

Closing the Case on Self-Fulfilling Beliefs

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Abstract Two principles in epistemology are apparent examples of the close connection between rationality and truth. First, adding a disjunct to what's rational to believe yields a proposition that's also rational to believe. Second, what's likely if believed is rational to believe. While these principles are accepted by many, it turns out that they clash. In light of this clash, we must relinquish the second principle. Reflecting on its rationale, though, reveals that there are two distinct ways to understand the connection between rationality and truth. Rationality is fundamentally a guide to the belief-independent truth, rather than a guide to acquiring true beliefs. And this in turn has important implications for current discussions of permissivism, epistemic reasons, and epistemic consequentialism.

Keywords epistemology, epistemic consequentialism, self-fulfilling beliefs, the aim of belief, the truth connection, epistemic closure