenomenon. To explain it—I suggest—we should appeal to the fact that language comprehension is a predictive process (see, e.g., Kuperberg and Jaeger 2016). Given the context of the conversation and other things she knew about Sven, Helena's confrontation with the stimulus that her comprehension system identified as "goat" at the end of

3.3 Seemings out of the blue

Let us now move to the last counterexample offered by Balcerak Jackson.

> **Interpretive Clairvoyance**
>
> Hans is meeting Sophia for the first time at an informal gathering of United Nations workers. He asks Sophia about her area in an attempt to make small talk, but when she answers, it sounds to Hans exactly as if Sophia is speaking some foreign language that is entirely unknown to him; the sounds she is making strike Hans as nothing more than an unbroken stream of unfamiliar vocal noises. And yet at the same time, Hans has a quasi-perception as of Sophia saying that she is an economist. (Balcerak Jackson 2019, 396)

As far as the intuitions go, Hans is not justified in believing that Sophia said that she is an economist. His quasi-perception of the content of Sophia's utterance came out of the blue. And yet, according to dogmatism, the sole fact that Hans has this quasi-perception provides justification for his belief "and none of the information at his disposal seems to do anything to call that into question." (Balcerak Jackson 2019, 397).

I agree that Interpretive Clairvoyance is an effective counterargument to a version of dogmatism according to which prima facie justification depends *solely* on the possession of the relevant seemings or quasi-perceptions. But does it work against more restrictive versions of dogmatism?

First, let us examine Brogaard's *sensible dogmatism* (2013, 2018). According to Brogaard, not all seemings that *p* confer prima facie justification on beliefs that *p*. Only seemings that are "grounded in the content of [subject's] perceptual, introspective, or memory-related experience" (Brogaard 2013, 278) do so. In what sense are seemings *grounded* in the content of experience?

> *Content Grounding:* A seeming of the form [It seems to A as if q] is grounded in a content p of a particular perceptual, introspective, or memory-related experience e had by A iff

---

Sven's utterance, triggered strong surprisal, which she might have experienced as puzzlement. Plausibly, this puzzlement prompted attention relocation in effect of which Helena started consciously analyzing what Sven has actually said. Eventually, she inferred that he must have uttered some other word than "goat", probably: "coat". Notice that in this last inference Helena must have appealed to her expertise with English minimal pairs (see section 3.1). Otherwise, why wasn't her first guess that Sven must have said "fridge"?

> [Reliably(if p is a content of e, then it seems to A as if q) and Reliably(if it seems to A as if q, then q)]. (Brogaard 2013, 277)

The intended reading of *reliably* here is "in the majority of close hypothetical situations." Thus, a seeming as if *q* is grounded in a content *p* of an experience *e* if and only if in the majority of close hypothetical situations experiences with the content *p* trigger seemings as if *q*, and in the majority of close hypothetical situations the world is as it seems.

I think that sensible dogmatism does not suffice to avoid Interpretive Clairvoyance. It is already stipulated that what Sophia says sounds to Hans like some foreign language. But according to sensible dogmatism, whenever Hans has *some* perceptual experience *e* that fulfills the condition for Content Grounding, his seemings as if Sophia said so and so should confer justification on his comprehension-based beliefs.[17] Imagine, for example, that every time Hans hears Sophia speak he has a sensation of a piano melody (different for different utterances) accompanied with a quasi-perception of the utterance meaning. In the majority of close hypothetical situations, experiences of a particular piano melody trigger the same seemings. If Hans has a sensation of melody *a*, he has a seeming as of Sophia saying that she is an economist, if he has a sensation of melody *b*, he has a seeming as of Sophia saying that it is her first time at the gathering of United Nations workers, etc. Moreover, in the majority of close hypothetical situations, if it seems to Hans that Sophia said that *p*, Sophia, in fact, said that *p*. Still, we are not inclined to say that Hans' beliefs about what Sophia says are justified, even if there is a *systematic* relation between the piano melodies he experiences and his accompanying seemings.

Fricker's (2003) theory is also a restrictive version of language comprehension dogmatism. According to Fricker's definition of occurrent utterance understanding:

> To understand a particular heard utterance of [a sentence] S, U(S), occurrently is to enjoy a correct quasi-perceptual representation of the content and force of U(S), and to do so in part as the result of one's dispositional understanding of S — that is, through the exercise of *a stably possessed, internally constituted reliable capacity* to enjoy such representations with respect to utterances of S. (Fricker 2003, 346, *emphasis mine*)

[17] For a similar argument against sensible dogmatism see (Lyons 2015a).

Fricker is, thus, very clear that to understand an utterance, the hearer has to not only enjoy a correct quasi-perception of the content and force of this utterance but to enjoy it *as a result of* exercising an appropriate (i.e., stably possesed, internally constituted reliable) capacity. However, this restriction is still not enough to deal with Interpretive Clairvoyance. Arguably, not *any* stably possessed, internally constituted reliable capacity to enjoy quasi-perceptions of the content and force of utterances would do. We would not say that my comprehension-based beliefs are prima facie justified by quasi-perceptions of utterance meaning if these quasi-perceptions were triggered by sensations of piano music, smells, or colorful afterimages.[18]

To sum up. I argued that dogmatism has all the tools necessary to answer Rabbit Habit and New Goat. Nevertheless, I agree with Balcerak Jackson that neither of the existing versions of language comprehension dogmatism successfully deals with Interpretive Clairvoyance. I am not claiming that it is impossible to develop a version of dogmatism immune to this counterexample, but I will leave this task to devoted supporters of dogmatism.[19] In the next section, I will argue that even if there is no hope for language comprehension dogmatism, it is too early to declare the victory of epistemic inferentialism. Balcerak Jackson's abductive argument does not go through, because there is another non-inferential theory of justification of comprehension-based beliefs which deals with all counterexamples discussed in this section.

[18] Here is one more potential line of defense for language comprehension dogmatism. A dogmatist could say that perceptual beliefs are prima facie justified by seemings that are not only grounded in experience (as it is characterized by Brogaard) but grounded in an appropriate experience. In the case of language comprehension, the appropriate experience might be, for example, the experience of words in a given language. Not just any experience of words in a given language would do, however. A dogmatist would have to stipulate that seemings of utterance meaning are grounded in the experience of the appropriate words. But how can we establish which words are appropriate to trigger a given seeming? Obviously, we cannot simply say that these are the words which have the same meaning which the hearer quasi-perceives, because the utterance meaning and word meaning are two very different things (cf. Drożdżowicz 2019). The case remains open.

[19] An anonymous referee for this journal suggested that a defender of dogmatism could explore three additional solutions to Interpretive Clairvoyance. Firstly, they might simply bite the bullet saying that notwithstanding how Sophia's speech sounds to Hans, his seeming that Sophia said that she is an economist is sufficient to justify his belief. Secondly, a dogmatist might argue that the reason why Hans is not justified in believing that Sophia said that she is an economist is that his experience of her speech serves as an undercutting defeater for his prima facie justified belief. Finally, a dogmatist might argue that Hans's seeming would justify his belief only if there were appropriate structural parallels between the stream of sounds and quasi-perceptions of meaning. For example, a sound stream transcribed into IPA as /ɪˈkɑnəmɪst/ would correspond to the seeming of meaning ECONOMIST, etc. Since this is not the case in Interpretive Clairvoyance, Hans's belief is not justified. None of these solutions strikes me as obvious and acceptable without an extensive defense. Therefore, as indicated in the main text, I leave their elaboration to supporters of dogmatism.

4. Comprehension-process reliabilism

Even though Balcerak Jackson's discussion focuses on language comprehension dogmatism, he is ultimately interested in establishing that "the hearer's justification for her belief about what is said is not immediate" (Balcerak Jackson 2019, 402). Discarding dogmatism would be sufficient to achieve this goal if dogmatism was the only available theory of immediate justification of comprehension-based beliefs. But it is not. In this section, I outline another such theory, i.e., *comprehension-process reliabilism*.[20]

According to *process reliabilism*, a belief that *p* of a subject *S* is prima facie justified if it is generated by a reliable belief-forming process (cf. Goldman 1979, Goldman and Beddor 2016). Comprehension-process reliabilism is simply an application of process reliabilism to a particular type of belief-forming process, namely, language comprehension:

> *Comprehension-process reliabilism:* (i) a belief that *p* is prima facie justified if it is the result of a reliable belief-forming process; (ii) language comprehension is a non-inferential, reliable belief-forming process.[21]

This is a general recipe. To turn it into an actual account, one has to say more about the process of language comprehension and why it is reliable.

Dean Pettit (2010) comes close to formulating a version of comprehension-process reliabilism. First, he criticizes epistemic inferentialism as well as dogmatism, which suggests that he wants

[20] Discussing Interpretive Clairvoyance, Balcerak Jackson considers the possibility of rescuing the perceptual view by mixing it with reliabilism but does not find it promising. He claims that it is "the essence of the perceptual model that taking one's quasi-perception at face value *is* a process that can confer justification" (Balcerak Jackson 2019, 398), and therefore a supporter of perceptual model cannot say that Hans's comprehension process in Interpretive Clairvoyance does not confer justification on his comprehension-based beliefs. Here again, Balcerak Jackson falls prey to the ambiguity of the term *perceptual model*: does it refer to dogmatism or epistemic non-inferentialism? Taking quasi-perceptions at face value is "the essence" of dogmatism, i.e., the evidentialist version of epistemic non-inferentialism. Below I will provide a non-evidentialist process reliabilism for comprehension-based beliefs. If we take *perceptual* to mean epistemically non-inferential, my account counts as a version of the perceptual model.

[21] Given my goal in the present paper, I stipulate in the definition that language comprehension is *non-inferential* ("belief-independent" in Goldman's (1979) terminology) and commit myself to epistemic non-inferentialism. One could drop this condition and formulate an inferentialist version of comprehension-process reliabilism. Such a view could be, for example, based on Kathrin Glüer's (2009) theory of perception, according to which experiential states are beliefs with special, phenomenal content (cf. footnote 9 above). I am grateful to the editors of this issue for drawing my attention to this fact.

to defend a different kind of epistemic non-inferentialism.[22] Second, according to Pettit, linguistic competence is *warrant conferring* but not *warrant apt*.[23] It is not warrant apt because it does not stand in need of any further evidence. It is warrant conferring in that beliefs based on the exercise of linguistic competence are justified.[24]

Pettit provides reasons why linguistic competence is not warrant apt. He claims that it is deployed sub-personally and (at least to some extent) in a modular way. The question of warrant aptness simply does not arise with respect to such faculties. Just as our visual system, language comprehension does not require further evidence to confer justification to the beliefs it produces. In the absence of counter-evidence suggesting that it is *not* working properly, we are justified in taking its outputs at face value. But, as he focuses mostly on the critique of epistemic inferentialism, Pettit does not develop his alternative account in any detail; in particular, he does not really explain *why* the exercise of linguistic competence is warrant conferring, and thus, why we should take comprehension-based beliefs to be prima facie justified.

I will now outline an account which *does explain* why the process of language comprehension is warrant conferring. It draws on Peter Graham's (2010) teleological process reliabilism for testimony-based beliefs.[25] Just as a reminder: while comprehension-based beliefs are beliefs of the form *that S said that p*, e.g., that Ruth said that it's a full moon tonight; testimony-based

---

[22] Balcerak Jackson mentions Pettit among representatives of the perceptual model (2019, 389, footnote 4), which is yet another indication that he *does not* restrict the perceptual model to language comprehension dogmatism.

[23] For the purposes of the current discussion, I will use warrant interchangeably with justification.

[24] It is worth highlighting that Pettit (2010) focuses on *linguistic competence* (competence with syntax and semantics of a given language) and not the process of *language comprehension* (exercise of this competence). However, linguistic competence is warrant conferring only insofar as language comprehension produces (at least prima facie) justified beliefs.

[25] There are, obviously, other paths one could follow to develop their favorite version of comprehension-process reliabilism. One of them is suggested by Jack Lyons (2009). According to Lyons, beliefs are prima facie justified if they are produced by processes rooted in so called *primal systems*. Primal systems are, in turn, characterized as systems: (i) whose inner workings are not accessible to introspection; (ii) which result from an innate state of an organism developed by learning. They are, thus, quite similar to Fodor's modules (Fodor 1983; for a detailed comparison with Fodor's view, see Lyons 2015b). The most widely discussed primal system is perception, but Lyons suggests: "Some beliefs about the speech of others are clearly perceptual. My auditory belief that so-and-so just said 'The cat is on the mat' is a straightforwardly perceptual belief. My belief that so-and-so just said that the cat is on the mat will be a perceptual belief only if the language comprehension system counts as a perceptual system; it very well might on the present understanding of perceptual systems, and I have no problem with this result." (2009, 135).

beliefs are beliefs about the world, e.g., that it's a full moon tonight, obtained through testimony.

Since Graham's target are testimony-based beliefs he does not focus on the process of language comprehension *simpliciter* but on what he calls *comprehension-with-filtering*. *Filtering* may be characterized as a suite of cognitive counter-deception mechanisms that prevent receivers of testimony from being easily manipulated by testifiers.[26] Graham enumerates a list of empirical research supporting the claim that, starting at a very young age (some experiments involve 16-month-olds), we develop special attentiveness towards speakers who make obvious mistakes, do not sound confident, have been unreliable in the past, etc. Notably, according to Graham, filtering does not condemn us to epistemic inferentialism.

> Filtering need not involve explicit awareness — belief or judgement — that counter-considerations are absent. Filtering need not involve reasons and reasoning… filtering involves sensitivity to counter-considerations: where there are counter-considerations of a certain sort, acceptance would be less likely. (Graham 2010, 152)

As I have mentioned, Graham's account is teleological. It is spelled out in terms of *etiological function*, *normal functioning*, and *normal conditions* (Millikan 1984). In a nutshell, an *etiological function* of any mechanism or feature is the effect of its ancestors, which explains why the mechanism or feature persisted. The etiological function of our hearts is to pump blood, because pumping blood was the effect that hearts were selected for, i.e., it is the effect of ancestors of our hearts which explains why we still have hearts. *Normal functioning* is working in the way that contributed to stabilizing the etiological function (e.g., pumping blood, in the case of the heart), and *normal conditions* are conditions sufficiently similar to those in which "that function has historically been performed" (Millikan 1984, 34).

Here is how Graham applies the teleological apparatus to the problem of epistemic entitlement.[27] According to him, "entitlement attaches to beliefs in virtue of the normal functioning of the belief-forming process when the process has forming true beliefs reliably as

[26] This notion of *filtering* is very close to Sperber et al.'s (2010) *epistemic vigilance*.

[27] Graham appeals to Burge's (1993, 1996) distinction into two types of *warrant*: *justification*, which involves reasons and evidence a subject can often cite; and *entitlement*, which does not involve them. Given that, according to Graham, the positive epistemic standing of testimony-based beliefs does not depend on reasons or evidence, he says that testimony-based beliefs enjoy prima facie entitlement. In the present discussion, I will use *justification* and *entitlement* interchangeably. However, the reader should bear in mind that justification in the sense in which I am using it *does not* require reasons or evidence.

an etiological function" (Graham 2010, 156). Perception-based beliefs enjoy prima facie entitlement because the perceptual process has forming true beliefs reliably as a function. Similarly, Graham argues, comprehension-with-filtering has inducing true testimony-based beliefs reliably as its function. The reason why we are equipped with the cognitive mechanism of comprehension-with-filtering is that an ancestor of this mechanism was beneficial to our ancestors. More specifically, it allowed them to reliably acquire true beliefs about the world based on testimonies of their interlocutors.[28]

Since my goal in the present paper is to provide an account of justification of comprehension-based beliefs, i.e., beliefs of the form *that the speaker said that p*, I do not need to engage here in the debate about the nature and epistemic status of filtering. Therefore, I would like to suggest a restriction of Graham's theory to comprehension *simpliciter*.

> *Teleological comprehension-process reliabilism (TCR)*: (i) a belief is prima facie justified if it is based on a normally functioning belief-forming process that has forming true beliefs reliably as a function; (ii) language comprehension is a non-inferential, belief-forming process that has forming true comprehension-based beliefs reliably as a function.

I find it extremely plausible that forming true comprehension-based beliefs is the etiological function of the process of language comprehension. Hearts persisted because of their beneficial effect of pumping blood. Language comprehension persisted because of its beneficial effect of generating true beliefs of the form *that S said that p*. That obtaining such true beliefs is beneficial to members of our species is rather uncontroversial; it contributes to successful communication and allows us to learn from and cooperate with others.

Finally, the restriction of Graham's teleological account to comprehension *simpliciter*, and thus to the generation of comprehension-based beliefs, seems to be necessary anyways. Forming true testimony-based beliefs is the function of comprehension-with-filtering of *assertoric utterances*. But what about other speech acts? Understanding that Ruth asked whether it's a full moon tonight does not (at least not directly) generate the belief that it's a full moon tonight;

[28] Graham makes a further, Millikan-style argument that it is an etiological function of *assertion* to induce true beliefs in hearers. Otherwise, assertion would not persist. "So unless hearers get something out of accepting reports, they will not accept them. And if they will not accept them, speakers will not benefit from making them. Then they will not get made." (Graham 2010, 160). In result, the function of assertion and the function of comprehension-with-filtering taken together support the prima facie justification of testimony-based beliefs.

understanding that Ruth ordered to stop the car does not (at least not directly) generate the belief that I will stop the car, etc. A complete theory of language comprehension, applicable to all speech acts, seems to require the two-level structure with (i) comprehension-based beliefs on one level, and (ii) testimony-based beliefs for assertions, and their counterparts for other illocutionary forces, on the other.[29]

Let us now see whether TCR can deal with Balcerak Jackson's counterexamples. Discussing Rabbit Habit in Section 3.1, I argued that it does not pose an actual problem to dogmatism. According to dogmatism, seemings provide prima facie justification to comprehension-based beliefs. As *prima facie*, this justification can be defeated, e.g., if the hearer has a reason to doubt that their language comprehension faculty is reliable. Thus, the warning about the possible misperception of phonemes, which Hans receives from his doctor, plays the role of a defeater undercutting the evidential support between his seeming and the respective belief. An equivalent answer is available to TCR. TCR is also a theory of prima facie justification and thus it leaves room for defeat. If, as it is in Rabbit Habit, a hearer *knows* that his language comprehension faculty is not functioning normally, the prima facie justification of beliefs formed by this faculty is defeated, and the hearer is not justified in believing that the speaker said so and so.[30]

What about New Goat? Discussing this counterexample in section 3.2, I have argued that it does not pose a problem for epistemic non-inferentialism. It is stipulated by Balcerak Jackson that Helena's justification for the belief that Sven said that he had just bought a new goat is defeated. It might be the case that Helena will end up forming another belief, i.e., the belief that Sven must have said that he had just bought a new coat, but a supporter of any version of epistemic non-inferentialism (be it dogmatism or TCR) can readily agree that Hans's justification for this belief is inferential. Clearly, not all beliefs about what other people say (or must have said) are justified immediately. The belief that Sven must have said that he had just bought a new coat is not.

---

[29] The two-level structure is a theoretical assumption. I am not claiming that it has psychological reality, e.g., that when we comprehend an assertion, we have to go through both these levels.

[30] There is a long-standing debate in epistemology, one in which I will not engage here, whether process reliabilism can offer a satisfactory account of epistemic defeat. The most popular strategy of explaining defeat in process reliabilism, Alvin Goldman's *Alternate Reliable Process (ARP) theory* (Goldman 1979; cf. Lyons 2009, 2016), has been passionately discussed over the years (see Beddor 2015, *forthcoming* for good overviews). For recent defenses of improved versions of ARP see Grundmann (2009) and Graham and Lyons (*forthcoming*). In this paper, I will simply assume that there is *a* theory of defeat available to process reliabilism.

Finally, what about Interpretive Clairvoyance? Just as a reminder, the challenge posed by Interpretive Clairvoyance was to explain why Hans is not justified in believing that Sophia said that she is an economist, despite the fact that it seems to him that she said this exact thing. What is crucial for TCR is that it does not take justification to be grounded in experiential states (or in any other state, for that matter). It is not only a *non-doxastic* but a fully *anti-evidentialist* position. It might very well be the case that typically the language comprehension process is *associated with* certain phenomenal states, but the justification of comprehension-based beliefs is not *grounded* in these states. Comprehension-based beliefs are justified only as far as they originate from a normally functioning language comprehension process. Hans's belief in Interpretive Clairvoyance is not formed by a normally functioning comprehension-process or any other process that has forming true-beliefs reliably as a function.[31] Hans's ancestors *did not* have the faculty of interpretive clairvoyance, so this faculty does not have an etiological function at all. This is enough to explain why interpretive clairvoyance does not produce prima facie justified beliefs.

The above is not an all-out defense of comprehension-process reliabilism or TCR. This task would require much more space. Nevertheless, by outlining and making an initial case for this theory, I have shown that we are not doomed to epistemic inferentialism, even if Interpretive Clairvoyance defeats language comprehension dogmatism.

5. Conclusion

The goal of this essay was to offer a new defense of epistemic non-inferentialism about comprehension-based beliefs, i.e., the view that justification of comprehension-based beliefs is immediate. I started by examining Balcerak Jackson's critique of a version of epistemic non-inferentialism, viz. language comprehension dogmatism. Only one out of three counterarguments provided by Balcerak Jackson turned out to be successful, but it was enough to reject dogmatism (at least until an improved version of this view is provided). Nevertheless, the rejection of dogmatism does not suffice to establish epistemic inferentialism. In the last section, I offered another version of epistemic non-inferentialism, viz. teleological

[31] The only assumption I make here about the normally functioning comprehension-process is that it is *not* one in which the linguistic input sounds to the hearer as "some foreign language that is entirely unknown to him" (Balcerak Jackson, 2019, 396). I discuss the process of linguistic understanding in detail in (Grodniewicz, 2021).

comprehension-process reliabilism. I argued that this view successfully deals with all counterexamples provided by Balcerak Jackson.[32]

References

Balcerak Jackson, B. (2019). Against the perceptual model of utterance comprehension. *Philosophical Studies*, *176*(2), 387–405.

Beddor, B. (2015). Process reliabilism's troubles with defeat. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 65(259), 145–159. Oxford University Press.

Beddor, B. (forthcoming). Reasons for Reliabilism. In M. Simion & J. Brown (Eds.), *Reasons, Justification, and Defeat*. Oxford University Press.

Bond, Z. S. (2005). Slips of the Ear. In R. E. Remez & D. B. Pisoni (Eds.), *The Handbook of Speech Perception* (pp. 290–310). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Brogaard, B. (2013). Phenomenal Seemings and Sensible Dogmatism. In C. Tucker (Ed.), *Seemings and Justification* (pp. 270–290). Oxford University Press.

Brogaard, B. (2018). In defense of hearing meanings. *Synthese*, *195*(7), 2967–2983.

Brogaard, B. (2019). Seeing and Hearing Meanings: A Non-Inferential Approach to Speech Comprehension. In T. Chan & A. Nes, *Inference and Consciousness* (pp. 99–124). Routledge.

Burge, T. (1993). Content preservation. *Philosophical Review*, *102*(4), 457–488.

Burge, T. (1996). Our entitlement to self-knowledge. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, *96*(1), 91–116.

Drożdżowicz, A. (2019). Do we hear meanings? – Between perception and cognition. *Inquiry*, 1–33.

Fodor, J. A. (1983). *The Modularity of Mind*. MIT press.

Fricker, E. (2003). Understanding and Knowledge of What is Said. In A. Barber (Ed.), *Epistemology of Language* (pp. 325–66). Oxford University Press.

Glüer, K. (2009). In Defence of a Doxastic Account of Experience. *Mind & Language*, 24(3), 297–327. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0017.2009.01364.x

Goldman, A. (1979). What is Justified Belief. In G. Pappas (Ed.), *Justification and Knowledge* (pp. 1–25). D. Reidel.

Goldman, A. I. (2008). Immediate Justification and Process Reliabilism. In Q. Smith (Ed.), *Epistemology New Essays* (pp. 63–82). Oxford University Press.

Goldman, A., & Beddor, B. (2016). Reliabilist Epistemology. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/reliabilism/

[32] I am very grateful to J. Adam Carter, Sanford Goldberg, Peter J. Graham, Christoph Kelp, Josep Macià, Mona Simion, Josefa Toribio, and the Editors of this special issue for helpful comments, questions, and objections. Special thanks to Bartłomiej Czajka, Manuel García-Carpintero, and Grzegorz Gaszczyk for numerous detailed conversations on the topics of this paper. Financial support was provided by the DGI, Spanish Government, research project FFI2016–80588-R.

Graham, P. J. (2010). Testimonial Entitlement and the Function of Comprehension. In A. Haddock, A. Millar, & D. Pritchard (Eds.), *Social Epistemology* (pp. 148–174). Oxford University Press.

Graham, P. J., & Lyons, J. C. (forthcoming). The structure of defeat: Pollock's evidentialism, Lackey's distinction, and prospects for reliabilism. In M. Simion & J. Brown (Eds.), *Reasons, Justification, and Defeat*. Oxford University Press.

Grodniewicz, J. P. (2021). The process of linguistic understanding. *Synthese*, *198*(12), 11463–11481. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-020-02807-9

Grundmann, T. (2009). Reliabilism and the problem of defeaters. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 79(1), 64–76.

Huemer, M. (2007). Compassionate Phenomenal Conservatism. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *74*(1), 30–55.

Kuperberg, G. R., & Jaeger, T. F. (2016). What do we mean by prediction in language comprehension? *Language, Cognition and Neuroscience*, 31(1), 32–59.

Lyons, J. C. (2009). *Perception and basic beliefs: Zombies, modules, and the problem of the external world*. Oxford University Press.

Lyons, J. C. (2015a). Seemings and Justification. *Analysis*, 75(1), 153–164.

Lyons, J. C. (2015b). Unencapsulated Modules and Perceptual Judgment. In J. Zeimbekis & A. Raftopoulos (Eds.), *The Cognitive Penetrability of Perception: New Philosophical Perspectives* (pp. 103–122).

Lyons, J. C. (2016). Goldman on Evidence and Reliability. In H. Kornblith & B. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Goldman and his Critics*. Blackwell.

Millikan, R. G. (1984). *Language, Thought and Other Biological Categories*. MIT Press.

Pettit, D. (2010). On the Epistemology and Psychology of Speech Comprehension. *The Baltic International Yearbook of Cognition, Logic and Communication*, *5*(1), 1-43.

Pollock, J. L. (1986). *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge* (Vol. 22). Hutchinson.

Pryor, J. (2005). There is immediate justification. In M. Steup & E. Sosa (Eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology* (pp. 181–202). Blackwell.

Sperber, D., Clément, F., Heintz, C., Mascaro, O., Mercier, H., Origgi, G., & Wilson, D. (2010). Epistemic Vigilance. *Mind & Language*, 25(4), 359–393.

Steup, M. (2018). Destructive defeat and justificational force: The dialectic of dogmatism, conservatism, and meta-evidentialism. *Synthese*, 195(7), 2907–2933.