



# Wisdom, Action, and Knowledge

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An important debate in the current philosophy of wisdom is whether propositional knowledge is necessary for wisdom. Most of the debate, however, has been focused on discussing wisdom as a character trait. This paper contributes to the debate by discussing wisdom as a property of actions and defends what I shall call the knowledge view: propositional knowledge is necessary to explain wise actions. The standard view among philosophers (e.g., Kekes 1983, 2020; Nozick 1981; Whitcomb 2011; Grimm 2015; Tsai 2022) is that wisdom is a virtue which is intimately connected to wellbeing – be it in terms of being in a cognitive state, the contents of which are the goals of wellbeing and the ways to reach them, and/or an ability to perform actions appropriate to reaching the goals of wellbeing. In line with the standard view, I shall take wise actions to be those that somehow relates to the goals of wellbeing. Both consequentialism and Aristotelianism describe how such a relation can pan out. I shall not take sides and, for the sake of the paper, assume both and see how my thesis stands irrespective of which side of the debate one decides to take. With this thought, I’ve organised the paper as follows. §1 discusses the two modal features of wise actions: counterfactual robustness and rational robustness. §2 argues that knowledge explains these two modal features. §3 examines two epistemic accounts vogue in current philosophical literature that may plausibly explain wise actions. §4 discusses whether knowledge is also sufficient to explain wise actions.

## 1 Two Modal Characteristics

### 1.1 Counterfactual Robustness

Before we begin, let me illustrate two ways in which wise actions can be thought of. The first is in terms of *Consequentialism* and the second is in terms of *Aristoteliansim*. I shall discuss these views here because they are two of the most common ways in which wisdom (and virtue in general) is thought of. Consequentialists think of virtues as character traits that somehow systematically

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produces good (e.g., Driver 2004). Accordingly, we could think of virtuous actions as those that somehow systematically reaches those goals of good. Since wisdom is associated with wellbeing, a Consequentialist view of wise action would be one where the action systematically reaches the goal(s) of wellbeing. Given this, we can think of wise actions as those that are directed at the goals of wellbeing. In other words, one could think of them as ‘success actions’, i.e., actions that either reach or are aimed at reaching those goals. Now, an action performed by an agent can be said to be successful just in case the action helps the agent reach the goal for the sake of which the action is performed. A goal could be said to be a state of affairs that the agent desires to realise. For example, in archery the goal is the bullseye; in chess the goal is winning the game. An action can help the agent reach the goal in two ways. Firstly, it might *directly* realise the state of affairs. Thus, in archery where the archer’s goal is the state of affairs where the arrow hits the bullseye, shooting the arrow directly at the bullseye realises that state of affairs. Secondly, an action might *contribute* towards realization of the state of affairs. This is the case with chess where the state of affairs that needs to be realised by the player is checkmating the opponent – any particular move she makes (at least when it’s not the one that checkmates the opponent’s king) may contribute towards the realization of that state of affairs without directly realizing it.

Consequentialists can think of a wise action as being successful in a similar way – an action, the performance of which generally achieves, or contributes to achieving, a certain goal. Here the goals are the goals of wellbeing, and the actions are those that directly realise those states of affairs or are conducive to realising them. These actions are generally multiple such that an agent has the option of reaching these goals through various actions. And finally, these actions are successful only if they reach or somehow help reach the goals. Thus, a wise career advice is one in which the advice can lead the advisee to, say, choose a proper career for herself, or a wise decision in a family dispute is one that somehow leads to the abating or solving the dispute, and so on. This, of course, isn’t to say that wise actions are always successful – some actions that do not always lead to reaching the goals of wellbeing. In cases such as these, the action is directed at a certain goal, the action fails to achieve the goal due to a certain intervening circumstance, and yet it can rightly be regarded as wise.

In contrast, according to Aristotelians, unlike Consequentialists, there is no separation between the virtuous action and its goal, such that, to act virtuously is just to be *constituted* by the goal(s) of that virtue. That’s to say, the goal is taken to be constitutive of the virtuous action (e.g., McDowell 1979, Nussbaum 1986; ch 10). Now, constitution is a relation between two entities *A* and *B* such that if *A* is said to be constituted by *B*, then *B*, at least in part, explains *A*. Thus, if I say that water is constituted by hydrogen, then hydrogen, at least in part, explains the nature of water. Extrapolating this notion to actions, for Aristotelians, the action of, say, eating isn’t so much that an agent performs an action, the goal of which is somehow food getting inside one’s mouth. But rather, the getting of food inside one’s mouth is constitutive of the action of eating. In other words, food getting inside one’s mouth explains, at least in part, the action of eating. Similarly, Aristotelians would say that wise actions are not so much the ones that somehow reach or help reach the goals

of wellbeing. But rather, the goals of wellbeing themselves constitute wise actions, i.e., the goals of wellbeing themselves explain, at least in part, wise actions. Thus, a wise career advice could be said to be one where the advice is constituted by the adviser's goal to lead the advisee into, say, choosing a proper career for herself, or a wise decision in a family dispute is one that's constituted the abating or solving the dispute, and so on.

Now, consider the following example.

*(Judge 1):* Michael was a young black male who is a high-school dropout without a job. He was brought before the Court for holding up a taxi-driver on gunpoint and robbing him of \$50. He was caught red-handed. The judge in charge of Michael's case was Judge Lois Forer who observes that 'There was no doubt that Michael was guilty'. Thus, all that was left for Judge Forer was to mete out the punishment to him. So, she looked into the state's sentencing guidelines – they recommended a minimum sentence of twenty-four months. She then looked into Michael's particular circumstances. She found out that the gun he was brandishing was merely a toy gun. Although he had dropped out of school to marry his pregnant girlfriend, Michael later obtained a high school equivalency diploma. He had been steadily employed, earning enough to send his daughter to parochial school – a considerable sacrifice for him and his wife. Shortly before the holdup, Michael had lost his job. Despondent because he couldn't support his family, he went out on a Saturday night, had more than a few drinks, and then robbed the taxi. Finding out about his circumstances, Judge Forer thought that twenty-four months in prison would be a disproportionate punishment for Michael given the kind of crime he has committed. Accordingly, she decides to deviate from the guidelines sentencing Michael to eleven and a half months in the county jail and permitting him to work outside the prison during the day to support his family. She also imposed a sentence of two years' probation following his imprisonment conditioned upon repayment of the \$50. She said that her rationale for the lesser penalty was that this was a first offense, no one was harmed, Michael acted under the pressures of unemployment and need, and he seemed truly contrite. He had never committed a violent act and posed no danger to the public. A sentence of close to a year seemed adequate to convince Michael of the seriousness of his crime.<sup>1</sup>

This is a good example of wise action: through this sentence Forer handed Michael over the rightful punishment he deserved such that it both fits the crime and also protects the community from any potential threat he might pose. At the same time, he was also rehabilitated so that he wouldn't commit another offence upon release. Also, his reduced sentence meant that there is minimal harm to his wife and

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<sup>1</sup> This is a real-life example taken from Schwartz and Sharpe (2010: 17-8).

children, while facilitating his reintegrating into the community. In other words, this sentence leads to the wellbeing of Michael, his family, and the larger community.<sup>2</sup>

But suppose, however, that before any of Forer's sentence could be carried out, Michael passes away due to a freak accident. In such a case, the sentence would no longer lead to Michael's or his family's wellbeing, for Michael is no more for that to happen. The judgment, however, would still not stop being wise. Here, for Consequentialists, the concerned judgment doesn't lead to success, and yet, intuitively, there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with calling it wise. Why is that the case? The natural thing to say is that the success we're talking about here is counterfactual: what really matters for an action to be wise is that the action successfully reaches the goal only in certain counterfactual situations.<sup>3</sup> To make it more precise, we can say that an act of  $\varphi$ -ing performed for the sake of reaching a goal of wellbeing  $G$  is wise only if, were the agent to  $\varphi$  in certain circumstance  $C$ , she would reach  $G$ . Similarly, for the Aristotelian, the concerned action doesn't constitute any goal of wellbeing. But the reason it's still wise is also counterfactual:

<sup>2</sup> An anonymous referee has pointed out that in cases of legal justice, judges are not concerned so much with the wellbeing of the accused, as they are concerned with whether the deserved justice is met. Thus, in *Judge 1*, Forer's sentence is wise, not because it leads to Michael's wellbeing, but rather, because she carefully reasoned through the facts and evidence in a way that it led to Michael receiving the deserved justice – his wellbeing is merely a happy incidental outcome of it. This would also explain why in cases of much more serious crimes, a wise sentence would be one where the accused is given a harsher sentence, thus not leading to his wellbeing. In response, firstly, one could think of wellbeing in two ways – one is in relation to individuals (like Michael and his family), and the other in relation to the society as a whole. If so, then a case in which an unjust sentence is given, such that it doesn't match the seriousness of the crime, may not be good for the society's wellbeing. Thus, Forer being led by her compassion to give reduced prison sentences, and say, letting the accused work outside the prison while serving sentence, wouldn't be wise as it may lead to the accused being a threat to the society. Secondly, it could be that justice isn't independent of wellbeing. This is particularly so if one takes wellbeing to be constitutive of plurality of goals (e.g., Kekes 2022), one of which is justice. Thus, in this case, Forer's sentence could still be wise even if her goal is to give Michael the justice he deserves, since justice is one of the goals of wellbeing. Thirdly, it seems that the referee is espousing a domain relative view of wise action such that one performs wise actions only relative to certain domains where the goals of each domain vary. Thus, for instance, the goal of legal justice is providing justice, and accordingly, Forer's sentence is wise because it leads to that goal of legal justice. Similarly, the goal of gardening maybe healthy plants and a gardening method maybe wise if it leads to healthy plants. Now, there is room for such views of course (e.g., Ryan 2012). Traditionally, however, since there seems to be overwhelming consensus that wise actions relates to wellbeing, I shall assume the traditional view in this paper and move forward. The traditional view would also explain why an action performed with the goal of harming others is intuitively not considered wise (e.g., an act of raping can never be wise irrespective of the level of reasoning employed to perform it) as it doesn't lead to or constitute wellbeing.

<sup>3</sup> A domain relativist might object to this saying that the more obvious explanation here is that wise actions do not always lead to wellbeing, and the sentence being wise could be explained simply in terms of the sentence leading to justice (the goal of legal justice) through a careful consideration of the evidence of the case (and also perhaps Forer's sympathy for Michael). In response, one could of course deny domain relativism and insist on wellbeing as the goal of wise actions. But even if we allow justice to be the goal here, it's unclear whether justice is met by Michael merely in virtue Forer's *pronouncement* of the sentence, and him not remaining alive to receive the appropriate punishments. At least, intuitively, it doesn't seem to be the case that the degree of justice being done to Michael while he receives all the punitive and rehabilitative measures is the same as when he doesn't receive any of them, even when he is dead. And if that's the case, then we're back to the counterfactual explanation of the phenomenon even if we take justice to be the goal of the sentence, i.e., what really matters is whether justice is received by the accused only in certain counterfactual situations.

what really matters for an action to be wise is that the action constitutes the goals of wellbeing only in certain counterfactual situations. To make it more precise,  $\varphi$ -ing is wise only if, were the agent to  $\varphi$  in certain circumstance  $C$ ,  $\varphi$  would constitute  $G$ . Following the standard Lewisian semantics for counterfactuals, wise actions are counterfactually robust in the following way:

(*Counterfactual*):  $S$ 's action  $\varphi$  performed for the sake of reaching  $G$  is wise only if in all nearby worlds<sup>4</sup>, where  $S$  performs  $\varphi$  in  $C$ ,  $S$  succeeds in reaching  $G$ ,  
 or  
 $S$ 's action  $\varphi$  is wise only if in all nearby worlds, where  $S$  performs  $\varphi$  in  $C$ ,  $\varphi$  constitutes  $G$ .

For Consequentialists, *Counterfactual* can explain the fact that the sentence was wise despite having failed to reach its goals. On this view, even if  $S$   $\varphi$ -s for the sake of reaching  $G$  but fails to thereby reach  $G$ ,  $\varphi$  might count as wise because, if she were to  $\varphi$  in certain circumstances  $C$  (which may not actually obtain), she would succeed in reaching  $G$ . This is exactly the case with our example. The judgment fails to reach the goals because Michael's death blocks it from reaching them. Forer's sentence could still count as wise, because if she were to give the same judgment under circumstances where this extraordinary event hadn't transpired, it would have led to both Michael and his family wellbeing. Similarly, for Aristotelians, *Counterfactual* also explains why the sentence was wise despite not constituting the goals of wellbeing. Thus, even if  $\varphi$  fails to be constituted by  $G$ ,  $\varphi$  might still count as wise because, if  $S$  were to  $\varphi$  in certain circumstances  $C$  (which may not actually obtain),  $\varphi$  would be constituted by  $G$ . In our example, the sentence isn't constituted by the goals of wellbeing because they were related to Michael's wellbeing, and since Michael dies, the question of his wellbeing doesn't arise to begin with to constitute the sentence. But Forer's sentence still counts as wise, because if she were to give the same judgment under circumstances where this extraordinary event hadn't transpired, it'd have constituted of Michael's wellbeing.

The above account, however, isn't very informative: it doesn't tell us which sorts of counterfactual circumstances matter for assessing wise actions. When we judge that Forer's sentence is wise, we do so because we think that if she had given the same sentence in a scenario where Michael didn't die under unusual circumstances, the sentence would've led to Michael's and his family's wellbeing. In doing so, we're thinking of is what would've been the case if the circumstances surrounding Forer were *ordinary* or *normal*. Suppose we're right in judging that failure in extraordinary circumstances doesn't count against the wisdom of an action. Then, what really matters for assessments of wise actions is whether the agent's action succeeds in

<sup>4</sup> It may be observed that *Counterfactual*, and other modal conditions featuring below, can go through even if we quantify the relevant number of nearby worlds as most, rather than all. This is a larger debate in modal philosophy. Here, however, I'm following Williamson's (2009) thought that taking only most worlds, may, in many situations lead to many small risks amounting to a large risk. Thus, for instance,  $\varphi$ 's risk of not successfully reaching  $G$  at world  $w_1$  is small,  $\varphi$ 's risk of not successfully reaching  $G$  at  $w_2$  is small, ...,  $\varphi$ 's risk of not successfully reaching  $G$  at  $w_n$  is small, doesn't entail that  $\varphi$ 's risk of not successfully reaching  $G$  is small. Similar cases could be made for the other modal conditions below.

reaching its goal only in normal circumstances, or whether the action is constituted by the goal. However, despite the circumstances being normal, the agent might not perform the action if she believes falsely that the circumstances are abnormal. For instance, assume that Forer is assessing Michael's case under normal circumstances such that if she gives that sentence, then Michael and his family would live well. However, suppose that she falsely believes that the circumstances are abnormal such that if she gives precisely that sentences then Michael and his family wouldn't live well. In that case, she'll not give that sentence – she'll give the sentence only if she believes that the circumstances are normal such that the sentencing would lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing. Accordingly, what needs to be built into our assessment of wise action is also that the agent believes that she is performing the action under normal circumstances. Thus, if an agent acts wisely, then, were she to perform the same action under normal circumstances believing that she is indeed under normal circumstances, she'll succeed in reaching the relevant goal, or her action would constitute the goal. So, we can restate the aforementioned counterfactual condition as follows.

(*Normality*):  $S$ 's action  $\varphi$  performed for the sake of reaching  $G$  is wise only if in all nearby worlds, where  $S$  performs  $\varphi$  in normal circumstances while believing that the circumstances are normal,  $S$  succeeds in reaching  $G$ ,  
 or  
 $S$ 's action  $\varphi$  is wise only if in all nearby worlds, where  $S$  performs  $\varphi$  in normal circumstances while believing that the circumstances are normal,  $\varphi$  constitutes  $G$ .

This condition, obviously, leaves open the possibility that the agent may not succeed when she acts under abnormal circumstances, or that her action may not constitute wellbeing.

But once again, we might worry that this *Normality* condition is still not sufficiently informative. It doesn't tell us when circumstances are normal. One way to think of normality would be in terms of statistical frequency. For instance, suppose that someone arrives home from office at 5 pm every day. Given this statistical frequency, we say, 'Normally, she arrives home from office at 5 pm.' Accordingly, it would be abnormal for her to arrive home at 9 pm on any random day. However, there is another notion of normalcy that's not straightforwardly statistical. According to Nickel (2009) and Smith (2016) this view is based on explanatory privilege: a situation that's normal doesn't require explanation (or at least as much explanation as something abnormal). Thus, it'd make sense for me to ask the person 'Why are you late?' when she arrives home at 9 pm. However, it'd be strange to ask her 'Why are you on time?' when on a random day she arrives home at 5 pm. I believe that the same could be said about our example too. It'd be strange to attribute the abnormality of the situation to the statistical probability of assessing Michael's case. A better view would be to attribute it to his untimely freak death. That the sentence didn't lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing is in need of an explanation, and this explanation could be traced to his untimely freak death. Accordingly, given that such cases can be considered as abnormal, they can be excluded from those cases that really matter for an action to be considered wise.

A related point is that what comes as normal depends on the context. For instance, in the cases of masked dispositions, one can think that the gods can wrap a glass with bubble-wraps just before one is about to strike it so that the glass doesn't break on striking. However, the glass is still considered fragile. This is because, the normal counterfactual situations are the ones where such unusual events do not occur – when we're considering whether the glass is fragile, we rule out the presence of such unusual interfering factors as constitutive of the background conditions of fragility. Something similar could also be said of wise actions – when performing a wise action, the agent doesn't take seriously the presence of abnormal possibilities as constitutive of the background evidence for performing the action. Thus, it'd be extremely unusual for Michael to die a freaky death right after the sentence is passed, and accordingly, Forer can exclude that possibility from the background evidence in the case. If she takes seriously all such abnormal possibilities, then she may not be able to even give a reasonable sentence, far less a wise one.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2 Rational Robustness

Take the following example.

(*Judge 2*): Same as *Judge 1*. However, here, despite having all this information, Forer was about to hand over a punishment of twenty-four months in prison, as the books would have it. But right before she could deliver the judgment, the law for robbing a taxi-driver for \$50 was changed such that now the offender is sentenced to eleven and a half months in prison with permission to work outside the prison during the day to support family members in case they have any. Along with that, a sentence of two years' probation is also to be imposed following their imprisonment conditioned upon repayment of the \$50. Forer was made aware of this new law right in time, and she delivered the sentence accordingly.

In this case Forer had, like in *Judge 1*, the relevant information about Michael's personal background and the particular circumstances surrounding the robbery case. And she gave the same sentence as she did in *Judge 1* such that what could be said of her judgment in *Judge 1* could also be said of her judgment in *Judge 2* – Michael's punishment was rightfully deserved, fitting both the crime and protecting the community from any potential threat he might pose, he was rehabilitated and so the likelihood of him committing further offences upon release is reduced, and the length of his sentence is much less, thus causing minimal harm to his wife and children and increasing his chances of reintegrating into the community. But intuitively, we wouldn't call Forer's sentence in *Judge 2* a wise sentence. This is because the process through which she reached her sentence was not reliable.

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<sup>5</sup> An anonymous referee observes that decision to marry someone can be wise even if one of the spouses die right after the wedding. They note that one doesn't need a counterfactual account involving normality to explain this, and that '[the decision to marry] was wise because it was so reasonable to think the marriage would turn out well.' However, saying that's merely equivalent to a counterfactual like 'If the conditions are normal and we get married, then our marriage will turn out well'.

Whereas, in *Judge 1*, Forer *reasoned* through the information she possessed about Michael to reach the judgment (recall from *Judge 1*: ‘She said that her rationale for the lesser penalty was that this was a first offense, no one was harmed, Michael acted under the pressures of unemployment and need, and he seemed truly contrite. He had never committed a violent act and posed no danger to the public,’), in *Judge 2* she didn’t – it was merely a happy coincidence. Thus, in *Judge 1*, for Forer, had the laws and rules been slightly different, had the amount robbed been \$49 or \$51 instead of \$50, or had he robbed a truck-driver instead of a taxi-driver, she would have still found a way to Michael’s and his family’s wellbeing – she would have researched into Michael’s particular circumstances, reasoned according to the data she had come across, and all of it would still allow her to give a similar sentence that somehow leads to Michael’s and his family’s wellbeing. However, in *Judge 2*, if the laws and circumstances were similarly different, she would have failed to mete out such a sentence. Thus, the reliability we’re talking about here has to do with reason responsiveness of the actions. Forer’s reasoning in *Judge 1* makes the wise outcome more likely – it’s a more reliable way through which one can successfully reach the goals of wellbeing. Thus, wise actions are rationally robust in the sense that could be described by the following condition:

(*Rationality*):  $S$ ’s action,  $\varphi$ , is wise only if in all nearby worlds where  $S$  has sufficient reasons to perform  $\varphi$ ,  $S$  performs  $\varphi$ .

## 2 The Knowledge View

In this section I argue that knowledge explains wise action. Towards this, I shall point out that both the conditions on wise actions – *Normality* and *Rationality* – can be explained in terms of two central features of knowledge – safety and stability.

### 2.1 Normality

Recall, *Normality* says that, if  $S$   $\varphi$ -s wisely, then in the nearby worlds where conditions are normal (and  $S$  truly believes that they are normal) and  $S$  performs  $\varphi$ ,  $S$  succeeds in reaching  $G$  (for Consequentialism), or  $\varphi$  consists of  $G$  (for Aristotelianism). If we observe carefully, we will notice that *Normality* imposes a pragmatic safety condition on wise actions: it implies that a wise action is a reliable or safe way to live well in normal circumstances. Indeed, if it were not, then, there would be at least one nearby world where conditions are normal, and performing that action wouldn’t lead to wellbeing. In such a case, even if the conditions are normal in the actual world and the agent, say, succeeds in reaching the relevant goal by performing that action, the success would merely be out of luck or accident, thus making the action unreliable or unsafe. So, is there any feature of knowledge that can explain this? It seems there is.

Knowledge is generally explained in terms of ‘safety’: to say that  $S$ ’s belief that  $p$  is safe is to say that  $S$ ’s belief that  $p$  couldn’t have easily been false. This notion of



safety has been explicated in a number of ways. However, a relatively uncontroversial way to do it's by appealing to a modal view:

(*Safety*):  $S$ 's belief that  $p$  is safe if, in all nearby worlds, i.e., worlds where  $S$  holds a sufficiently similar belief that  $p^*$  on a sufficiently similar basis under sufficiently similar circumstances,  $S$ 's belief that  $p^*$  is true.<sup>6</sup>

Take, for instance, Goldman's (1976) fake barn example: a man is driving through an area which is full of fake barns that are indistinguishable from real barns. He, however, by chance happens to glance through the window at the only real barn in the whole area and, in virtue of looking at it, forms the belief that it's a barn. Intuitively, we wouldn't attribute knowledge to the man in this instance. But if knowledge is safe, this intuition is easily sustained: he could have easily looked at a different barn, which would be fake, and could have formed a sufficiently similar belief that it's a barn, but this belief would have been false. Similarly, lottery cases can also be explained by safety. Consider someone who, on statistical grounds, believes that her ticket will not win the lottery. And this, indeed, ends up being the case. However, such a belief doesn't qualify as knowledge. This is because there will be at least one nearby world where she holds the belief that her ticket will lose and yet it ends up winning, thus rendering her belief false.

Now, our Consequentialist hypothesis says that a wise action, performed for the sake of reaching a certain goal, is explained by the agent's knowledge that the relevant action will help her reach the relevant goal under normal circumstances (while believing that the circumstances are in fact normal). If  $S$  knows that  $\varphi$  will help her successfully reach  $G$  under normal circumstances (while believing that the circumstances are normal), then in all nearby worlds, her belief that  $\varphi$  will help her successfully reach  $G$  under normal circumstances is true. Now, a subset of the nearby worlds are the nearby worlds where the conditions are normal. Since  $S$ 's belief that  $\varphi$  will help her successfully reach  $G$  is true in these worlds,  $S$  will be successful in reaching  $G$  if she performs  $\varphi$  for the sake of reaching  $G$ . Thus, if Forer knows that giving that sentence would normally lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing, then, in all nearby worlds, her belief that the sentence would normally lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing will be true. Thus, in all these worlds, whenever conditions are normal (and she truly believes that they are normal), and Forer gives the sentence on the basis of her belief, Michael and his family will live well.

For Aristotelians, the hypothesis is that a wise action  $\varphi$  is explained by the agent's knowledge that the relevant action will constitute  $G$  under normal circumstances (while believing that the circumstances are in fact normal). If  $S$  knows that  $\varphi$  will constitute  $G$  under normal circumstances (while believing that the circumstances

<sup>6</sup> Prominent advocates of safety include Sosa (1999), Pritchard (2005), and Williamson (2000, 2009). There have been some objections against this view, e.g., Comesaña (2005), Kelp (2009), and Bogardus (2014). This is no place to discuss them of course. However, in the post-Gettier era, philosophers have generally taken that knowledge isn't merely justified true belief, but rather, justified true belief that's free from epistemic luck. If one takes this anti-luck condition to be something like *Safety*, then knowledge will be something like safe justified true belief. For detailed responses to objections against safety, see e.g., Grundmann (2018), Zhao (2021), and Mortini (2022).

are normal), then in most relevant nearby worlds, her belief that  $\varphi$  will constitute  $G$  under normal circumstances is true. Since  $S$ 's belief that  $\varphi$  will constitute  $G$  is true in these worlds,  $\varphi$  will constitute  $G$  if  $S$  she performs  $\varphi$ . Thus, if Forer knows that giving that sentence would normally constitute of Michael's and his family's wellbeing, then, in most relevant nearby worlds, her belief that the sentence would normally constitute of Michael's and his family's wellbeing will be true. Thus, in all these worlds, whenever conditions are normal (and she truly believes that they are normal), and Forer gives the sentence on the basis of her belief, Michael and his family will live well. This is how *Safety*, and thus knowledge, accounts for the *Normality* condition on wise actions in both Consequentialism and Aristotelianism.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2 Rationality

*Rationality* too is explained by knowledge. Take the following case:

(*Grabit Scandal*): 'I see a man walk into the library and remove a book from the library by concealing it beneath his coat. Since I'm sure the man is Tom Grabit, whom I have often seen before when he attended my classes, I report that I know that Tom Grabit has removed the book. However, suppose further that Mrs. Grabit, the mother of Tom, has averred that on the day in question Tom was not in the library, indeed, was thousands of miles away, and that Tom's identical twin brother, John Grabit, was in the library. Imagine, moreover, that I'm entirely ignorant of the fact that Mrs. Grabit has said these things...[But] Mrs. Grabit's a compulsive and pathological liar, that John Grabit's a fiction of her demented mind, and that Tom Grabit took the book as I believed.' [Lehrer and Paxson 1969: 228]

Here, initially, I could be attributed the knowledge that Tom indeed stole the book. However, Mrs Grabit's misleading testimony that Tom was thousands of miles away at that time and that it was his twin brother John who stole the book defeats my knowledge that Tom stole the book. This defeat could be attributed to some kind of epistemically unlucky situation such that I could have lost my belief that Tom stole the book since I could have easily come to know about Mrs Grabit's testimony after she testified. In *Grabit Scandal*, my reason for believing that Tom stole the book was that I saw him perpetrating the act (I recognize that it's him from my class). However, Mrs Grabit's misleading testimony would override that reason and make me believe that it was not Tom whom I saw removing the book. Assuming that the testimony is widely known to the rest of the peers around me, I could have easily gotten the information and stopped believing that Tom stole the book; it's a matter of sheer luck that I haven't heard it and, thus, still retain the belief that Tom stole the book. Thus, in general, one can say that the epistemic luck we're discussing here consists in that there is an easily accessible fact about the agent's situation, which, if

<sup>7</sup> Sharon Ryan believes that wisdom grounded on knowledge insists on 'perfect success' (Ryan 2012: 108), and since perfect success isn't characteristic of wisdom, she inclines towards justified belief as the epistemic explanation of wisdom. However, as we see here, knowledge can well take care of the lack of perfect success of wise actions.

discovered by her, would make her lose her reason for believing what in fact is true. Since this kind of epistemic luck attacks the reasons for holding a certain true belief, we shall call it *rational luck*. This suggests that knowledge is subject to a stability condition:

(*Stability*): An agent  $S$ 's belief that  $p$  is stable only if, in all nearby worlds, i.e., worlds where  $S$  forms a sufficiently similar belief that  $p^*$  on a sufficiently similar basis under sufficiently similar circumstances,  $S$ 's belief that  $p^*$  isn't rationally undermined by misleading evidence (that's true in the actual world).

Thus, if *Stability* is true, then my true belief that the man who removed the book from the library is Tom Grabit (despite it being formed in a reliable way, as some might demand) will not count as knowledge. This is because in at least one nearby world my belief could have been undermined by misleading evidence that's true in the actual world, i.e., Mrs Grabit's false testimony that Tom was thousands of miles away at the time of the incident and it was his twin brother John who stole the book.

Such a stability condition on knowledge is defended by philosophers like Nozick (1997) Williamson (2000), and Das (2016). Nozick points out that an agent's true belief that  $p$  is stable just in case, in all the worlds where  $p$  is true and the agent arrives at  $p$  through a certain way  $w$ , the agent believes  $p$  by  $w$ . Thus, the stability is in that if the agent comes to truly believe that  $p$  in the actual world through  $w$ , then in all the worlds close to the actual world which are characterised by 'small enough perturbations', the agent will continue to truly believe that  $p$  (Nozick 1997: 151). Williamson observes that 'present knowledge is less vulnerable than mere present true belief to *rational* undermining of future evidence' (2000: 79). His point being that a true belief that's in danger of being undermined by misleading counterevidence at any moment is too unstable to constitute knowledge. Das agrees with them and points out that for a true belief to be counted as knowledge it be 'based on evidence that couldn't be rationally defeated in nearby cases by any fact about the agent's predicament' (Das 2016: 91).<sup>8</sup>

But how does this feature of knowledge explain *Rationality*? Once again, what explains  $S$ 's wise action  $\varphi$  is  $S$ 's knowledge that  $\varphi$  will help her successfully reach  $G$ , or that  $\varphi$  constitutes of  $G$ , in normal circumstances (plus,  $S$ 's belief that the circumstances are indeed normal). That knowledge is stable, and thus, immune to rational luck, entails that  $S$ 's belief, that  $\varphi$  will help her successfully reach  $G$ , or that  $\varphi$  constitutes of  $G$ , in normal circumstances, isn't based on any reason that could easily have been defeated by misleading evidence. So, there are no nearby worlds where  $S$ 's reason for holding this belief is defeated by misleading evidence. Thus, in those worlds, if  $S$  does believe that the conditions are normal, and  $S$  has all the relevant reasons to perform  $\varphi$ , then she'll indeed perform  $\varphi$ . So, in *Judge 1*, if Forer knew that her giving the sentence will lead to Michael's and his family's

<sup>8</sup> This isn't to say that knowledge is entirely indefeasible. For instance, knowledge can be defeated at a future time, even by misleading evidence. *Stability* doesn't say that a belief amounting knowledge can never (*in time*) be rationally defeated by some misleading evidence. What it says is that there are no relevant *nearby possibilities* where a belief formed on a sufficiently similar basis can be rationally defeated by misleading evidence.

wellbeing, then her belief that giving that sentence will lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing was not based on any reason that could easily have been lost due to some misleading evidence. In other words, her belief was not rationally lucky. Accordingly, in no nearby worlds, where circumstances are normal, is her reason for holding that belief lost due to misleading evidence. Thus, in those worlds if Forer has sufficient reasons to give the sentence, then she'll give the sentence.

To conclude, one can formulate the necessity of knowledge condition as follows:

(*K-Necessity*):  $S$   $\varphi$ -s wisely only if  $S$  knows that  $\varphi$  will lead to reaching  $G$ , or that  $\varphi$  constitutes  $G$ .

### 3 Other Epistemic Views

But why think knowledge is the best explanation of wise action? Can't other epistemic notions equally or better explain it? In this section we shall look at three such views – justification, true belief, and non-doxastic attitudes.<sup>9</sup> Now, philosophers have largely them used these two views to explain wise agency. However, if these theories are meant to explain wisdom as a whole, then they should explain wise actions as well. Accordingly, what I shall examine here is whether these theories, are able to explain wise actions. I conclude by observing that none of them succeed in that endeavour.

#### 3.1 Justified Belief

Sharon Ryan, (2012, 2017), has argued that knowledge isn't necessary for wisdom, but rather it's justified belief that's necessary for wisdom. She points out that the reasons behind the performance of a wise action merely consist in justified beliefs (Ryan 2012: 108). Here I argue that sacrificing knowledge for mere justified belief is unhelpful as the latter fails to satisfy *Normality*. Thus, consider the following case:

(*Judge 3*): Judge Forer goes through the evidence of Stan, someone who perpetrated a very similar crime to that of Michael and also with an extremely similar background. She decides to give him the same sentence as in *Judge 1*. However, on the day of judgment, due to some confusion, it was Michael standing before her, and the sentence she passed on was him despite her not having gone through his case.

If Sharon Ryan is right, then Forer's sentence in *Judge 3* should be counted as wise vis-à-vis Michael. But, intuitively, in this case we don't attribute wisdom to the sentence. As such, a case like this provides a counterexample to her view. *Judge 3*

<sup>9</sup> There are also the understanding accounts of wisdom defended by Swartwood (2013) and Shane Ryan (2016). I think their objection to the knowledge view is rather misplaced – they reject it because they think that knowledge isn't *sufficient* to explain wise actions. However, the knowledge view is a more modest one, i.e., knowledge is merely *necessary* to explain them. Accordingly, even if we allow that something like understanding can sufficiently explain wise actions, it still leaves room for the knowledge view. But more on it later.

is a case where Forer has the belief that the sentence would lead to the convict's and his family's wellbeing. She even has justification for the belief – after all, she has gone through the evidence of the case thoroughly. So, how does mere justified belief fail to satisfy *Normality*?

Earlier we noted that knowledge is safe, i.e., if an agent knows something, in the nearby worlds where the agent holds a similar belief under similar circumstances, that belief is true in those worlds. Unlike knowledge, however, justified belief isn't safe – if an agent is merely justified in believing something that's true, in the nearby worlds where the agent holds similar beliefs under similar circumstances, those beliefs aren't always true. This is indeed what fake barn kind of cases tend to show. In this case, the man was justified in believing that it was a barn, and it was in fact a barn. However, in a nearby world where he is driving through the same county, had he, say, looked through his windshield instead of the window he would have looked at a barn façade and believed falsely that it was a barn. Thus, given this nature of justified belief it would fail to satisfy *Normality* because, in at least one nearby worlds, even when conditions are normal, *S* cannot produce success conducive action as *S* can easily have a false belief about which action will successfully lead to reaching *G*. Hence, in those worlds, when *S* performs such an action, *S* will not successfully reach *G*. Accordingly, if Forer merely has a justified belief that the sentence would lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing, then in at least one nearby world where the circumstances are normal, her belief will be false and her passing that judgment will not lead Michael's and his family's wellbeing. In normal circumstances, judges do not confuse among accused. In *Judge 3*, however, Forer was extremely lucky that there was another accused standing before her, viz Michael, who has committed very a similar crime and has a very similar background as Stan, such that whatever sentence would lead to Stan's and his family's wellbeing would also lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing. The person standing in Stan's place could easily have been someone other than Michael with very different crimes and backgrounds, and had that been the case, the sentence may have not led to the accused's, their family's, or the society's wellbeing. Thus, there will be at least one nearby world, where the circumstances are normal (and she believes that the circumstances are normal), and she gives the sentence without it leading to wellbeing. Hence, mere justified belief fails to satisfy *Normality* as the condition insists that in all such nearby worlds where she gives the sentence, it leads to wellbeing. Something very similar could be said of Aristotelianism as well.

Ryan also thinks that someone in a sceptical scenario can be wise if she has a high number of justified beliefs. Accordingly, wise actions can be performed by someone in a sceptical scenario as well. Now firstly, we need to be clear what such kind of actions can be. It's strange to think that they can be physical actions like raising hands, kicking balls, killing people etc – it's odd to think that a BIV-Messi is playing football; he may *think* that he is playing, but that's not the same as *playing*. However, mental actions can be performed in sceptical scenarios. Thus, a BIV can think, wonder, reflect etc. However, not all mental actions can be performed there – generally, truth-related mental actions like remembering, perceiving, knowing etc cannot be performed by a BIV, for by stipulation BIVs preclude truth. Now, wise actions are not just limited to practical actions – like in Forer's case, *passing the*

*sentence* – but also includes mental actions – like Forer *judging* which sentence to pass. Thus, the appropriate question to ask will be: can a BIV-Forer perform a wise mental action, like judging? The answer is no. Now, the actual world is a world close to that of the simulated BIV-world since the simulations track the actual world. If that's the case, then had the simulations been slightly different, her beliefs regarding the sentence would have been false, and she would have judged the wrong sentence to pass, thus not making it a wise judgment. Thus, once again, the judgment will not be safe, since it's merely based on a justified belief and not knowledge, and fail to satisfy *Normality*. If, however, Ryan is to insist that the BIV simulations track the actual world *perfectly*, then, contrary to her, Forer's beliefs in the BIV can be true, since what her BIV believes corresponds to facts in the actual world, and perhaps in many cases even be knowledge, just like someone who has trained extensively in a perfect flight simulator without actually flying does know quite a bit about flying.

### 3.2 True Belief

McCain (2020) too is of the view that wisdom doesn't require knowledge. Unlike Sharon Ryan, however, McCain's candidate of choice is true belief. Can such a view explain wise actions? It seems not. What I argue below is that mere true belief cannot account for wise actions as it fails to satisfy *Rationality*. Recall, *Rationality* observes that  $S$ 's action,  $\varphi$ , amounts to a wise action only if in most relevant nearby worlds where  $S$  has sufficient reason to perform  $\varphi$ ,  $S$  performs  $\varphi$ . To this, someone like McCain might say that  $S$ 's reasons to  $\varphi$  can consist of true beliefs in response to which  $S$  can  $\varphi$  such that  $S$  either successfully reaches  $G$  or that  $\varphi$  constitutes of  $G$ . Thus, in *Judge I*, even if Forer merely believed that her giving that particular sentence will lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing and pronounced her judgment accordingly, her judgment would still be wise.

To see how such a view is misleading, let us begin by observing that knowledge involves a way of reacting which is rather different from reacting to true belief. Take Williamson's example of the persistent burglar (2000: 62). Williamson asks us, what mental state explains a burglar spending a whole night ransacking a house looking for a diamond, risking discovery? It cannot be mere true belief. For imagine he comes to believe truly that the diamond is in the house on the basis of a false testimony of someone trustworthy that it's under the bed in the bedroom, whereas it's in fact inside the drawer in the study. In such a case, once he finds out that the diamond isn't under the bed, he will stop his search and leave. However, if he *knew* that the diamond is in the house, then any false premise on the basis of which his true belief that the diamond is in the house can be ruled out. Accordingly, the easily discoverable falsehood that the diamond is under the bed will not provide him with a reason to stop the search, and it's highly likely that he will continue to ransack the house till the diamond is found. Thus, the burglar's rational persistence in searching the diamond in the face of new counterevidence (in this case, not finding the diamond under the bed) is better explained in terms of knowledge than in terms of mere true belief. As such, mere true belief isn't stable in the way knowledge is.

But if that's the case, then true belief fails to account for *Rationality*. For if what explains an agent *S*'s wise action  $\varphi$  is merely *S*'s true belief that  $\varphi$  will help her successfully reach *G*, or that  $\varphi$  constitutes *G*, in normal circumstance (where she also believes that the circumstances are in fact normal), then on any occasion when *S* comes across some misleading evidence against her belief, her reason to  $\varphi$  is defeated, and she'll not perform  $\varphi$ . Thus, in *Judge 1*, if Forer merely believed that her giving that particular sentence will lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing, then if she is presented with some misleading evidence (say, that Michael was wielding a real gun, or that Michael killed the taxi driver in the process of robbing, and so on), she'll no longer give that particular sentence.

### 3.3 Non-Doxastic Attitudes

It might be argued that there could be important non-doxastic states that factor into performing wise actions such that they might be best captured by an epistemic state that cannot be reduced to a form of propositional knowledge. Now, two responses could be made towards this. Firstly, it needs to be borne in mind is that wise actions are robust – both counterfactually and rationally. And any epistemic state, whether doxastic or not, needs to account for such robustness such that being in that state robustly leads to success in a range of nearby worlds. But if that's the case, then we do require conditions similar to *Safety* and *Stability* to explain such robustness. And once we have that, then the state starts to look very similar to knowledge. Now of course, it may be pointed out that it can be some form of practical knowledge instead of propositional knowledge – practical knowledge leads to success in a robust way such that if someone couldn't perform the action successfully in nearby cases, then the person doesn't know how to perform it. Traditionally, following Ryle (1949), such states were taken to be distinct from propositional knowledge. However, the recent philosophical advocacy of a position called intellectualism sees practical knowledge merely as a species of propositional knowledge (e.g., Stanley and Williamson 2001; Stanley 2011). And if one is an intellectualist about practical knowledge, then such an epistemic state is no different from propositional knowledge.

Secondly, it doesn't seem to be the case that wise actions can be performed without any reference to doxastic attitudes. For instance, it would be odd to think that Forer's sentence is wise if she didn't even believe that it would lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing. Such phenomena doesn't normally arise in a verdict in a court of law – the intuition seems to be quite strong that when a judge or jury gives a sentence to a certain crime, they *believe* that leads to some goal – punishment, rehabilitation etc. The contrary would be very strange. Thus, it's implausible that Forer's sentence could be considered wise when she doesn't even believe that it will somehow lead to wellbeing. Same goes to other wise actions. For instance, if someone gives me a wise advice, it's hard to think that she doesn't even believe that it will somehow lead to my wellbeing.

## 4 Is Knowledge Sufficient?

So far, I've defended the *K-Necessity* thesis, i.e., that knowledge is necessary for explaining wise actions. A natural question that follows from this is: is knowledge sufficient as well to explain wise actions? Is the following conditional true?

(*K-Sufficiency*):  $S$   $\varphi$ -s wisely if  $S$  knows that  $\varphi$  will lead to reaching  $G$ , or that  $\varphi$  constitutes of  $G$ .

If one is to answer in the affirmative, two objections arise against it: firstly that, there might be some cognitive state over and above knowledge that's required for a fuller explanation of wise action, and secondly, that even if knowledge is the only requisite cognitive state, non-cognitive states may also be involved in the explanation of wise actions. Let's deal with two versions of these objections.

### 4.1 Understanding

It could be argued that, cognitively speaking, even though knowledge is necessary for explaining wise actions, there may be other cognitive states over and above knowledge required for a fuller explanation of them. Understanding seems to be a good candidate for such a cognitive state. Take Consequentialism, for instance. We earlier observed that a wise agent will perform  $\varphi$  only if she has the knowledge that  $\varphi$  will lead to reaching  $G$ . In other words, she knows the reason why to perform  $\varphi$ . However, one may argue that knowledge of such reasons may not be sufficient to perform  $\varphi$ . Shane Ryan, for instance, notes that suppose someone receives testimonial knowledge about wellbeing such that now she has reasons to live well. However, if she fails to understand the reasons – for example, if she fails to understand why a certain action is right for moral reasons, or that it can be outweighed by other reasons – then she may still not end up performing that action (Ryan 2016: 242).

Two points could be made in response to that. Firstly, that wise action has weaker explanatory requirements compared to the character trait of wisdom. That's to say, given that the character trait of wisdom is a much more complex state with its development attributable to a number of processes over a lengthier period of time, it requires a more complicated explanation in comparison to wise actions which may be more instantaneous, and can also be performed by non-wise agents – indeed, we come across people to whom we wouldn't attribute wisdom otherwise, but occasionally would surprise us by acting wisely (to which we may respond with a statement like, 'He's a fool, but that was a wise thing he did'). Given this, even though it may be the case that a cognitive state like understanding, which is over and above the state of knowledge, may be required to fully explain wisdom as a character trait, it may not be required to explain individual instances of wise action with mere knowledge sufficing.

Secondly, even if we allow that understanding explains wise action, it may be argued that a lot depend on whether one takes reductionism or non-reductionism about understanding to be correct. Reductionism is the view that all states of



understanding can be reduced to knowledge states. Thus, if reductionism is true, then one can explain these appearances of understanding through knowledge itself. Reductionism posits that understanding is merely a matter of the quantity of knowledge an agent has in relation to a certain proposition, phenomenon etc – there is no qualitative difference between the cognitive states of knowledge and understanding. Accordingly, the difference between an agent knowing a proposition or a phenomenon and an agent understanding a proposition or a phenomenon is in just that the agent who understands has more knowledge about the proposition or phenomenon than the one who merely knows it.<sup>10</sup> Non-reductionism, on the other hand, is the view that states of understanding cannot be reduced to mere states of knowledge, and accordingly understanding is a cognitive state that's over and above knowledge.<sup>11</sup> Shane Ryan seems to take a strictly non-reductionist view. He says that when someone is in a state of understanding, 'she sees how things hang together' (2016: 242). Here, Shane Ryan uses the quasi-perceptual expression 'sees' to describe understanding. In other words, understanding imitates a quasi-perceptual state similar to seeing. But if he is resorting to that, then there is a problem for him. For, perceptual states just are states of knowing. Thus, if I see that it's raining outside, then I know that it's raining outside (e.g., Williamson 2000; Holton 2017). Accordingly, if we follow Shane Ryan here, someone understands something when she knows the ways things hang together.<sup>12</sup> For instance, one may say that Forer not only knows that the sentence will lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing, but also understands why that sentence will lead to their wellbeing. In such a case, what she knows isn't only that the sentence will contribute to their wellbeing, but also the reasons why the sentence will contribute to their wellbeing. Thus, using quasi-perceptual vocabulary isn't very helpful in such cases, as it merely leads to reducing understanding to knowledge.

## 4.2 Motivation

Although we may think that there are good reasons to reduce understanding to knowledge such that knowledge is the all and only cognitive state required to explain wise action, it may still be argued that there are non-cognitive states that are still required to explain wise actions. A case in point would be motivation. In *Judge I*, Forer has the normative reasons to pass the sentence on Michael. That's to say, she knows certain facts that count in favour of passing the sentence, and given that knowledge she ought to pass that sentence. However, suppose that for some reason she lacks motivation to pass that sentence. In such a case, she may not pass that sentence. Accordingly, it may be argued that along with the knowledge that the

<sup>10</sup> For defences of reductionism see Riaz (2015) and Sliwa (2015).

<sup>11</sup> For defences of non-reductionism see Kvanvig (2003) and Hills (2016).

<sup>12</sup> Something similar could also be said of another such term 'grasping' used by the likes of Kvanvig (2003) and Hills (2016). One could think of grasping as knowing the way things fit together within a range of possibilities. For example, when I grasp a proposition, I'm able to tell that the proposition is different from a number of similar propositions.

sentence will lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing, Forer also needs to be in a motivational state, which cannot be reduced to a knowledge state.

Although there may not be any straightforward way to reduce motivation to knowledge, a case could be made that, when it comes to wise action, knowledge and motivation are very intimately connected such that knowledge immediately entails motivation. Motivational internalism suggests that if one judges that she morally ought to perform a certain action, then she is in some way motivated to perform that action (e.g., Darwall 1995; Brink 1997; Audi 1998; Parfit 1998). Thus, for instance, if one judges that racism is wrong, then she would be motivated to act in ways that avoid racial bigotry. Our cases of wise actions could also be thought of as moral cases. For instance, if one judges that  $\varphi$  is a way to live well, then it's morally right to guide another person to it. Accordingly, if motivational internalism is correct, then if she judges that she ought to guide that person in that way, then she is motivated to guide that person in that way.

Now, when we know that  $p$ , we also make the judgment that  $p$ . Thus, if I know that there's a tree in front of me, I also make the judgment that there's a tree in front of me. And if, according to motivational internalism, judgment entails motivation, then if one knows that she morally ought to perform a certain action, then she is in some way motivated to perform that action. Thus, for instance, if I know that racism is wrong, then I would act in ways that avoid racial bigotry. Similarly, if one knows that  $\varphi$  is a way to live well, then she is motivated to guide another person to it. It's in this sense, that knowledge entails motivation. Given this, since Forer knows the reasons that her sentence will lead to Michael's and his family's wellbeing, she is also motivated to give that sentence. Now of course, a ready objection would be that the agent may be akratic, such that even though the agent has the knowledge of why she ought to perform that action, and perhaps even the entailing motivation, she doesn't perform that action. That of course may be a possibility. However, in general, those are usually cases of irrational action. A wise action, on the contrary, isn't an irrational action (and, in fact, for some, a paradigmatic rational action). Accordingly, the objection fails to apply to wise action.

To conclude, in this section I've shown two things. Firstly, that understanding could be reduced to knowledge, such that we may not require a cognitive state over and above knowledge to account for wise action. Secondly, that, even if motivation cannot be straightforwardly reduced to knowledge, we can show a close connection between knowledge and motivation, such possession of the knowledge can immediately be motivation entailing. Now, all of it depend on debates external to discussions on wisdom such that anyone who is convinced of views opposing those I hold here – reductionism about understanding, and motivational internalism – will not be convinced by me. However, what I hope to have demonstrated here are possible avenues through which *K-Sufficiency* could be defended against these objections.

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