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When Beliefs Wrong

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ABSTRACT. Most philosophers find it puzzling how beliefs could wrong, and this leads them to conclude that they do not. So there is much philosophical work to be done in sorting out whether I am right to say that they do, as well as how this could be so. But in this paper I will take for granted that beliefs can wrong, and ask instead *when* beliefs wrong. My answer will be that beliefs wrong when they *falsely diminish*. This answer has three parts: that beliefs wrong only when they are *false,* that beliefs wrong only when they *diminish,* and that false diminishment is sufficient for wronging. I will seek to elaborate on and defend all three of these claims, but it is the first to which I will give the most attention.

Sometimes, I believe, we wrong one another by what we believe about each other. The human resources manager who wrongly suspects the young married female applicant of seeking the job for its maternity benefits, the jealous wife who wrongly suspects her husband of having a wandering eye, and the father who doubts his daughter has what it takes to succeed in a career in engineering—all wrong the subjects of their beliefs by what they believe about them. We can also wrong ourselves. The anxious graduate student who believes others are more capable than she, Marušić's rational smoker who believes that his attempt to quit will fail,[1] and

1. Marušić (2012, 2015).

the Olympic medal winner who believes her success was a fluke of luck can all, when properly fleshed out, be cases of believers wronging themselves.

Most philosophers find it puzzling how beliefs could wrong, and this leads them to conclude that they do not. So there is much philosophical work to be done in sorting out whether I am right to say that they do, as well as how this could be so. But in this paper I will take for granted that beliefs can wrong, and ask instead *when* beliefs wrong. My answer will be that beliefs wrong when they *falsely diminish.* This answer has three parts: that beliefs wrong only when they are *false,* that beliefs wrong only when they *diminish,* and that false diminishment is sufficient for wronging. I will seek to elaborate on and defend all three of these claims, but it is the first to which I will give the most attention.

1. FROM DOXASTIC WRONGS TO MORAL ENCROACHMENT

There are two main worries that philosophers often have about the idea that beliefs can wrong. The first is that beliefs do not seem like the right kind of thing to be sufficiently under our deliberate control for us to be morally accountable for them.[2] I will set this worry aside, here, though some things I say in what follows will be relevant for it. But the second is that if beliefs can wrong, then some beliefs must *be* wrong, and if this is so, there will be moral standards governing beliefs. But if there are moral standards governing beliefs, the worry goes, these standards will be orthogonal to the properly *epistemic* standards governing beliefs, and so these standards will come into conflict.[3] Perhaps it will turn out that we are sometimes morally required to believe something that we are in no position to know or which is even highly improbable, on the evidence. Or perhaps it will turn out that sometimes even knowledge is morally wrong.

The thesis that beliefs wrong, however, lends itself most naturally to the conclusion that some beliefs are morally wrong—not that some beliefs are morally required. If *non*-belief is never wrong, then there can never be any conflicts between moral and epistemic standards governing belief which consist in some belief being morally required, even though we are in no position to know it, or it is improbable, given our evidence. So this kind of conflict between moral and epistemic norms governing belief is easy to avoid. But I believe that we should also seek to avoid a second form of conflict—cases in which it is morally wrong to believe what is known or epistemically impeccable. It is much more plausible that beliefs wrong, if the beliefs that wrong are never epistemically impeccable, than that we can wrong one another even with epistemically impeccable beliefs.

2. Compare Nolfi.

3. Compare Stroud (2006), Keller (2004), Gendler (2011).

However, this second kind of conflict between moral and epistemic norms governing beliefs is not so easy to avoid—at least, not consistently with capturing many of the most compelling cases of beliefs which, intuitively, wrong.[4] Take the case of the human resources manager. It may be *true* that married women of a certain age are the most likely to take advantage of maternity benefits, and it may even be true that the proportion of married women of that age who take jobs in his industry and soon have children is quite high. If it would be epistemically reasonable for him to form beliefs about the weather on similar evidence, how can it not be equally epistemically reasonable for him to form a belief about the present married woman applicant on the evidence that he has? And yet this case is paradigmatic among those in which it is intuitive that beliefs wrong. Similarly, the father owes it to his daughter not to write off the possibility of her success in the same way that he would reason about a game of chance in Las Vegas.

Yet even this second kind of conflict between moral and epistemic norms governing beliefs can be eliminated, if there is moral encroachment on epistemic rationality itself. If the very same moral factors that make the human resources manager wrong the applicant and the father wrong his daughter also raise the stakes for how much evidence is required to *epistemically* justify their beliefs, then the moral wrongness of beliefs will guarantee an *epistemic* fault, even though some morally wrong beliefs are supported by evidence that would be sufficient to justify a belief about a different topic.

Moral encroachment is a special case of what has generally been called *pragmatic encroachment*. In cases of pragmatic encroachment, there are intuitively practical features of a believer's situation—in particular of the relationship between her situation and some proposition in question—which alter the appropriate standards governing how much evidence is sufficient to justify belief in that proposition.[5] Just as the idea that beliefs can wrong is controversial, the idea that there is pragmatic encroachment on epistemic justification and on knowledge is itself deeply controversial, though it has come to be much more widely accepted over the last fifteen years.[6]

2. FROM MORAL ENCROACHMENT TO PRAGMATIC INTELLECTUALISM

One of the prominent puzzles facing proponents of pragmatic encroachment is to explain *which* kinds of practical factors matter, when they matter, and how they could matter, without allowing for reasoning such as that Pascal employed in his

4. Compare Basu and Schroeder (forthcoming).

5. Compare Basu (2018).

6. Highlights include Fantl and McGrath (2002, 2010), Hawthorne (2004), and Stanley (2005); see also Schroeder (2012a) and Ross and Schroeder (2014) for defenses.

famous Wager to count as epistemically justified. For many years philosophers have used Pascal's Wager—which is clearly *not* a way of gaining knowledge or epistemic justification—to argue that the only thing that matters for purely *epistemic* rationality of belief, as opposed to the kind of broadly instrumental rationality that Pascal's Wager does indeed exemplify, are *epistemic reasons*—which are concluded to be evidence.[7]

The best explanation for pragmatic encroachment on epistemic justification, I believe, *agrees* that epistemic justification depends only on the balance of epistemic reasons. It also agrees that the only kind of epistemic reason in favor of any belief is evidence for the content of that belief. But it has widely been misunderstood that these two assumptions are *not* enough to rule out pragmatic encroachment on epistemic justification. On the contrary, if there are epistemic reasons *against* belief that are not simply evidence against the content of that belief, and among the epistemic reasons against belief are reasons with a practical (or moral) flavor, then there *will* be pragmatic (or moral) encroachment on epistemic rationality. Indeed, when there are greater practical (or moral) reasons against a belief, it will require *more* reasons in favor of that belief—more evidence—to justify it, and hence practical aspects of the situation would be exactly the right sort of thing to raise the standards for what it takes to justify a belief.[8]

I noted earlier that one prominent source of puzzlement about how beliefs could wrong arises from the idea that beliefs are not sufficiently under our control in order to be responsive to moral reasons. Similarly, philosophers have long argued that beliefs are not sufficiently under our control in order to be responsive to reasons that are not evidence. But in both cases, philosophers have focused on the wrong diet of examples. Such arguments focus on whether we ever *believe* at will, or believe *on the basis* of considerations that are not evidence. But I have been allowing that there are no epistemic reasons in favor of belief that are not evidence. What is at stake is whether there are any epistemic reasons *against* belief that are not evidence.

And it is much less obvious that we are unable to respond to non-evidential reasons against belief. Indeed, as I have argued at length (Schroeder 2012b, 2013), it is quite compelling that we *do* successfully respond to non-evidential reasons against belief. For example, consider the kinds of evidence on the basis of which you are happy forming beliefs about philosophy or about prerecorded human history. And now consider whether you would ever form a belief about how many people are in the next room on the basis of similar evidence. You wouldn't—you would look for yourself before making up your mind. As this example illustrates, we have an easy time *not* forming beliefs when there is much more and better evidence available than we already possess. Yet the proportion of evidence available to evidence already possessed is not, in and of itself, evidence either way about

7. For a representative of this tradition, see Bonjour (1985).

8. See in particular Schroeder (2012a), Snedegar (2017).

whether a proposition is true. So we are clearly and readily responsive to at least some kinds of consideration that count *against* belief but are not evidence.

Similarly, people with known peanut allergies have no trouble holding out for more evidence that a sandwich is made with almond butter before concluding that this is so, than people who lack peanut allergies.[9] Yet the difference between knowing you have a peanut allergy and not being aware of the allergy is a difference in what you are aware of about the practical consequences of believing that something does not contain peanuts. This shows that we have no trouble being sensitive to practical considerations, either, when we form beliefs—when these considerations are epistemic reasons *against* belief.

It should be no surprise that there are epistemic reasons against belief that are not evidence. If there were not, then the only reasons to count for or against believing that P—the evidence for and against the proposition that P—will be the very same as the only reasons to count against or for believing that not-P. And if that were so, and whether it is epistemically rational to believe a proposition depends only on the reasons, then we should expect that it is rational to believe that not-Pwhenever it is not rational to believe that P.[10] But this is not what we find. On the contrary, it is often neither epistemically rational to believe that P nor epistemically rational to believe that not-P. This is *explained* by the fact that there are *more* reasons against believing that P than in favor[11] of believing that not-P, and likewise in reverse. These additional reasons against belief are non-evidential epistemic reasons.

Nor should it be surprising that either facts about how hard it is to come by further evidence or about the practical costs of error might turn out to be the kinds of reasons to which we are responsive, as believers. Given the roles of belief in cognitive simplification and as a basis for decision, other things being equal, it will be less advantageous to believe when much better evidence is easily available, and when the costs of being wrong are high.[12] So these are exactly the kinds of things that we should expect a well-designed belief system to be sensitive to and exactly the kinds of things to bear on the rationality of belief *qua belief.*

This picture of why there is pragmatic encroachment on the epistemic rationality of belief—a picture whose pieces I have developed and defended separately in a number of places—I call *pragmatic intellectualism.* According to pragmatic intellectualism, a belief is epistemically rational just in case the epistemic reasons to have it are at least as good as the epistemic reasons against it, evidence is the only kind of epistemic reason in favor of a belief, but in addition to evidence against its content, there are further, non-evidential, epistemic reasons against belief, among them *stakes-related* reasons, which turn on the costs of *false belief.*

9. Ross and Schroeder (2014).
10. Schroeder (2015).
11. Snedegar (2017).
12. Ross and Schroeder (2014).

3. THE COSTS OF ERROR

Stakes-related reasons, I have suggested, arise from the cost of error. If you have an allergy to peanuts, there is no intrinsic cost to believing that a sandwich contains almond butter. Indeed, unless you are able to form such beliefs, you will likely never be able to experience the pleasures of eating almond butter, because in the absence of being sure that it is almond butter, the chance that it might instead be peanut butter would make eating it too risky. So the costs of this belief—the reasons not to believe it—must derive instead from the costs of believing it *falsely.* It is because of the costs in the worst case—the case in which you believe it falsely—that believing it can be unacceptably risky, even in cases in which it happens to be true.[13]

The fact that stakes-related reasons derive from the costs of error is often poorly appreciated, and it has many important consequences. For example, defenders of pragmatic encroachment often talk about a proposition being 'high stakes'. But since stakes-related reasons derive from the costs of error, this talk is easily misunderstood. The costs of erroneously believing that not-P can be very low, even when the costs of erroneously believing that P are very high. And even low costs of error can have outsize effects, in cases in which failing to believe can be just as bad as believing wrongly.[14]

If there are stakes-related epistemic reasons against belief and moral costs of error count, then there will be moral encroachment on the epistemic rationality of belief. I believe that this is right—indeed, I believe that it should be obvious, once we understand how stakes-related reasons work, because moral costs are just a special case of costs.

In the normal course of things, the costs of error which count against a belief are the consequences of the things that you will *do,* if you rely on this belief. Since one of the things that you will do if you believe a sandwich is made from almond butter is to treat it as a live option for lunch, it is clear why someone who is allergic to peanuts will face bad consequences if they falsely believe a sandwich is made of almond butter—since if that is false, it is most likely made of peanut butter, which will give them a terribly bad turn. Similarly, one of the things that the human resources manager could do in the normal course of relying on a belief that a job candidate is about to become pregnant is to treat her as less likely to fulfill their hiring need, one of the things the jealous wife could do would be to confront her husband, and one of the things the father might do would be to discourage his daughter's ambition. One of the things the insecure graduate student could do would be to quit her program, and Marušić's smoker may never actually try to quit, if she believes it will be unsuccessful.

There is a sense, on this view, in which the primary wrong at stake in each instance is a wrong of *action*—or at least, of possible action. It would be wrong

13. Schroeder (2012a).

14. Schroeder (2012a).

for the human resources manager to treat the applicant differently, wrong of the jealous wife to confront her innocent husband, and so on. But when believing carries a *risk* of acting, believing can also count as a kind of derivative wrong—the wrong of risk imposition. This gives us a simple way of implementing the idea that beliefs genuinely wrong. And I think this simple view is all right, so far as it goes. Indeed, I think it adequately explains some of our cases. But I don't think that it goes far enough.[15] Some jealous wives might be very good at not confronting their husbands, and if so, the risk that they will act on their belief is very low. So even if risks of wronging someone in general can constitute wrongs in their own right, as I believe, *very low* risks of wronging may constitute only very insignificant wrongs, if at all.

Similarly, I find it compelling that the father wrongs his daughter by his belief even if he is very good at concealing his beliefs from her. Worse, although we can wrong others by imposing risks on them, it is not at all plausible—even if we are quite comfortable with the idea that we can wrong ourselves in general—that imposing risks on ourselves is a way of wronging ourselves. And it is not even clear what the Olympic medal winner who discounts her performance could possibly *do* with this belief, that would be the locus of the harm.

This leads me to think that in order to fully capture the ways in which beliefs can wrong, there must be some moral costs that beliefs carry in and of themselves, independently of their consequences or risked consequences. And this would be true, if our interpersonal relationships are in part constituted by our beliefs about one another.[16] Insofar as our beliefs help to constitute our relationships, the effects of our beliefs on our relationships are not mediated by the effects of our beliefs on our actions or other behaviors. But it is in fact *plausible* that our interpersonal relationships are in part so constituted. It is plausible that the marriage is directly damaged when the jealous wife suspects her innocent husband of cheating, and if the daughter going into engineering feels betrayed by her father, upon learning of his belief, I would be hard pressed to tell her that she is wrong.

This model for doxastic wrongs extends more naturally, I think, to cases of wronging oneself—including those where there is no obvious action at all. The anxious graduate student does have a damaged relationship with herself, when she fails to appreciate her own strengths and as a result gives up on her passions too easily. And the Olympic medalist's relationship with herself also fails, I think, to be whole, when she can't give herself the credit that she deserves. So many doxastic wrongs, I believe, are like this—constituted by the erroneous beliefs themselves, rather than on their consequences by way of action.

But both action-mediated consequences and constitutive consequences are consequences of a false belief doing its normal job in your cognitive economy. Although the moral costs that are not mediated by action are slightly less obvious,

15. Compare particularly Basu (2018, ch. 2).

16. Compare Bero (2017), Marušić and White, section 1.

they still fall under the rubric of stakes-related reasons against belief, because they can still be construed as costs of error. I conclude that on this picture, beliefs wrong only when they are false.

4. WRONGFUL TRUE BELIEFS

This conclusion may seem surprising to many people. If beliefs can wrong at all, why should wrongful beliefs be confined to *false* beliefs? Maybe there are also true things that it is wrongful to believe. It is small comfort to note that if anyone proposes an example of a wrongful true belief, we get to blame them for doing so—the fact that there is no morally permissible way of identifying any such should not, surely, lead us to think that there *can* be none. Moreover, this thought is supported by reflection on cases. Take, for example, the case of the human resources manager considering the application of the young married woman. Suppose that this particular young woman is in fact applying to this job precisely because of its generous maternity benefits. In that case, the view that I have been defending is committed to the consequence that the human resources manager does *not* wrong her by believing her to have this motive. The fact that those who deny that beliefs ever wrong (i.e., nearly every other philosopher) must also say this will seem scant comfort to those of us to whom getting to criticize human resource managers like this one is part of what is appealing about the idea that beliefs can wrong, in the first place.

I do accept the conclusion that in this version of the case, the human resources manager does not wrong the applicant in virtue of his false belief. But there is much that can be said in order to make good on the feeling that his belief is not quite as it ought to be, and saying it can shed much light on the relationship between wrongful belief and moral features of belief more generally. The first thing that can be said is that although there is *one* respect in which he wrongs the applicant of whom his belief is false but not the applicant of whom his belief is true, there *may* be some further respect in which he wrongs them both, as members of a class. Others have explored the way in which stereotypical beliefs can turn on false essentialization of a class—either a race, gender or sexuality, or an intersectional category like 'young married woman'.[17] When they do, they will turn on falsehoods after all, and so it will be possible to locate another wrong, given my account.

But there is a more important answer to be given to this objection. And that is that even if true beliefs never wrong, we can still recapture what is wrong about some true beliefs. We can do so by attending to the important distinction between objective and subjective dimensions of evaluation. This is a familiar distinction with respect to the norms governing action. When Bernie's glass holds petrol, but he has every reason to believe that it is instead a gin and tonic, it makes sense for

17. Leslie (2017).

him to take a sip, but it is advisable for him to set it down. Taking a sip would be rational for Bernie, but a mistake. And setting it down would save him trouble, but would be a defective way for him to reason. The concepts of advisability, mistake, and saving trouble line up—they apply on the basis of the real consequences of Bernie's action, independently of what evidence he has to believe those consequences will be that way. The concepts of making sense, of rationality, and of defective reasoning also line up—but in a different way. They line up with Bernie's beliefs, or perhaps with his evidence, rather than with what is true independently of his beliefs or his evidence.

Taking a sip of a gin and tonic is a morally neutral action. But some actions are not morally neutral. For example, suppose that Gretchen fires a gun into a closet door, knowing that Alex is hiding behind one of three closet doors, but not knowing which. Luckily, Alex is not hurt, because he was hiding behind a different door. Some people—myself on most days among them—will say that Gretchen's action is objectively wrong, absent some quite substantial justification, because even though it does not actually harm Alex, it imposes a substantial risk of harm, which is itself a tangible enough effect to be of moral significance in its own right. But whether or not that is true, it is certainly true that Gretchen's action is *subjectively* wrong. Given her information, she was in no position to be confident that Alex was not behind the door she shot at. Given her information and evidence, there was not enough to go on, in order to make this action subjectively justifiable.

Subjective and objective dimensions of assessment also come apart in the case of belief. Beliefs are correct, it is widely held, only if they are true. But beliefs can be rational, even if they are false, and irrational, even if they are true. Similarly, I hold, a belief can be subjectively wrong, even if it is not objectively wrong, and objectively wrong, even if it is not subjectively wrong.

So return to the case of the human resources manager, considering the application of the young married woman who is truly applying for this job for the purpose of taking advantage of its maternity benefits. According to pragmatic intellectualism, the fact that *falsely* believing this about the applicant would wrong her is an epistemic reason—a right-kind reason—*against* belief. It is a consequence of this that the human resources manager must have much *more* evidence that this is the case, in order for it to be rational for him to believe this of her, than would otherwise be the case, if this belief were morally neutral. Similarly, I suggest, this fact is also a subjective *moral* reason against the belief, so that the manager requires much better justifying reasons in favor of the belief, in order for it to be subjectively *morally* permissible.

In typical cases, therefore, it will turn out that even when someone does not wrong someone by what she believes about him, but only because that belief is true, this belief will nevertheless be subjectively wrong, epistemically irrational, and therefore incapable of being knowledge. I suggest that this should go some way toward assuaging the 'criticism from the left', if you will, that in restricting wronging beliefs to false beliefs, my account does not go far enough in acknowledging the ways in which beliefs can be morally problematic.

So that completes my argument for, and defense of, my thesis that beliefs wrong their subjects only when they are false. That idea is really the most important idea that I want to advance in this paper, and if I have convinced you of it—and of *why* it is correct—I will be ecstatic. However, it would be nice to be able to say something more about *which* false beliefs are capable of wronging someone. And here my suggestions are of a much more tentative nature. But I would like to suggest that beliefs wrong you only when they *diminish* you, in a sense that I will try to explain—only when they *bring you down*.

It is important to be clear up front that *diminishing* you is *not* the same thing as being negative. If Phyllis decides that her Asian neighbor is probably good at math, she has a *positive* belief about him, but still brings him down, by applying a common stereotype. If her belief is false, then she wrongs him—he has just as much right to not carry the burden of being presumed to be good at math as anyone else who is not good at math. Conversely, the belief that someone is not good at public speaking is a negative belief, but instead of bringing them down, it might actually bring them up, in contexts in which they are overcoming their fear and speaking out about something important.

So bringing someone down cannot be exactly the same thing as being a negative belief about them. What, then, do I mean by 'bringing someone down'? What I mean is interpreting them in a way that makes their agential contribution out to be less. An agential contribution can be less because it is a *worse* contribution, but it can also be less because it is *less* of a contribution. The fact that there are both of these dimensions to what makes a contribution less explains why beliefs can wrong both when they falsely attribute some negative property to someone, as with the human resources manager and the jealous wife, and when they falsely make someone's own agency in some situation out to be less than it really is, as with the Asian neighbor. And it explains why this is especially true when both of these features line up, as with most of my cases of wrongful beliefs.

So that is my direct, intuitive case that beliefs wrong only when they diminish, casting your contribution as less than it really is. But this intuitive case can be backed up by any of a number of attractive pictures about *why* such beliefs wrong.

My favored explanation appeals to an idea that I have been developing elsewhere: an idea that I call the *interpretive theory of persons*.[18] According to this view, persons—like you and me—are essentially the best interpretation of the behavior of our bodies—where the best interpretation is the interpretation that makes your contribution out to be the greatest, along the dimensions of size and value, that is recognizably your own. This theory, I claim, explains why applying charity in the interpretation of others is not epistemically irresponsible, because it is the view on

18. Schroeder (forthcoming).

which only a certain kind of charitable interpretation is *true*. It also explains why having one's actions attributed to a bad mood can feel *depersonalizing*.

If the interpretive theory of persons is correct, then you cannot relate to someone as a person, unless you are relating to the best interpretation of their behavior. If you are not relating to the best interpretation of their behavior, then you are just relating to their body, or to their behavior, but not to *them*. So insofar as we believe that interpersonal relations are just that—relations between persons—it will follow that failures to secure the best interpretation of someone will be failures of interpersonal relations. This can explain, I think, why the nature and severity of wrongful beliefs about someone can depend on the nature of your relationship with them. For example, it explains why the jealous wife's belief about her husband and the father's belief about his daughter's prospects in engineering are much more likely to be serious wrongs than a stranger's beliefs about either.

An alternative, independent explanation that I also quite like appeals to the role of cooperation in interpersonal relationships. On this view, inspired by Korsgaard [1992], morality is essentially about cooperation, and close interpersonal relationships are cooperative enterprises *par excellance*.[19] So morality, at its core, will require—and only require—treating someone in ways that are compatible with cooperating with them. But just as you cannot act by yourself while discounting your own power for positive agency in the world, you cannot cooperate with someone else, while discounting their capacity for agency. Morality, at its core, requires seeing the other's capacity to contribute in the same way that you see your own.

Other explanations are also possible. For example, Steve Bero [2017] argues that constitutive of the taking the Strawsonian participant stance toward someone is caring in a certain way about what they think about you, in a way that makes them central to your sense of self. The fact that these cares are central to your sense of self, and not merely some preferences among others, can serve to explain in a constructive way, using very minimal materials, why frustrating these cares, unlike disappointing preferences in general, can be the right kind of thing to wrong someone. So as long as we care about the *right* attitudes of others—being seen in a positive light, and recognized for our accomplishments and potential—and only about such attitudes, Bero's account can also give us the tools to explain why diminishment, in my sense, is necessary for wronging belief.

6. CONCLUSION

So far, I have argued that our beliefs wrong one another only when they falsely diminish. But what we have said so far also gives us the ingredients for a case that we should also expect these conditions to be jointly *sufficient*. Each of the explanations

19. Compare also Marušić and White, section 3.

that I considered in section 5 for why diminishment might be necessary for wronging belief also constitutes, I think, an even better explanation of why false diminishment is sufficient for wronging.

I've only barely scratched the surface of what is involved in beliefs that diminish—barely enough, I hope, to have gestured toward what a full account of the ways in which beliefs can wrong must be supplemented with, in order to offer a complete picture. My main concern in this paper has been to show why the view that beliefs wrong only when they are *false* is at the cornerstone of an attractive and general picture of how it could be that beliefs can wrong at all.

It is common to assume, in discussions of moral dimensions governing belief, that if there are moral norms governing belief, then there could be some positive moral duties *to* believe things—for example, to believe positive things about our friends, or to believe *more* positive things about our friends than are strictly true. But on the picture that I have been laying out, the morality of belief, just like the moral encroachment on knowledge and epistemic rationality, works solely by making it *harder* to justify some beliefs—not by making it easier to justify others. In order to make good on that picture, we need to make good on the moral reasons against belief that are moral. And I have argued both on grounds of avoiding overgeneralization and on the grounds that these are the reasons that we are actually responsive to, in forming our beliefs, that the place for moral epistemic reasons against belief lies in the *costs of error.* So the view that only false beliefs can wrong is a consequence of this attractive and surprisingly conservative picture of how it is that beliefs could wrong.

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