

12 Faith, Hope, and Justification¹

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Justification comes in many stripes. There's epistemic, practical, and all-things-considered justification. Justification can apply to mental states, like belief, desire, intention, and to acts, like bodily movements, mental acts, omissions. And even narrowing in on the *epistemic* justification of *belief* specifically, philosophers make further distinctions. A common one is between *propositional* justification—having justification to believe *p*—and *doxastic* justification—having a justified belief that *p*.²

Doxastic justification is stronger than propositional justification. Consider two examples of the latter without the former. The first is when one has good reasons to believe *p*, but for whatever reason, simply doesn't believe *p*. Suppose I have a justified belief that my paper is due on the 15th, and have a justified belief that today is the 15th, but nevertheless fail to believe that my paper is due today. In this case, I have propositional, but not doxastic, justification to believe that my paper is due today.

The second example of propositional without doxastic justification is when I have good reasons to believe *p*, but ignore those reasons and instead believe *p* on a poor basis. Suppose I see that my phone's reliable weather app predicts rain tomorrow. But I distrust the app because I think its creators are a part of a conspiracy. Instead, I grab my magic 8 ball and ask if it will rain tomorrow, and the ball answers "yes," so I believe it will. In this case, I have great reasons to believe it will rain tomorrow, but my belief isn't based on those reasons. Again, I have propositional, but not doxastic, justification to believe that it will rain tomorrow.

While most of the literature on this distinction focuses on the justification of *belief*, beliefs aren't the only attitudes that can enjoy justification.

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2 The distinction between propositional and doxastic justification was originally introduced by Firth (1978); see Silva and Oliveria (Forthcoming) for an introduction to the distinction.

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This chapter focuses on two other mental states: *faith* and *hope*. We'll assume that faith and hope—like belief—are sometimes justified and sometimes unjustified. My faith that my brother will show up to my birthday party may be justified, but my faith that my magic 8 ball is reliable isn't justified. My hope that my paper will eventually be published may be justified, but my hope that our 2-hours-late Uber driver will show up isn't justified.

The primary goal of this chapter is to explore how the propositional and doxastic justification distinction applies to faith and hope. First, in Section 12.2, we'll explore the nature of faith and hope—getting clear on descriptive questions about faith and hope is essential for answering questions about their justification. In Section 12.3, we'll explore general normative questions about faith and hope. Finally, in Section 12.4, we'll apply the propositional and doxastic justification distinction to faith and hope. Throughout this chapter, we'll use belief as a contrast class; there's been a lot of ink spilled over the justification of belief, so it's instructive to start there.

There are a few notable upshots of our discussion. Bringing in faith and hope makes salient additional normative categories, including the way the distinction between epistemic and practical justification interacts with the distinction between propositional and doxastic justification. We will see that there are four ways we can evaluate belief, faith, and hope (and other mental states as well). We'll also see that, while wishful thinking causes a lack of at least doxastic justification in the belief case, wishful *faith* and wishful *hope* don't as obviously lack doxastic justification. Finally, we'll consider what it might look like for faith and hope to have propositional justification without doxastic justification.

12.1 The Nature of Faith and Hope

There are many kinds of faith, and many kinds of hope. Here, we'll focus on faith and hope as *mental states*, as opposed to faith and hope as *actions*. A lost hiker might take an act of faith by attempting to jump a wide crevice, if it's the only way back to civilization (see James 1897). Similarly, some in the hope literature focus on an action-oriented strand of hope, often called *hopefulness* (Martin 2013: 69; Blöser and Stahl 2017a: 367). There are important questions about what justifies faith and hope qua acts, but here we'll restrict our focus to attitudes.

Second, we'll focus on *propositional* versions of faith and hope—as opposed to faith or hope in a person or in an ideal. This again sharpens our focus, and brings the strand of faith and hope of interest in line with belief—which is also a propositional attitude.

Finally, this chapter is about both religious and secular faith and hope. Faith and hope are two of the three theological virtues (alongside love; see 1 Cor. 13:13), but at the same time, they are an important part of our

everyday lives and personal relationships (see. e.g. Saran 2014; Preston-Roedder 2018). My remarks in this chapter apply to both strands.

This is a borderline truism: evaluating the rationality of an attitude requires some understanding of the nature of that attitude. For this reason, we'll begin with descriptive questions in this section, then move to normative questions.

12.1.1 Belief, Faith, and Hope

Philosophers often distinguish between two kinds of mental states. *Cognitive* or epistemic states have a mind-to-world direction of fit. They represent the world. They are normally truth-tracking, responsive to evidence, and evaluable from primarily an epistemic point of view. Examples of cognitive mental states include beliefs, credences, and probability-beliefs.

Conative mental states, by contrast, have a world-to-mind direction of fit. They reflect what an agent takes to be desirable or valuable, and are inherently motivating. They needn't involve evidence or epistemic justification for their contents. I can desire that *p*, even knowing *p* is false—for example I desire a catastrophe never occurred, but I know it did. Examples of conative mental states include desires, pro-attitudes, and beliefs about the good. Of course, for the belief “*p* is good” to be justified, one needs evidence that *p* is good or desirable—but one doesn't need evidence that *p* is *true*. With this distinction in mind, let's examine the nature of belief, faith, and hope.³

Belief is the attitude of taking something to be the case or regarding it as true (Schwitzgebel 2019). Belief generally requires quite a bit epistemically (e.g. fairly strong evidence). We ought not, and often will not, believe *p* if our evidence strongly favors not-*p*. In this, belief is primarily sensitive to epistemic factors, like evidence and truth.⁴ On the other hand, believing *p* doesn't have implications for desiring *p*. I might believe that I failed a test or I missed a flight, even though I have no desire for either of those to be true. Thus, belief has a strong cognitive component but no essential conative component.

What's the relationship between faith and belief? Almost all philosophers think that belief doesn't entail faith. Consider my beliefs that I failed a test or missed a flight—I don't have *faith* that either of these are true. A common explanation for this is that faith that *p*, but not belief that *p*, involves a positive conative attitude toward *p*—for example a desire for *p*, a positive evaluation of *p*, and so on.

3 For more on the relationship between these three states, see Jackson (2021).

4 I say “primarily” because on some views, practical and moral factors can affect the epistemic justification of a belief (e.g. Fantl & McGrath 2009; Basu & Schroeder 2019). I set these encroachment views aside.

Many also deny that faith entails belief—although this is more controversial.⁵ There are a number of reasons for this, but here is one: faith seems to “go beyond the evidence” in a way that belief doesn’t. Similarly, faith is compatible with more doubt than belief. Even if belief is compatible with *some* doubt—as it seems fine to say, “I believe *p* but there’s a chance I’m wrong”—it seems like faith is compatible with *even more* doubt—more counterevidence or lower credences. Both of these observations seem difficult to explain if faith just is, or entails, a kind of believing.

So, if you buy the story about faith from the previous paragraph—which I’ll assume is basically correct—this means that faith has (i) a cognitive component (but a moderate one, weaker than belief’s) and (ii) a moderate or even strong conative component. I’ll expand on each condition in turn.

With respect to (i), faith is *compatible* with believing, but it goes beyond the evidence more than belief. So, if I have very good evidence that God exists, I may both believe and have faith that God exists. But if I lose some of this evidence, I might give up my belief, but nonetheless maintain my faith that God exists. In this case, the epistemic component of faith isn’t belief, but might be replaced by, for example a moderately high credence God exists or a belief that God’s existence is probable. Nonetheless, it also doesn’t seem like faith is compatible with *any* amount of doubt. If I get so much counterevidence that my credence in *p* is say, 0.1, I should give up my faith—and most would do so. Faith also involves (ii): a desire for, or a pro-attitude toward, its content. So I could also lose my faith that God exists if lose my desire for God to exist, or begin to think that God’s existing would be a bad thing.

Faith may include more than the cognitive and the conative states described above. It might also involve the *affective*, so having faith involves, or has implications for, one’s emotions (Rettler 2018). Some also maintain that a separate aspect of faith is the fact that it goes beyond the evidence (Buchak 2012). However, I suspect this could be captured in other features of faith (the fact that it is partially grounded in a pro-attitude, and/or that it doesn’t require belief). Here, I’ll mainly focus on the cognitive and conative components of faith, but my arguments should be consistent with views that include other components as well.

Hope is similar to, but importantly distinct from, faith. On the standard view, hope that *p* consists of two things: a desire for *p* to be true and a belief that *p* is possible (Downie 1963: 248; Day 1969: 89; see Milona 2019 for a recent defense of the standard view). Note that, on this view, the cognitive component of hope—which can be understood as either a belief that *p* possible or as a non-zero credence in *p*—is even *weaker* than that of faith. In the case of faith, if one has a very low credence in

5 Pojman (1986), Audi (1991), Alston (1996), among others, argue that faith doesn’t entail belief. Mugg (2016) and Malcolm and Scott (2016) argue that faith entails belief.

p, one shouldn't—and most wouldn't—continue to have faith. But hope is uncontroversially consistent with very low credences—as long as they are non-zero. Note that hope is consistent with high credences as well, but not maximally high—it seems odd to hope for things in which we are certain. Then, as Martin (2013: 69) notes, hope that p may be consistent with any credence in p between, but excluding, 1 and 0. Even so, hope's cognitive component is weaker than that of faith.

But, like faith, hope has a strong conative component. Hoping for p requires a desire for p to be true. As Born (2018: 107) notes, “Hope is essentially a desire, a pro-attitude ...” Almost everyone in the hope literature maintains that a desire for the proposition in question is necessary for hope. Whether the conative component of hope is stronger than the conative component of faith is controversial. In Jackson (2021), I give two reasons to think hope's conative component is stronger than faith's. One, if hope has the same conative component as faith and a weaker epistemic one, hope starts to look like faith's “younger sibling.” However, hope seems to have its own power and distinctiveness, apart from faith. It is often considered a virtue in its own right, and something that is important for people to cultivate. Hope's having a stronger conative component than faith can explain its distinctness. Two, there's a puzzle in the hope literature about how hope has such strong motivating power in difficult circumstances, when all it requires is a non-zero credence in p (see Pettit 2004: 154; McGeer 2004: 104; Martin 2013; Calhoun 2018a). One way to help solve this puzzle is to maintain that hope has an *especially* strong conative component. Because the outcome would be so *good*, this motivates agents with hope in a unique way.

Some respond to this puzzle—and a related puzzle that involves distinguishing hope from despair—by maintaining that hope has additional components, beyond simply a desire and a possibility-belief (or non-zero credence). For example, Meirav (2009) argues that hope involves “an external factor”—an attitude toward some factor (e.g. nature, fate, God) on which the realization of the hoped-for end causally depends. Calhoun (2018a) argues that hope provides the hopeful a “phenomenological idea of the future.” On Martin's (2013) “incorporation” account of hope, the hopeful's cognitive attitudes provide a “justificatory rationale” for related emotions and actions. Finally, Chignell's (2021) “focus theory” of hope entails that hoping involves a special attention to the hoped-for outcome.

Even so, most that supplement “the standard view” of hope nonetheless think that a desire and a non-zero credence/possibility-belief are *necessary* for hope—they just maintain that they aren't jointly sufficient. Again, like the case of faith, I'll mainly focus on the cognitive and conative components of hope picked out by the standard view, but my arguments are consistent with views that include other components as well.

In sum: belief is a cognitive attitude with a mind-to-world direction of fit, that is primarily sensitive to epistemic factors, like evidence. Faith

and hope, by contrast, involve both cognitive and conative components, so they consist of states that have a mind-to-world direction of fit, and other states that have a world-to-mind direction of fit. The cognitive and conative components of faith and hope nonetheless differ slightly—for example, most think that hope is consistent with lower credences than faith, but hope may have a stronger conative component than faith.

12.1.2 Mental Fundamentality

Some states are *mentally fundamental*, in the sense that they don't reduce to other states. For example, one debate involves whether beliefs reduce to credences or credences reduce to beliefs, or whether belief and credence are both fundamental attitudes (see Jackson 2020a). Others have argued that knowledge is fundamental (Williamson 2000), that seemings are fundamental, or that desires are fundamental (Lewis 1988, 1996). On many of these views, we should understand other mental states in terms of the fundamental states. David Lewis, for example, thought that pretty much all mental states could be traced back to a belief-like state or a desire-like state. Some go even further and reduce desires to beliefs about the good (Price 1989; Gregory forthcoming). Still others reduce beliefs to high credences (Eriksson & Hájek 2007; Lee & Silva 2020). Reducing everything to a small number of attitude-types is challenging, however, because there are many candidate *sui generis* mental states—including imaginings, intentions, and emotions (although some reduce intentions to beliefs and emotions to beliefs; see Marušić & Schwenkler 2018 for the former and Roberts 1998 for the latter).⁶

The point here isn't to settle debates about exactly which mental states are fundamental; I discuss this to shed light on the nature of faith and hope. In my view, faith and hope are *not* good candidates for fundamental mental states. Why? Well, consider our discussion above. Both faith and hope have cognitive components and conative components, which have opposite directions of fit. If faith and hope are *sui generis*, then, for one thing, it's not clear what direction of fit they'd have. Breaking them into smaller components is natural and intuitive, is characteristic of almost all existing philosophical analyses offered thus far, and gives us clearer answers to questions about direction of fit.

Consider faith. The role of the cognitive component of faith can be played by different mental states—including beliefs, credences, probability-beliefs, beliefs in epistemic modals (states that have a mind-to-world

6 If certain mental state(s) are fundamental, this isn't to say that mind-body dualism is true. There's a separate question of whether we can give a satisfactory *physicalist* account of mental states. The mentally fundamental states may or may not reduce to, or supervene on, physical states. These debates about mental fundamentality don't presuppose anything about the dualism/physicalism debate.

direction of fit). The same goes for the conative component—it can be played be a desire, a pro-attitude, or a belief about the good (states that have a world-to-mind direction of fit). Faith may have an affective or emotive component as well. It's thus natural to see faith as a mental state that is “built up” of these more fundamental mental-state parts. The same for hope—many of our hopes may be built up of a probability-belief or non-zero credence (the cognitive component) and a desire or pro-attitude (the conative component).

Because this picture of faith and hope is both natural and orthodox (for faith, see Howard-Snyder 2013; for hope, see Blöser & Stahl 2017b), I'm pretty sanguine about a project that reduces faith and hope to various combinations of more fundamental attitudes. The fact that we've seemed to successfully understand them by breaking them into various components, combined with the theoretical pressure there is to not multiply fundamental entities beyond necessity, there is good reason to go in for a reductionist project.

Before we move to normative questions, note that the idea that faith and hope are non-fundamental states doesn't mean they are invaluable, unimportant, or not worth studying. In fact, as I argue in Jackson (2021), states that have both a conative and a cognitive component have a unique ability to motivate and rationalize action. Further, we'll see in the next sections why evaluating and understanding faith and hope may require more than simply analyzing each of their parts.

12.2 Normative Questions

We now turn to normative questions about faith and hope. We'll focus on faith and hope's “justification” or “rationality”—I'm using those terms interchangeably. We'll also focus on rationality as a function of **object-given** reasons—holding an attitude because *its object* is appropriate to hold (e.g. believing something because it is true or desiring something because it is good). Object-given reasons contrast with **state-given** reasons—cases where having *the state itself* brings about certain benefits (e.g. if I offer to pay you \$100 to form a certain belief or desire).⁷

So, what makes faith and hope justified? Deriving general principles about faith and hope's justification seems difficult at first blush. Faith and hope are plausibly non-fundamental mental states and include components with opposite directions of fit. This means that accurately representing the world isn't enough to be justified full-stop, and being fitting or conducive to one's flourishing isn't enough to be justified full-stop.

One might think that a token of faith or hope is justified when it is both sufficiently accurate/evidentially supported (fill in your favorite story about rational cognitive attitudes) *and* sufficiently fitting/conductive to

7 Thanks to Ralph Wedgwood.

one's flourishing (fill in your favorite story about rational conative attitudes). However, this might not even be enough. Suppose mental state M has parts A, B, and C. Simply because A, B, and C are justified doesn't mean M as a whole is justified—M's justification may depend on how A–C interact. For example, maybe each component is individually justified, but they fail to cohere with each other.⁸ So giving a story about the justification of faith and hope seems difficult.

However, “justification” is ambiguous between *practical* and *epistemic* justification; this may help with our problem. First, note that whether we can evaluate *beliefs* for their practical justification is controversial. Several—for example Kelly (2002), Shah (2003, 2006), Way (2012)—argue that evaluating beliefs for practical justification raises wrong-kind-of-reason concerns. On this view, practical reasons don't apply directly to beliefs at all. Others—for example Leary (2017), Rinard (2018, 2019)—argue that there are practical reasons for and against belief. Interestingly, faith and hope are completely different—no one, to my knowledge, has argued that practical evaluations of faith and hope are subject to a wrong-kind-of-reason concern. What's more, many prominent normative accounts of faith and hope *focus primarily* on practical rationality (see Rioux 2021: sec. 2).⁹

This makes sense, given the nature of belief, faith, and hope outlined in the previous section. Since belief is primarily an epistemic or cognitive state, it's natural to think there'd be controversy as to whether it can be practically evaluated. Faith and hope, by contrast, involve both the cognitive and the conative, which makes them natural candidates to be evaluated not just epistemically but also practically—they don't only aim at representing the world, but also involve what is good and valuable.

Thus, it's natural to think that, for each token state of faith or hope that p, there's four possibilities. It could be: both practically and epistemically unjustified, practically justified but not epistemically justified, epistemically justified but not practically justified, and both practically and epistemically justified.

To see how practical and epistemic justification may come apart here, consider some examples. Let's begin with hope. Milona and Stockdale (2018: 209) discuss a case of hoping to get back together with one's abusive ex-partner. This hope might be perfectly *epistemically* justified: given your evidence of your partner's past behavior, it is rational to consider this a live possibility or sufficiently probable. Nonetheless, it is *practically*

8 Relevant here is the literature on organic unities and emergent properties; see Moore (1903: 27); O'Connor & Wong (2015).

9 For hope, see Bovens (1999: sec. 3); Pettit (2004: 160); Martin (2013: 48–52); Calhoun (2018b: 86–88). For faith, see Buchak (2012); McKaughan (2013). But others do focus explicitly on epistemic rationality; see Benton (2019, 2021) for an explicit discussion of hope's epistemic rationality, and specifically it's incompatibility with knowledge, and Jackson (2019, 2020b) for a discussion of faith's epistemic rationality.

unjustified: even if you do in some sense desire it, you ought not to desire it; its obtaining would be quite bad for you. Hopes can also be practically justified, but epistemically unjustified. Consider a teenager who hopes his divorced parents will get back together. This hope may be *practically* justified if it would be good for him if they got back together, but it also might be *epistemically* unjustified—if he has strong evidence that essentially guarantees that it would never occur. You can imagine someone telling this teenager, “Why do you still have hope? That isn’t going to happen.”

Related considerations apply to faith. Consider cases where you ought not desire some outcome, but you desire it anyway, and you have decent evidence the outcome will obtain—for example faith that something will happen that will enable you to satisfy a harmful addiction. Here, faith may be epistemically justified, but not practically justified. And faith can also be practically but not epistemically justified. If you have faith that you are much smarter than you actually are, this might be practically justified if being smarter would be good for you, but it may nonetheless be epistemically unjustified, if it is ill-supported by your evidence. Or consider a case of religious faith in which one has little or no evidence that God exists, but continues to have faith in God anyway, because they think God’s existing would be a good thing. This faith may be epistemically unjustified but practically justified. And of course, both faith and hope can be practically and epistemically justified, and practically and epistemically unjustified—compare faith or hope that one’s loyal spouse is trustworthy to faith or hope that one’s magic 8 ball is reliable.

This distinction between practical and epistemic justification—and the ways that these can come apart—aids us in answering normative questions about faith and hope. It’s plausible that faith/hope’s *epistemic* normative status derives from the attitude’s epistemic/cognitive components, and faith/hope’s *practical* normative status derives from the attitude’s conative components. This suggests that faith and hope are epistemically unjustified when their cognitive component is unjustified, and practically unjustified when their conative component is unjustified.

More controversially, faith and hope may be epistemically justified when their cognitive component is justified, and practically justified when their conative component is justified. This second claim is more controversial for two reasons. One, it’s not clear that we can completely rule out the possibility that a conative state can confer epistemic irrationality, or that a cognitive state can confer practical irrationality. It does seem weird to think that, for example my hoping that *p* is practically unjustified because my credence in *p* is practically unjustified. However, this may be possible on some views on which there are practical reasons for belief, or epistemic reasons for desire. Second, it is more controversial because of what was noted above: simply because its components are justified doesn’t make a state overall justified, since we then also need to address, among other things, questions about how those components interact. For these reasons,

we can conclude that faith and hope are *normally* epistemically justified when their cognitive component is epistemically justified, and *normally* practically justified when their conative component is practically justified.

To close this section, it's worth considering ways that higher-order defeat interacts with faith and hope. Higher-order defeat occurs when you receive evidence that your attitude was formed in a defective way—for instance, if you form a belief that there is a tree in front of you, then find out you just took a drug that causes tree hallucinations.

The standard cases of higher-order defeat of belief are more difficult to apply to faith and hope. For example, debunking arguments for theistic belief may undermine one's belief that God exists, but they may not prevent one from rationally having faith, or rationally hoping, that God exists, since rational faith and hope require moderate to minimum evidential support. Of course, if the higher-order evidence is decisive enough, it can also undermine faith or hope by defeating their cognitive components.

Higher-order defeat can also undermine the *conative* component of faith and hope. If a desire that serves as the conative component of faith/hope is based on a belief, that desire can be defeated if that belief is defeated. For example, if, while at my child's soccer game, I believe my child is on the yellow team, and, on this basis, hope that the yellow team scores. If I get higher-order evidence against my belief that my child's team is yellow, this can undermine my desire and thus my hope that yellow scores. While the specifics will depend on one's theory of rational desire, one explanation for this is because the evidence that undermines my belief *my child's team is yellow* also undermines my belief *the yellow team's scoring is good*, which, in turn, undermines my desire that yellow scores. This evidence may make my belief about goodness *epistemically* irrational, which in turn makes my hope *practically* irrational. Interestingly, then, the epistemic irrationality of some states may cause the practical irrationality of others.

The conative component of faith and hope may also be undermined by non-epistemic factors. Suppose I have faith that God exists, and thus desire for God to exist. However, I also don't want to desire that God exists, because I want to fit in with my non-religious friends. Or maybe I hope that there's a cigarette in my pocket, but I also don't want to desire this since I am trying to quit smoking. Possibly, these higher-order desires could undermine the practical rationality of faith or hope by undermining the conative component of the attitude.¹⁰

Now, we turn to ways that the propositional/doxastic justification distinction may apply to faith and hope.

10 Thanks to Luis Oliveira for helpful discussion about the relationship between faith, hope, and higher order defeat, and for many of these instructive examples.

12.3 Proposition and Doxastic Justification

Recall that the distinction between propositional and doxastic justification is the distinction between having justification to have an attitude and having a justified attitude. An attitude is propositionally, but not doxastically, justified in two main sets of cases: when one has good reasons to have attitude but simply hasn't formed it, or when one has the attitude, but on a poor basis.

This distinction is normally applied to *belief*. But it's not clear why we should limit ourselves to the belief case; the distinction seems to apply just as well to faith and hope. One could have justified faith (or hope) that *p*, or have justification to have faith (or hope) that *p*.

This distinction also is normally applied *only* to epistemic justification: traditionally, the distinction brings out two ways that *beliefs* can be *epistemically* justified. But when we zoom out to include faith and hope, this raises the question: could this distinction be applied to other kinds of justification, like *practical* justification? It's hard to see why not. For example, one could have a strong practical reason to have faith or hope that *p*—and thus have practical propositional justification—but not have practical doxastic justification, simply because one hasn't formed the relevant attitude. Further, it may be that one ignores one's strong practical reasons and instead forms faith or hope on a poor basis. As we'll see soon, spelling out the specifics of this case is less straightforward, but it's not at all clear that this is impossible. This brings out at least four ways an attitude might be justified:

Epistemic propositional justification for *p*: having epistemic justification to have an attitude toward *p*.

Epistemic doxastic justification for *p*: having an epistemically justified attitude toward *p*.

Practical propositional justification for *p*: having practical justification to have the attitude toward *p*.

Practical doxastic justification for *p*: having a practically justified attitude toward *p*.

Thus, faith and hope may be justified in any of the four ways above. And the possibility of practical justification opens up new options even in the belief case: if there are practical reasons for belief, then beliefs may be *practically* doxastically or propositionally justified as well.

What do these possibilities look like, more concretely? First, as noted above, one can have propositional but not doxastic justification in either sense (epistemic or practical) if one simply fails to form the attitude (belief, faith, or hope) in question. This applies across the board: to all three attitudes, and to practical and epistemic justification.

Things get more complex in cases of faith and hope where one lacks doxastic justification because the basing relation isn't met. Let's start with epistemic justification. In the belief case, a common example is *wishful thinking*: Suppose you have a lot of evidence for p , but believe p merely because you think it would be a good thing if p were true. For example, you have good evidence that your favorite sports will win the national championship, but believe they will win merely because you desire that they win. In this case, your belief lacks doxastic (epistemic) justification.

The case of hope and faith is different. Wishful thinking for hope or faith is hoping or having faith that p is true because you think that it would be a good thing if p is true. It's less clear that you'd lack doxastic (epistemic) justification in this case: compare "you only believe that because you want it to be true" with "you only hope for that because you want it to be true." The former seems to accurately point out a problematic way of believing, but the latter doesn't seem problematic. A desire your team wins doesn't seem like a bad basis for hoping they win. Something similar may be said about faith—a desire may not be a bad basis for faith, either (especially if your evidence doesn't decisively count against the proposition of faith). Then, it seems much worse to base a *belief* on a desire than to base *faith* or *hope* on a desire. This is because faith and hope essentially involve the conative, and belief does not. Thus, wishful *thinking* may be irrational, but wishful *hoping* or wishful *faith* may not be.

So, it is at least possible that faith or hope based on a desire for the proposition in question is epistemically, doxastically justified. What might remove doxastic justification, however, is to base the *cognitive* components of faith or hope on desire. So, for example, one hopes one's team will win the championship, but one's only basis for thinking this is possible at all is only one's desire for their team to win. Or, alternatively, one has faith that one's team will win with a credence of 0.6, but one's credence is based merely on the desire for their team to win. In these cases, we can suppose that one has the relevant evidence to justify the cognitive components of each attitude (the possibility-belief and the 0.6 credence, respectively), and thus has propositional justification, but lacks doxastic justification for each cognitive component. We'd then need the further premise linking the justification of an attitude as a whole to the justification of its components—so, for example, if the cognitive component of my faith that p has propositional but not doxastic justification, then my faith that p has propositional but not doxastic justification. Thus, faith or hope might enjoy propositional but not doxastic epistemic justification in cases where their cognitive components have poor bases, for example wishful thinking. Note, however, that it may be *easier* for faith and hope to have both propositional and doxastic justification than belief in these cases, as it is easier to obtain both, for example justification for a non-zero (0.6) credence and a justified non-zero (0.6) credence than it is to obtain a justified belief or justification to believe.

What about practical justification? What would it look like to have practical justification to say, hope that *p*, without having a practically justified hope that *p*? Of course, this depends on what practical justification amounts to. At first blush, an attitude is practically, propositionally justified when its object is good for an agent, conducive to their flourishing, or coincides with their goals—recall that we are focusing on object-given reasons. One case where faith and hope might be irrational is when they are based on state-given reasons: that is, we only have the attitude because having it is pleasant or comforting, but it is not held toward an appropriate object. Here, there is belief/faith/hope parity: having faith or hope for merely state-given reasons seems just as irrational as it does in the belief case. If this is irrational, then this might point us to a case of practical propositional justification without practical doxastic justification: I have good object-given reasons to, hope that *p* or have faith that *p*. However, I ignore those and instead merely hope that *p* or have faith that *p* because having the state itself brings about certain benefits. For example: suppose you’ll pay me a large sum of money to hope that it will be sunny tomorrow. I may have practical justification to hope that it will be sunny, if I prefer sun to rain, but suppose I ignore this fact and instead hope for sun just to get the money from you. It seems like I have practical justification to hope that it will be sunny, but lack practically justified hope that it will be sunny.¹¹

The chart below summarizes the above discussion. As you can see, many distinctions can be made once we have three attitudes and four senses of justification on the table. Further, it also often seems appropriate to treat faith and hope similarly, since the relevant senses of justification often apply in the same way to both attitudes.

	<i>Belief that p</i>	<i>Faith that p</i>	<i>Hope that p</i>
Epistemic propositional justification for p	A function of the epistemic—requires a good amount of evidence for <i>p</i> .	A function of the epistemic—requires a moderate amount of evidence for <i>p</i> .	A function of the epistemic—requires only enough evidence for <i>p</i> to make <i>p</i> a live possibility.
Epistemic doxastic justification for p	Excludes cases where one lacks the attitude and cases where the basing relation isn’t met: e.g. wishful thinking.	Excludes cases where one lacks the attitude and cases where the basing relation isn’t met. When compared to belief, “wishful faith” or “wishful hope” may not be generally irrational, but only problematic when applied to the cognitive components specifically.	

(Continued)

11 Thanks to Ralph Wedgwood.

	<i>Belief that p</i>	<i>Faith that p</i>	<i>Hope that p</i>
Practical propositional justification for p	Are there practical reasons for belief? If no, this is empty. If yes, depends on what practically	Depends on your theory of practical justification, but may mean an attitude is good for an agent, conducive to their flourishing, or coincides with their goals. May not require epistemic justification.	
Practical doxastic justification for p	justifies belief; may be similar to faith/hope.	Excludes cases where one lacks the attitude and possible cases where one's attitude isn't based on the fact that practically justifies it.	

12.4 Conclusion

We've covered the nature of belief, faith, and hope—while belief is an epistemic state, faith and hope have both epistemic and conative components with opposite directions of fit. This sheds light on why it's natural to evaluate faith and hope not just epistemically, but also practically. Bringing in faith and hope to the discussion of propositional and doxastic justification thus highlights additional normative categories, and suggests that practical justification also admits of further precisification.

We've also noted that sometimes faith and hope deserve a separate normative treatment than belief: for example, wishful *faith* and wishful *hope* don't lack doxastic justification in the same situations in which wishful *belief* does. The propositional and doxastic *practical* justification of *belief*—if there are practical reasons for belief—also merits further exploration.

In conclusion, faith and hope can enjoy propositional and doxastic justification, in both epistemic and practical senses. Our discussion reinforces the point made in the introduction: justification comes in many forms. Nonetheless, getting clear on the various types of justification enables us to more accurately evaluate in what senses our attitudes are—and are not—justified.

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