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## **Delusions and Dispositionalism about Belief**

### *Abstract*

The imperviousness of delusions to counter-evidence makes it tempting to classify them as imaginings. Bayne and Pacherie argue that adopting a dispositional account of belief can secure the doxastic status of delusions. But dispositionalism can only secure genuinely doxastic status for mental states by giving folk-psychological norms a significant role in the individuation of attitudes. When such norms individuate belief, deluded subjects will not count as believing their delusions. In general, dispositionalism won't confer genuinely doxastic status more often than do competing accounts of belief.

### **1. Introduction**

Most accounts of belief make links between belief and action, belief and evidence, and belief and overall rationality that deluded subjects violate. Deluded subjects do inferentially elaborate on their delusions, sometimes act on them, and may appreciate that others find their content evidentially implausible. But the affective, motivational, and inferential links deluded subjects make to and from the contents of their delusions are not what one would normally expect from a subject who truly believed that (for example) his wife had been kidnapped and replaced by an imposter, or that he himself were dead.<sup>1</sup>

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This has led some to argue that seriously deluded subjects cannot be ascribed any beliefs at all.<sup>2</sup> A less radical position holds that while we may properly ascribe propositional attitude states to these individuals, their delusions themselves can't be treated as propositional attitudes. Delusions, it is argued, aren't intelligible in anything like that way.<sup>3</sup> However, neither of these positions is palatable. Completely dismissing deluded subjects from interpretive space should be avoided if possible (Bayne and Pacherie 2004b). And we often take ourselves to understand at least a part of the content a deluded subject labors under. We also find some of their behavior more explicable when we think of it as stemming from the delusion in something like the way many of our ordinary behaviors stem from our beliefs. In light of these facts about our responses to deluded subjects, it seems right to class delusions with propositional

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the literature I will be addressing focuses on monothematic delusions, such as Capgras (the delusion that an intimate is actually an imposter) or Cotard (the delusion that one is dead). I will likewise restrict my focus primarily to these cases, because they pose the clearest examples of states we are strongly tempted to label beliefs, but which fail to look like beliefs on many standard accounts of belief.

<sup>2</sup> Especially when influenced by Davidson, 1984 or Dennett, 1987. Davidson 2004a doesn't discuss delusions in particular, but could be interpreted as arguing that seriously irrational individuals can't be attributed any contentful attitudes at all (see also Davidson 2004b). Evnine 1989 interprets Davidson as ruling out the possibility of belief-ascription in cases of serious mental illness, and judges this correct. Bortolotti 2005 and Klee 2004 also see Davidson as making constitutive links between being rational and being a believer that deluded subjects would violate. Both, however, take it that deluded subjects are believers, and therefore argue that Davidson's account of belief is wrong.

<sup>3</sup> On the possibility that delusions lack meaningful content, see Berrios, 1991. Campbell argues that delusions are contentful, but in the way of 'framework propositions' (like 'The earth existed before I was born') rather than ordinary particular beliefs (Campbell, 2001).

attitudes — whatever account (functionalist, representationalist, or some third option) we give of those attitudes. But then the question arises whether delusions should be classed as beliefs.

We would answer this question in the negative if we look at some of the criteria commonly used to individuate beliefs from other propositional attitudes and conclude that delusions don't meet those criteria. Delusions aren't, for example, responsive to counter-evidence. We might suppose, however, that delusions do meet the individuating criteria for some other attitude. Gregory Currie has argued that delusory content is *imagined*-content, misidentified by the deluded subject as believed-content.<sup>4</sup> On this account, a deluded subject does not (for example) believe that his wife is an imposter. He imagines this. But, in part because this imagining is playing belief-like motivational roles in his life, he believes that he believes his wife is an imposter. He doesn't have improper beliefs about his wife, but about the nature of the attitude he takes towards the content 'My wife is an imposter'.

We could, instead, pursue two strategies for classifying delusions as beliefs. Following the first, we would argue that, contrary to initial appearances, deluded subjects and their delusional contents do meet the criteria given by some standard account for believers and beliefs. For example, suppose we think of beliefs as representations, formed on the basis of evidence, that something is the case. If we also follow 'bottom-up' accounts of the Capgras delusion, it appears to be a belief in the relevant sense, because the delusion is formed on the basis of evidence. Subjects suffering from the delusion have anomalous experiences of intimates' faces: they recognize the faces but lack a sense of emotional connection when doing so. Such subjects (the view continues) take these experiences as evidence for the delusional content that one or more of their intimates has been replaced by an imposter. The force of the experience makes it reasonable, though wrong, for the subject to decline to recognize any potentially

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<sup>4</sup> See Currie, 2000 and Currie and Jureidini, 2001. I follow Bayne and Pacherie (2005) in explicitly taking the imagination account to cover monothematic as well as polythematic delusions.

competing evidence as strong enough to overcome the evidence of their perceptual experience.<sup>5</sup> So their delusion counts as a belief—albeit a false one. Someone pursuing this strategy hopes to be able to show, for most delusions, that they will likewise turn out to be false beliefs, unusual only because of the neurological damage that brings subjects to form them.<sup>6</sup> To the extent one is pessimistic that similar accounts will be forthcoming for all varieties of delusions, one will be cautious about this strategy.

The second strategy involves choosing a less-standard account of belief, and showing that deluded subjects' delusional contents clearly meet the criteria it lays out for individuating beliefs. One might begin on this second strategy by arguing that the links between ordinary belief and rationality should not be over-tight, or by arguing that beliefs can be present even when subjects are failing to manifest them normally.<sup>7</sup> The trick here will be to show that the account appealed to in order to count delusions as beliefs is really still an account of *belief*. Such an account will try to eliminate commitments that preclude delusions from counting as beliefs. But it can't jettison commitments needed to individuate belief from other attitudes.

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<sup>5</sup> The idea that delusions are reasonable beliefs formed in the face of abnormal experiences is argued by Brendan Maher, and critically discussed in Davies et al., 2001, Langdon and Coltheart, 2000, and Coltheart, 2007. See also Stone and Young, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> This is just one example of how to argue that deluded subjects, on a careful enough account of delusion, do qualify as believers on standard accounts of belief. It most closely follows accounts that take delusions to be formed as best explanations of anomalous experiences (Stone and Young, 1997). But it could also work with an account that took delusions to be beliefs that endorse the conceptually rich content of anomalous experiences (Bayne and Pacherie, 2004a; Pacherie, Green, and Bayne, 2006; Pacherie, 2009), if we allow that many satisfactory perceptually based beliefs similarly endorse particular experiences.

<sup>7</sup> On loosening the connections to rationality, see Bortolotti, 2005 and 2009. Gendler argues that 'lack of normal manifestation does not imply lack of belief' (Gendler, 2007, p. 237) in the course of arguing that self-deceived agents believe *p* and pretend not-*p*.

This paper examines one attempt to pursue the second strategy: Tim Bayne's and Elisabeth Pacherie's attempt to use a wholly dispositional theory of belief to defend the doxastic account of delusions against the imagination account.<sup>8</sup> I argue that their attempt fails. Dispositionalism can't distinguish beliefs from other propositional attitudes without making assumptions about believers that aren't true of deluded subjects. I lay out a dispositionalist view, highlight two of its features that Bayne and Pacherie underplay, and argue that they can't use this view of belief to claim victory over the imagination account (section 2). I'll then consider whether they could claim victory by using a strategy they don't try. But this strategy—of emphasizing the role folk-psychology plays in individuating attitudes—won't get them the result they want (section 3).

The conclusion of the paper draws a general lesson from this particular case about the limits of dispositionalism. Dispositionalism can look like a very appealing way to ensure that young children, the deluded and self-deceived, the forgetful, and the weak-willed can be ascribed the beliefs they may appear to have, despite the lapses in thinking and behavior that sometimes pose a challenge to these ascriptions. It might even look like a way to count animals as believers (Danon, 2009). Dispositionalism makes it easy to secure permission to use belief-ascriptive language in our descriptions of these individuals. But it does so precisely because it doesn't put as much weight on our choice of attitude-specifying language as do other accounts of belief. There is a version of dispositionalism on which those choices can carry real weight. But that version gives a crucial role to the expectations we have of one another as believing subjects, and the practices of mutual correction that help us meet those expectations. And the subjects we were hoping to count as believers violate those expectations, and often fail to be engaged by corrective efforts. Dispositionalism can be formulated so as to make the withholding of a belief-ascription something worth caring about. But then it will withhold belief-ascriptions from many of the same individuals that non-dispositional accounts discount as believers.

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<sup>8</sup> Bayne and Pacherie, 2005. They argue that the imagination account is inadequate. I will focus, however, only on their effort to defend the doxastic account.

## 2. Dispositional Stereotypes and Convenient Ascriptions

Bayne and Pacherie appeal to Eric Schwitzgebel's dispositional account of belief to explain away deluded subjects' failure to manifest their beliefs in normal ways. (I will focus on Schwitzgebel's version of non-reductive dispositionalism in this paper.<sup>9</sup>) They follow him in construing beliefs as clusters of dispositions. Believing that it is raining is being disposed to carry an umbrella when I go out, to avoid planning picnics, to react with surprise and delight if someone says, 'The rain stopped!', and so on. (Schwitzgebel identifies a belief that *p* with the set of dispositions stereotypically associated, in folk-psychology, with believing that *p*. The dispositions can include dispositions to draw inferences, take action, or feel certain emotions.<sup>10</sup>) They also follow Schwitzgebel in allowing that dispositional actualization varies with context. (Your presence would inhibit the actualization of my disposition to avow my belief that planning for your surprise birthday party is going well.)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> It is non-reductive because belief-constituting dispositions can include dispositions to be in other mental states.

<sup>10</sup> One might wonder whether there *are* folk-psychological stereotypes for beliefs in contents like those typically found in delusions. And the answer is yes. Schwitzgebel holds that a stereotype is the cluster of dispositions we are apt to associate with a belief, and argues that folk-psychology is rich enough that we are apt to associate dispositions even with beliefs we are encountering for the first time (2002, p. 251). He makes this point to cope with the fact that people develop novel beliefs all the time, but it nicely covers the fact that the contents of delusions will be novel to many people not doing clinical work. Also, some dispositions relevant to belief—such as the disposition to deny claims that are incompatible with the claim believed—are part of stereotypes for beliefs regardless of their content.

<sup>11</sup> Bayne and Pacherie also assert that beliefs are context-dependent, because 'what a person believes depends on the dispositions she manifests' (2005, p. 180), and context determines disposition manifestation. Schwitzgebel holds rather that what a person believes depends on the dispositions she *has*, understanding that dispositions aren't always manifest.

Bayne and Pacherie endorse Schwitzgebel's view that belief-ascriptions are easily made when a subject clearly fits the dispositional stereotype for the relevant belief, and also when his failure to do so is easily excused. Without such an excuse, they note, 'whether or not the attributor ascribes the belief will depend on the context of the belief ascription and what her interests are' (Bayne and Pacherie, 2005, p. 181). Bayne and Pacherie under-emphasize Schwitzgebel's distinction between excused non-manifestations of dispositions and explained dispositional absences. They also underplay the fact that on Schwitzgebel's account, once a dispositional profile has been exhaustively specified, there is no further factual question as to whether or not a subject really (for example) believes that *p*. Dispositionalism is neither plausible nor distinctive without these points, but they are in tension with Bayne's and Pacherie's aims. Examining Schwitzgebel's explanation of the context-dependence of ascription shows this.

Schwitzgebel discusses

a child studying for a test [who] reads, 'The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620,' and remembers this fact. She is a bit confused about what Pilgrims are, though: She is unsure whether they were religious refugees or warriors or American natives (Schwitzgebel, 2002, p. 257).

This girl (call her Jane) doesn't appear fully to fit the stereotype for believing that Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620. For example, she 'will not conclude that Europeans landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620' (Schwitzgebel, 2002, p. 257). Perhaps Jane sometimes visualizes the landing, and when she does so, she tends to visualize Native Americans, as they are depicted in another chapter of her textbook. In this situation, it will be hard to imagine an available excuse for these patterns of thinking that would make ascription of that belief to her completely uncontroversial. (For contrast, consider how your presence excused my failure to speak about your surprise party, and makes it completely uncontroversial to ascribe to me the belief that the party planning is going well.) What determines how Jane is described depends, now, on such practical matters as whether we are concerned with her 'likely performance on a history dates quiz' (ibid.)

No-further-fact dispositionalism means subjects with identical dispositional profiles can't have different mental states in distinct contexts.<sup>12</sup> The introduction of belief-ascriptive language does not add information beyond that contained in a dispositional profile but refers to that information in a convenient way (Schwitzgebel, 2002, p. 252n6). Context comes in, on this account, when attributors must decide whether the use of ascriptive language (rather than a specification of profile) will be helpful to their audience. No interpreter wants to ascribe a belief if doing so will mislead her audience, by causing them to form inappropriate expectations about the behavior of the subject being discussed. Different audiences have different expectations, and we can have a variety of aims when we describe others' mental states to an audience. Variations in either of these aspects of communicative contexts affect whether ascriptive shorthand is appropriate. For example, the decision to say that Jane believes the Pilgrims landed in 1620 will not mislead a teacher or parent expecting her to do well on that quiz question. But it might mislead a psychologist interested in children's views of racial justice.

In this example, dispositionalism ends a dispute about how to specify the content of Jane's belief. We might wonder whether she believes *the Pilgrims landed in 1620*, or rather that *some people landed in 1620*. Schwitzgebel offers us a way out: specify her dispositions (to do well on the quiz, to imagine Native Americans climbing out of a boat onto Plymouth Rock), and let the communicative expectations decide if *believing the Pilgrims landed in 1620* is a useful thing to say about Jane.

Schwitzgebel also discusses Geraldine, who has dispositions in the stereotype set for believing that her son Adam smokes marijuana (she sniffs his clothes surreptitiously) and dispositions in the stereotype set for believing that Adam does not (she feels smug when a neighbor tearfully reports his

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<sup>12</sup> Schwitzgebel does allow that some dispositions may be externally specified—that is, specified 'with reference to [the subject's] past or its environment' (Schwitzgebel, 2002, p. 267). So a subject who is transferred to Twin Earth (Putnam, 1975) might lose some dispositions, and that might sometimes suffice for a change in mental state. But this concession to externalism doesn't entail that a profile insufficient for belief in a normal subject could suffice for belief in a delusional subject.



child's drug problem). Here dispositionalism helps with the question of what attitude to attribute to a subject when it is clear at which content that attitude would be directed. The content here is 'Adam smokes marijuana', and the question is whether Geraldine believes it or disbelieves it. Dispositionalism says that the communicative demands on the person describing Geraldine will determine whether or not 'belief' is an appropriate way to signal the dispositional structure that constitutes Geraldine's (contextually invariant) mental state. It is easier to miss Schwitzgebel's commitment to context invariance in Geraldine's case. He considers whether we should say that Geraldine's beliefs change, depending on whether she is talking to her son or her husband, especially because Geraldine herself might make conflicting avowals in these situations (Schwitzgebel, 2002, p. 261). But he ultimately rejects this way of handling her case. He asserts that we should simply describe how Geraldine's 'dispositions conform to the stereotype for the belief in question and how they deviate from it' (ibid.). Her dispositions remain as they are: such a mixed bag that in most communicative contexts, the use of ascriptive shorthand to refer to them would mislead an audience.<sup>13</sup>

Bayne and Pacherie want us to be able to make belief-ascriptions when talking about deluded subjects. And they see explanations of manifestation-failures as the way to make room for those ascriptions. But they miss Schwitzgebel's implicit distinction between excuses and explanations. Here's how to make it explicit. An *excuse* explains why someone fails to manifest a disposition while suggesting she in fact has the disposition. Thus, for example, seeing that you are in earshot will prevent me from manifesting my disposition to avow that the planning for your surprise party is going well, on an occasion that seemed otherwise appropriate for such an avowal. Someone who grasps the layout of this situation will be able to excuse my failure to avow without suggesting I lack an all-things-considered disposition to make this avowal. One reason Bayne and Pacherie offer for why so few deluded subjects act on their

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<sup>13</sup> Schwitzgebel lists 'a few common patterns of deviation' (Schwitzgebel, 2002, p. 263), and each pattern fits in one of these two categories. That is, the deviations from the stereotype either raise questions about whether the subject really believes *this* content, or questions about whether the subject really *believes* this content.

delusions does look like an excuse in just this sense. Bayne and Pacherie argue that deluded subjects know they are likely to be committed to a psychiatric facility if they so act (2005, p. 185).<sup>14</sup> They wish to act in ways that are made (other things being equal) practically rational by the content of their delusion, but fail to act as they wish because things are not equal: because they are at risk of involuntary commitment. Suppose an interpreter appreciated the inhibiting effects of this fear. If the absent actions were all that stood in the way of a belief-ascription, the interpreter could go ahead and ascribe the delusional content as believed content. And she could do so in any context in which the fearfulness excuse was applicable.

An *explanation* of an apparent manifestation-failure, on the other hand, suggests not that a subject is inhibiting a manifestation of a disposition, but rather that he lacks the disposition in question altogether. He deviates from the dispositional profile for the relevant belief.<sup>15</sup> Suppose, for example, that someone doesn't avow any of his beliefs. And suppose the explanation for this is that twenty years ago, he took a solemn vow of silence. Keeping silence for so long has dissolved his previous dispositions to avow his beliefs in the circumstances in which most people normally do. His vow isn't now inhibiting the manifestation of a still-present disposition. Rather, it is the reason why he no longer has the disposition—

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<sup>14</sup> This at least requires seeing one's delusion as something that other people will take as a sign of mental illness. If it also requires seeing one's delusion *as* a delusion, and hence as false, then the subject in this situation must also be involved in some self-deception.

<sup>15</sup> Schwitzgebel does occasionally say that someone's excused failure to manifest a disposition is a deviation from a dispositional profile. But elsewhere he uses the phrase 'deviate from the stereotype' to refer exclusively to cases where the subject lacks a disposition in the profile for a given belief. I am following that latter usage, which better fits his overall view. Note that whenever we observe a manifestation-failure, we apparently have evidence for the absence of a disposition. Only a subset of those manifestation-failures, however, are rooted in disposition-absences. Someone unaware of an excusing condition might incorrectly judge a subject to deviate from a dispositional stereotype she in fact fits.

the reason why he deviates in that respect from the profile for the relevant belief. Someone who mentions his vow, then, is not providing an excuse in the relevant sense.<sup>16</sup>

This is where context-relativity comes in on Schwitzgebel's account: with interpreters' pragmatic judgments as to whether a particular deviation is *important* given their communicative aims. The more important an interpreter judges a dispositional deviation to be, the less likely she is to use belief-ascriptive shorthand to express facts about her target's dispositional profile. Assuming certain other sorts of information were available about his behavior, an interpreter of the man who took the vow of silence might have no trouble using belief-ascriptive language despite his deviation. No one aware of the vow would be misled by such an ascription into expecting speech.

If we wish to use Schwitzgebel's dispositionalism in order to count delusions as beliefs, then we need to look for excuses for all the ways in which deluded subjects fail to look like ordinary believers with respect to the content of their delusions.<sup>17</sup> But Bayne and Pacherie don't mark the distinction between excuses and explanations.<sup>18</sup> The fear of involuntary commitment they cite does look like an excuse. Imagine a Capgras sufferer who is disposed to call the police again to press them to look for his

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<sup>16</sup> The vow may have initially functioned to inhibit the disposition to avowal. There may not have been a bright line between the last moment when it so functioned, and the first moment when it functioned to dissolve that disposition. So there may have been times when it wasn't clear whether an appeal to the vow was functioning as an excuse. The fact that the application of excuses can be uncertain is one of the reasons Schwitzgebel thinks ascriptions of belief sometimes lack determinate truth value (2010, pp. 534-35, expanding on 2002, p. 255). The status of ascriptions in such 'in-between' cases is discussed below.

<sup>17</sup> We could also look for explanations of unimportant dispositional absences, but such explanations won't provide robust support for the claim that a delusion is a belief. This will be argued at the end of this section.

<sup>18</sup> They do use both words (see, for example, Bayne and Pacherie, 2005, p. 181). But in their discussion they blur the distinction between factors that inhibit disposition-manifestation and factors that disrupt or remove dispositions. There are some cases where that distinction is difficult to draw (see note 16 above). But securing doxastic status for a delusion requires excuses that clearly are excuses.

missing wife, but is inhibited from manifesting that disposition because he believes he'll be committed if he does (and then, among other things, he'll be unable to look for his wife himself.)<sup>19</sup> But the other non-standard situational features they appeal to, in attempting to account for deluded subjects' failures to manifest belief-appropriate dispositions, are all very general. This raises the question of whether the subjects in question are inhibiting dispositions or rather lack them entirely. Bayne and Pacherie discuss the anomalous experiences of faces and of one's own body (in the Capgras and Cotard delusions, respectively), abnormal experiences of agency, and disrupted motivation.<sup>20</sup> They don't offer detailed explanations of how these global non-standard features are supposed to function as excuses. Examining exactly how these features result in missing action or cognition shows that in a number of these cases, if the relevant feature really is a significant factor, then the subject is failing to act or think in the relevant way because they lack the relevant disposition. They aren't manifesting the disposition because they don't have it in the first place.

Consider, for contrast, how my desire to surprise you on your birthday counters my natural impulse to avow claims about party planning, when asked about those plans in front of you. Appealing to

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<sup>19</sup> Notice that, unless something like this last belief is added, fear of commitment will no longer function as an excuse. That's because, assuming the subject in question loves the supposedly missing family member, securing his or her safety would normally trump other factors. If someone really believed a family member had been kidnapped and was in danger, rescuing that person would seem worth the cost of a presumably temporary involuntary commitment.

<sup>20</sup> It is somewhat difficult to interpret Bayne's and Pacherie's discussion on pp. 181-5 of their 2005 paper. On p. 181, they appear to consider the view I am arguing we *must* have of Schwitzgebel's basic view. That is, they note that when deviations can't be accounted for in a stereotypical way, ascriber interest will determine whether to use belief-ascription. But on pp. 184 -185, it is clear that they think the deviations of deluded subjects can be accounted for, and hence that the ascriptions of beliefs to them will be simply correct. Because this line of thought fits best with their overall claim to have defended doxasticism generally, and defeated Currie's imagination account, it is my focus.

that desire fully explains my reticence. But it does so without suggesting I'm prey to a force strong enough to disrupt or eliminate the disposition to avow that belief (or my default disposition to avow any of my beliefs when appropriate). Can global disruptions in affective, inferential, motivational, or perceptual processes function in the same way? Can they be strong enough to inhibit dispositions to act and think in belief-relevant ways, and yet *not* be forceful enough to warrant a judgment that dispositions to act and think in those ways are absent altogether? (This is a version, specific to dispositionalism, of a general challenge for explanations of monothematic delusions. It is hard to find a cognitive deficit that is severe enough to explain the formation and maintenance of the delusion but which is also more or less restricted to the domain of the delusion.<sup>21</sup>)

Consider the first of the non-standard features of deluded subjects' situations to which Bayne and Pacherie appeal: the unusual perceptual and affective experiences that are present, for example, in Capgras. If a subject does have an affectively neutral response when viewing an intimate, that could lead her to experience that intimate as an imposter (or to form the hypothesis that he is). That explains why she has (what for now we'll call) a false belief. But how does it help explain, as Bayne and Pacherie claim it does, any of her failures to manifest cognitive dispositions relevant to the profile for that belief? What Bayne and Pacherie might have in mind is that Capgras sufferers appear not to consider the more plausible, alternative explanations for what they experience—such as that something is wrong with them. Failing to consider alternatives, and so failing to think of your belief as the best possible available belief, judged against plausible competitors, is a deviation from the pattern that marks the attitude of belief. Some of their other work on Capgras (Bayne and Pacherie, 2004a; Pacherie, 2009) suggests a possible excuse they might have in mind for those failures—an excuse that would give them the status of merely apparent failures. A Capgras sufferer receives confirming evidence every time she looks at the supposed imposter (because she fails to feel the normal affectively warm response). And since Capgras sufferers

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<sup>21</sup> For a version of this general point, see McKay, Langdon, and Coltheart, 2007. For discussion in the context of a doxastic treatment of delusions, see Davies, Coltheart, Langdon, and Breen, 2001.

eventually come to see more of their intimates as imposters, they often arrive at a point where they have no trusted intimate who could serve as an expert about the identity of any of the individuals they suspect as imposters. So perhaps Capgras sufferers *are* manifesting dispositions to test their delusion and consider evidence. But those of us who don't share their unusual experience don't appreciate these activities for what they are.

Suppose Bayne and Pacherie are correct in their account of Capgras. Even so, they would only have found an excuse for the apparent deviance of Capgras sufferers. Distinct, equally good accounts would have to be found for all the other delusions. The accounts would have to show two things: that other subjects have perceptual abnormalities that precipitate their delusions; and that those perceptual abnormalities cause the cognitive dispositions that are distinctive of belief, such as the disposition to consider alternative explanations before committing to a hypothesis, to be manifested exclusively in ways others find difficult to recognize. To the extent such accounts could be developed, they would help to establish the doxastic status of the relevant delusions. (They secure that status only if the apparent deviations in question were the subject's only deviations.) But the content of the Capgras delusion is distinctive: its topic is one on which the sufferer would normally count as an expert, and most of those equally expert will be intimates of the sufferer. Appealing to his anomalous experience may, then, allow us to count a Capgras sufferer as genuinely considering and discounting testimony against his delusion, as opposed to simply ignoring such testimony. But that won't be so for delusions whose topics allow for a wider pool of genuine experts.

The second factor Bayne and Pacherie cite concerns the abnormal experiences of agency that mark a number of conditions in which delusions can appear. These experiences have been appealed to in accounts of the formation of certain delusions, such as thought insertion. In these accounts, a subject who fails to experience her activity of thinking as her own may try to explain this anomaly by hypothesizing that the results of someone else's thinking are being inserted in her head.<sup>22</sup> Bayne and Pacherie use this

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<sup>22</sup> See Frith 1987 as discussed in Gold and Hohwy 2000.

point, however, to explain why a subject would maintain such a hypothesis once it is formed. It would presumably be very difficult to find direct evidence either for or against such a hypothesis (likewise with delusional contents such as ‘all my actions are controlled by someone else’). Nevertheless, we might expect subjects to reject it, given that it is ‘antecedently highly implausible in the context of normal conceptions of causation’ (184). The fact that they don’t, without even seeming to consider the plausibility issue, suggests they are missing a relevant cognitive disposition for this belief. Bayne and Pacherie assert that ‘normal conceptions of causation are themselves grounded in normal experiences of agency’ (ibid.). They suggest that the normal conceptions of causation need not have overriding evidential force for someone whose experiences of agency are abnormal. They don’t elaborate, but they might have in mind something like the following: deluded subjects are in fact carrying out plausibility comparisons for their delusions. They are, that is, manifesting some of the cognitive dispositions relevant to belief in those delusional contents. But we don’t realize that they are, because the notions of plausibility and causation to which they now appeal are quite alien to our own, grounded as they are in very different experiences.

If the apparent lack of these cognitive dispositions were the only bar to ascribing the relevant belief, this argument would allow us to count these subjects as believers, because the deviations again turn out to be merely apparent. But we might question whether Bayne and Pacherie are entitled to assume that the relevant cognitive dispositions are present, let alone being manifested, if such alien notions of causation and probability are being used. It is always difficult to draw the line that separates doing something badly from ceasing to do it at all. And many psychologically standard subjects do a poor job of reasoning when issues of causation and probability are at stake. Nevertheless, belief profiles, and standards for matching them, will mark, however imprecisely, the difference between reasoning badly about probability and no longer grappling with probability at all. To the extent that deluded subjects’ dispositions put them on the wrong side of that line, to that extent they deviate from the relevant profile. Any difficulty with the notion of causation that would be serious enough to make the content of a delusion seem plausible is serious enough to raise the question of whether that notion is a notion of

causation in name only.<sup>23</sup> (The same point would apply to the notion of probability into which that notion of causation feeds.)

When the arguments that could be made based on these two general features—abnormal experience and abnormal notions of causation—are fleshed out, we see that they don’t actually aim to excuse subjects for failing to manifest relevant dispositions. They aim to show that we have failed to see subjects’ activities as manifestations of those dispositions. So the subjects in question turn out not to need excuses at all. However, I’ve raised questions about how widely these arguments could apply. And it should be noted that these arguments succeed only on the controversial assumption that, while they have abnormal experiences (of faces, of agency), deluded subjects are as rational as standard subjects.<sup>24</sup> That is, they require deluded subjects to be reasoning, on the topic of their delusion, well enough to count as carrying out the procedures that manifest belief-relevant dispositions. The third feature Bayne and Pacherie discuss, disrupted motivation, is different. It might explain why deluded subjects don’t manifest dispositions they may nevertheless have.

Bayne and Pacherie discuss motivation in response to the objection that deluded subjects don’t manifest the behavioral dispositions that are relevant to belief in their delusional content. They begin by pointing out that ‘action is not caused by cognitive states alone but by cognitive states in conjunction with motivational states’ (185). Deluded subjects often have ‘disrupted affective and emotional states’ (ibid.), and may have distinctive beliefs and desires (such as the belief that they run a risk of involuntary commitment, and a desire to avoid it). So they won’t act in the way the profiles for belief in their delusional contents would lead us to expect (at least not when we consider a standard subject with that

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<sup>23</sup> I am *not* arguing that in order to have (and appropriately manifest) the cognitive disposition to think of one’s belief as more plausible than competitors, one must always reason from true premises, without any logical error, about plausibility. The claim is that someone doesn’t have this disposition if she is not using, in her reasoning, tools that are recognizable as concepts of causation and probability.

<sup>24</sup> For arguments against that assumption, see Davies et al. 2001 and Coltheart 2007.



profile). Such distinctive beliefs and desires can certainly function as excuses: they explain why a subject fails to manifest a disposition without undermining the idea that he truly has the disposition. They leave open the possibility that he might manifest it in a different context, when his view of other features of his situation is different.

To decisively answer the objection, Bayne and Pacherie need some account of those subjects who don't have distinctive beliefs or desires to rationalize their (lack of) behavior. And one thing they could say is: those subjects have generally disrupted motivation, which is why we don't see the relevant behavior.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps a subject could fully possess a belief and yet fail to manifest any of the behavioral dispositions in its profile because she lacks any motivation to act in ways that (according to her own patterns of belief and desire) would be practically rational.

But if such a lack of motivation really suffices to explain all a subject's failures to manifest relevant behavioral dispositions, it also makes it very likely that the dispositions aren't there to be manifested at all. Lack of motivation is unstable as a mere excuse. There are two reasons for this. The first has to do with dispositionalism's claim that belief includes behavioral, cognitive, and phenomenal aspects. On this view, to believe that *p* is to act and react in ways that would make sense if *p* were the case.<sup>26</sup> Of course, what it will make sense to do in the light of any particular claim depends on one's other beliefs and desires. So something that changes a subject's view of what it is practically rational to

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<sup>25</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous referee for pressing me to think more broadly about the role disrupted motivation could play.

<sup>26</sup> Schwitzgebel 2010, p. 542. Schwitzgebel is explicit that on his view, belief incorporates elements that other accounts of belief do not: 'belief [should] be seen as what animates my limbs *and* my mouth, what shows itself diversely in my action and my reasoning and my emotional responses, not just in some pried off sub-class of these things' (2010, p. 542). The importance of action to a dispositionalist account of belief is clear in his 2002 (see, for example, p. 252). The 2010 paper is more explicit, however, that dispositionalism is opposed to views of belief that would link it only to our consciously expressed, considered judgments, and those actions we self-consciously set out to take after lengthy deliberation.

do excuses her from her failure to engage in actions that are, other things being equal, recommended by dispositions in the profile for her target belief. For example, a desire to avoid attracting unnecessary attention could cause such a change. Lack of motivation, however, doesn't alter a subject's view of what actions are worth taking. Rather, it is supposed to explain why she doesn't take the actions which she supposedly believes *are* worth taking.

Now, dispositionalism does admit a category of excuses that appeal to states or events that prevent a subject from acting as she takes it she ought to do, without altering the fact that she believes she ought to act in that way. Lack of consciousness is one example (Schwitzgebel, 2002, p. 255). Could lack of motivation be like lack of consciousness in this respect? Is a subject whose condition has disrupted his motivation like the subject whose fainting spell has disrupted his waking consciousness? It is tempting to give a blanket negative answer. At least according to the philosophical and folk-psychological intuitions of some, it is not possible truly to desire the presence of your beloved spouse, to believe that your spouse is in danger, to believe that one could enlist the help of the police in rescuing and returning your spouse—and yet be unmotivated to call for that help.<sup>27</sup> On such a view, if someone isn't motivated to call for help, when that was what apparently ought to be done, then he isn't really disposed to call for help either. He's deviating from the dispositional profile for the belief that his spouse has been kidnapped—and doesn't really so believe. On the dispositional model of belief, we might say, beliefs just can't be motivationally inert.

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<sup>27</sup> See Hare 1952 (discussed in Stroud 2008) for arguments that akrasia is not truly possible. Some of the examples Schwitzgebel discusses in his 2001, 2002, and 2010 are like those often discussed as cases of akrasia. (See 2010, p. 550 n10 for his making the connection explicit.) Schwitzgebel takes it that in each such case—where professed belief and action come apart—an ascription of the relevant belief to the subject would not be flatly true. Of course, there are complicated conceptual questions about the relations between the philosophical notion of akrasia, and notions like amotivation, avolition, and apathy in psychology and psychiatry. Since I won't be defending the proposed blanket answer, they don't need to be worked out here.

But presumably the issues here are at least partially empirical, and shouldn't be pre-judged.

Perhaps lack of motivation could, in some cases, be like a lack of fuel in a combustion engine: a lack that leaves everything beyond itself unchanged, so that when it is restored, expected activity immediately follows. The engine has the same dispositions to act on the fuel regardless of whether or not the fuel is present. But there are reasons to suspect that lack of motivation does not always function this way in people suffering from mental illness or brain injury.

Consider, for example, some issues about lack of motivation in schizophrenia. (Individuals with schizophrenia are, of course, not the only ones who develop delusions. But schizophrenia is often present in subjects with delusions of misidentification (Förstl et al., 1991; de Pauw and Szulecka, 1998; Coltheart, Langdon, and McKay, 2007) and threat/control-override delusions (Appelbaum et al., 2000).)<sup>28</sup> Research on the interaction between cognitive, affective, and motivational deficits in schizophrenia has revealed that motivational deficits are sometimes driven by cognitive deficits. The failure to act so as to secure some benefit is sometimes due to a disrupted ability to represent a benefit as salient. It may also stem from the diminished force of any such representations that are present, or from a difficulty maintaining them in working memory (Barch, 2005; Heeley and Gold, 2007; Foussias and Remington, 2010; Silverstein, 2010). To apply this point to our case: someone might fail to attempt to find or rescue his supposedly missing spouse because he lacks the motivational spark to do so (despite truly desiring her rescue and believing he could help secure it). But he might, instead, fail to do so because he has trouble representing her as *gone*, *in danger*, *important*, or *beneficial to me in the future*.

Following the literature, I've presented this last possibility in representationalist terms. But a shift to the idiom of dispositionalism leaves us with the same possibility: that he fails to act because he does not fully believe his spouse has been kidnapped. That is, he fails to manifest the behavioral

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<sup>28</sup> 'Threat/control-override' refers to the class of delusions that include the delusion that some person or persons poses a threat to the subject, the delusion that some person or thing controls the subject's actions, and the delusion that some person or thing controls the subject's thoughts.

dispositions in the profile for believing that she has been kidnapped because he lacks them. And some of those behavioral dispositions are missing because he does not have, or does not have persistently, other relevant cognitive and affective dispositions: such as the disposition to feel fear on her behalf, to picture to himself the benefits of her return, to hold on to the idea of her being kidnapped long enough to draw the inference that she is in danger, and to remember that as long as someone continues to be in danger she requires rescue.<sup>29</sup> Lack of motivation can't excuse the failure of many deluded subjects to act in ways that would be practically rational given the content of their delusion if their lack of motivation is consequent on their failures fully to believe the content of their delusion. Yet motivation and cognition are often entwined. In at least some of the cases, then, where lack of motivation is the explanation for a subject's failure to act in some belief-relevant way, that lack of motivation stems from the absence of dispositions in the profile for that belief. The lack of motivation, then, isn't a mere excuse. And while the presence of a condition like schizophrenia could explain those dispositional absences, the dispositions in question aren't unimportant. These dispositional deviances aren't compatible with genuine belief.<sup>30</sup>

In the course of discussing these three features, Bayne and Pacherie concede that many deluded subjects have deviant emotional and affective responses to the contents of their delusions (for example, some Capgras sufferers are unconcerned about the supposed imposter in their homes).<sup>31</sup> They don't attempt to excuse this deviance but assert that dispositions to emotional and affective responses aren't 'constitutive elements of the belief stereotype' (184). Schwitzgebel explicitly states that the dispositional profiles for some beliefs will include dispositions to be in certain phenomenal or emotional states. Bayne

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<sup>29</sup> And when a disposition is crucial to a profile, having it only intermittently is sufficient to cause a subject to fail to fit the profile. See the discussion of context-invariance above on pp. 8-9.

<sup>30</sup> While I have focused on schizophrenia, the same reasoning about the limits on the motivation excuse would apply to other cognitively-driven motivational disruptions.

<sup>31</sup> Young (2000) discusses two studies showing thirty percent of Capgras sufferers had friendly feelings toward the supposed imposters. A sizable number also seem not to be distressed at the disappearance of the supposed original. One man said he felt grateful to his absent wife for having thoughtfully arranged a nice substitute (p. 53).

and Pacherie, of course, are free to endorse a version of dispositionalism that excludes such dispositions from the profile for any belief. The trouble is that reducing the number of dispositions in a profile increases the importance of the remaining dispositions. One might think that failure to have some of the dispositions pertaining to theoretical rationality, such as drawing appropriate inferences from one's belief, could (perhaps, in some cases) be compensated for by the presence of other dispositions—to feel appropriate emotions, to take appropriate action, and so on. Eliminating the category of affective dispositions would put more weight on other kinds of dispositions, such as those connected to theoretical and practical rationality. But deluded subjects don't necessarily do a better job at maintaining those dispositions. We could ignore deluded subjects' failures to come up to scratch with respect to affective/emotional dispositions by removing the expectation that *any* subject do so. But that won't automatically make it easier to count deluded subjects as believers of their delusional content.

So careful consideration of the features to which Bayne and Pacherie point—abnormal perceptual experiences, abnormal experiences of agency, and disrupted motivation—don't show that most deluded subjects in fact have the belief-relevant dispositions they apparently fail to manifest. Perceptual abnormalities may help, but only for delusions on whose topics deluded subjects are experts, and only if deluded subjects remain capable of (for example) evaluating evidence. But appeals to either abnormal experiences of agency or disrupted motivation are unlikely to help in many cases. When these factors are present, they are more likely to be eliminating belief-relevant dispositions rather than inhibiting their normal manifestation. And there is reason to think that most deluded subjects will, in fact, lack one or more belief-relevant dispositions. I'll look at those belief-relevant cognitive dispositions connected to theoretical rationality and those belief-relevant behavioral dispositions connected to practical rationality. (I won't discuss affective dispositions, because Bayne and Pacherie don't dispute that many deluded subjects lack them.)

Deluded subjects vary widely in their ability to offer reasons for their delusions, though some are unable to do so at all (Bortolotti and Broome, 2008.) There is also variation in the capacity of deluded subjects to recognize and respond in some appropriate way to apparent counter-evidence. One dramatic

example of a lack of this ability is provided by subjects with re-duplicative delusions who appear untroubled by the contradictions between their own claims. One woman, for example, asserted both that her husband was dead, and that he was a patient in the same hospital as herself, without seeming to see a problem (Breen et al. 2000, pp. 92-3). Other examples are provided by subjects whose clinician presents to them potential confounders for their delusion.<sup>32</sup> Buchanan and his colleagues (1993) report that nine out of twenty-three subjects who sometimes acted on their delusions, and forty-five of fifty-six subjects who did not so act, ignored an interviewer's presenting a potential contradiction to the content of their delusion. Twelve and eight in each group did alter (at least during the interview) their conviction in their delusion in response. But interestingly, only one of the actors, and none of the non-actors, responded by giving a delusion-consistent explanation of the contradiction. Yet that is what one would expect of someone who believed the content of her delusion. Elaborating the delusion might be a case of evaluating evidence badly. A subject might, for example, appeal to her non-standard concept of causation in doing so. But it would be a manifestation of a disposition to recognize potential counter-evidence, and to explain away some apparent counter-evidence as merely apparent. Perhaps some of the seventy-eight subjects who failed to elaborate their delusions to cope with the presented information were in fact disposed to do so but were inhibited by some other feature of their situation. It isn't plausible that all of them were. Many of these subjects retained high conviction in their delusion, and hence presumably some of them retained a desire to maintain, to others, commitment to that delusion. Given these difficulties with reason-giving, contradiction-recognizing, and (counter-) evidence assessment, we can safely say that many deluded subjects lack some of the cognitive dispositions that distinguish the believing attitude from (for example) the imagining attitude.

Some deluded subjects are disposed to act in the ways that would be practically rational, given the content of their delusion and their other relevant mental states. This can be clearest when they manifest that disposition by harming another individual. There are cases of Capgras subjects, for

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<sup>32</sup> See Taylor 2006 for examples of such conversations.

example, assaulting or killing the individual whom they take to be an imposter. Sometimes the violence is clearly rationalized by the delusion: either because it is done out of a concern for safety (the supposed imposter posed a threat), or because some other belief makes the violence seem acceptable (as with the man who decapitated his father to look for the batteries in the head of what his delusion represented as a robot (de Pauw and Szulecka, 1988)). But there are less dramatic cases as well: in one study, ninety-six of one hundred subjects suffering from persecutory delusions reported themselves to have taken at least one behavior in the previous month that helped to protect them from a delusional threat (i.e. carrying out a protective ritual, or avoiding a supposedly dangerous situation) (Freeman et al., 2007).

But a number of deluded subjects fail to manifest such dispositions, or do so only infrequently and inconsistently. Again, to determine whether or not there is a disposition-preserving excuse in every case is an empirical (and difficult) affair. But given the sizable numbers of deluded subjects who fail to take the actions their delusions would recommend as most pressing, it would be just as wrong to assume that all such subjects had an appropriate excuse as to assume that none did. And the number of deluded subjects who don't appear to act on their delusions at all (beyond the action of avowing them) is sizable—nearly fifty percent in one study.<sup>33</sup> Even if some action is taken, it may not be the action that would presumably be most pressing if the delusional content were true. After all, when a subject with Capgras avows her delusional content, and hence shows that she can verbally express it, she throws into relief the oddness of her failing to call the police to report verbally the disappearance of her family member (Young, 2000). Many delusions would make violent behavior practically rational (because, for example, a supposed imposter intends the subject harm), or would remove some typical reasons for avoiding violence (because, for example, the subject doesn't view the supposed imposter as a member of his

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<sup>33</sup> See Wessely et al., 1993 and Buchanan et al., 1993. Buchanan and Wessely 2004 contextualizes that earlier work. Forty percent of seventy-nine subjects self-reported no action on their primary delusion in the previous month. And for fifty percent of the subjects, informants answered negatively the question of whether the subject had 'definitely or probably' acted in the previous month on his or her primary delusion (2004, p. 299).

family) (Bourget and Whitehurst, 2004). It is, therefore, significant that rates of violence in deluded subjects aren't *higher*. There is debate about exactly why different studies find different levels of violence in subjects with delusions, but many studies find a substantial number of subjects who display no violence.<sup>34</sup>

Even when violence is present, it need not be a manifestation of a disposition to act in ways that the content of a delusion makes practically rational and urgent. Förstl and his colleagues found reports of violence in eighteen percent of two hundred and sixty cases of misidentification syndrome they reviewed. But they don't provide any information that would indicate whether the violent acts were (at least from the deluded subject's point of view) rationalized by the content of the delusion. And without that information, it isn't clear that all those violent subjects were acting *on* their delusions in the relevant sense. More generally, it appears very difficult to sort out which actions from deluded subjects, violent or otherwise, are taken on the basis of their delusions. There is often a very poor match between deluded subjects' retrospective self-reports of action-on-delusion, and the reports of people in regular contact with them (Buchanan and Wessely, 2004; Wessely et al., 1993).<sup>35</sup> It may be difficult to distinguish subjects

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<sup>34</sup> Förstl et al. 1991 found eighteen percent of two hundred and sixty cases of delusions of misidentification involved violence; Appelbaum et al. 2000 found no correlation between violence and delusions (either delusions in general or threat/control-override delusions in particular); Haddock et al. 2004 found that the presence of threat/control delusions, compared with other psychotic symptoms, doubled the likelihood of violence—but the rate was only five times that of individuals with no mental disorder.

<sup>35</sup> This complicates the value of some studies for defenders of the doxastic account. Bayne and Pacherie (2005, p. 173) cite Wessely et al., 1993, to the effect that seventy-seven percent of subjects had acted on their delusion in the previous month. But that number is the percentage of subjects about whom an informant said some delusional action had 'definitely *or probably*' been taken (Wessely et al., 1993, p. 72, emphasis added). The percentage dropped to half when the same question was posed about the subject's primary delusion only. And while it is possible that informants, because of incomplete information, miss some actions that really were taken because rationally motivated by the delusion, it is also possible that some informants assumed a practically rational



who acted, as they now assert, in ways that were rationalized by the content of their delusion from subjects who are *merely* asserting that they did so. But unless that sorting can be accomplished, we won't have evidence that a subject manifested a relevant disposition to action-on-delusion.<sup>36</sup>

In sum, many deluded subjects act (or fail to act) in ways that make it likely they lack one or more of the important dispositions in the profile for belief in the content of their delusion. Of course, many non-deluded subjects also deviate from dispositional profiles for beliefs that they attribute to themselves, or that others may be tempted to attribute to them. On the dispositionalist view of belief, we have the option of deciding that a deviation is not important. And presumably that option is available with respect to subjects suffering from pathology as well as with respect to standard subjects.

Bayne and Pacherie could still argue, therefore, that interpreters will decide a particular deviation from the dispositional stereotype for (say) the belief that your wife has been kidnapped and replaced by an imposter is relatively unimportant. That would preserve our ability to say that a patient believes that his wife has been kidnapped. But that doesn't preserve our ability to say that the sum total evidence of his dispositions points towards his so believing, where his so believing is a fact over and above his having the dispositional profile he has. It only preserves our ability to refer to those dispositions without misleading our audience about them. Dispositionalism has the resources to generate the ascriptive claims Bayne and Pacherie want precisely because it doesn't give them the same weight they do.

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connection (between the delusion and some content) when there may not have been one (from the deluded subject's point of view).

<sup>36</sup> Buchanan et al. 1993 found that subjects were more likely to act on their delusions when they had lower conviction in the delusion, and were capable of considering counter evidence to the delusion. Buchanan and Wessley (2004) speculate that some deluded subjects may take action relevant to their delusion because they want to obtain evidence to confirm or refute it. If so, then such actions might count as manifestations of dispositions relevant to theoretical rationality. But if the subject was attempting to *disconfirm* the content of the delusion, his resultant action would not be a manifestation of the disposition to act in ways made practically rational by the content of one's belief.

Radical dispositionalism not only finesses debates about how to specify content, or about which of two opposed attitudes (of the same kind) a subject holds towards some specified content. It also finesses debates about which kind of attitude a subject has towards some content. The question about Geraldine was whether she believed or disbelieved the content: Adam smokes marijuana. The question raised by Currie about deluded subjects is whether they believe or imagine the content: My kidnapped wife has been replaced by an imposter. A consistent dispositionalist should say: We can specify the dispositional set of such patients, being careful not to overlook dispositions that stereotypically belong with imagining that content rather than with believing it. And then we let the question ‘Does he believe it or imagine it?’ be settled by the practical demands of the interpretive context. In contexts in which ascribing an imagining-attitude would be misleading or otherwise problematic but ascribing a believing-attitude would not be, then the belief-ascription is appropriate.<sup>37</sup>

But Bayne and Pacherie wanted more than pragmatic permission to talk about delusions as beliefs. They wanted a robust victory over the imagination account. And dispositionalism can’t give it to them, because it allows that if there were a context in which an audience would be misled by belief-ascriptive shorthand, but not by imagining-ascriptive shorthand, the language of imagination would be a better choice. (Just as ‘*Some people* landed in 1620’ was a better that-clause for the race researcher to use in talking about Jane.) Belief-ascriptive language reflects local interpreter convenience, relative to the interests and background information of a particular audience. It doesn’t express all-things-considered judgments that a deluded subject really believes his delusional content, despite his having some dispositions that fit the stereotype for imagining them instead.

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<sup>37</sup> Cognitive-behavioral therapy for delusions might be such a context. Bayne and Pacherie take the fact that therapists, construing subjects as believing their delusions, have success in treating them to be a potential empirical argument in favor of the doxastic account (2005, pp. 185-86). See note 53 below for an explanation of why this is question-begging.

### 3. Securing appropriate status for ascriptions

Schwitzgebel has the resources to take our ascriptive claims seriously, despite the merely pragmatic nature of the decisions he thinks lead us to make them. (I'll make Schwitzgebel's resources explicit and then challenge Bayne's and Pacherie's ability to deploy them.) Schwitzgebel can count a belief ascription where someone fully fits the dispositional stereotype for a belief *simply accurate*, because being so disposed constitutes so believing. Ascriptions in cases where non-manifestation is obviously excused are also simply accurate. The tricky cases are those in which someone deviates from the dispositional stereotype. (Only slightly less tricky are cases in which we strongly suspect someone deviates from the stereotype, because his only available excuse doesn't seem genuinely excusing.) Ascriptions made despite deviations—and many ascriptions of belief in delusional content will be of this kind—cannot be simply accurate. They clearly can be convenient. Can they be appropriate in any deeper way? Only if they can will the use of 'belief' in such ascriptions of delusional content count in any serious way against the imagination account. But this question of appropriateness doesn't matter only to the ultimate success or failure of the doxastic account of delusions. In our interactions with one another, including our moral judgments of one another, we put weight on the differences between attitudes. We take our ascriptive choices seriously. We might, for example, make a different judgment of responsibility for a harmful action depending on whether we think the agent in question believed or only imagined some relevant content.<sup>38</sup> Can dispositionalism let our ascriptions bear this weight, despite the fact that ascriptive choice initially appears to be driven only by communicative concerns?

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<sup>38</sup> Knobe argues that our judgments about whether an agent did some action intentionally are dictated by our judgments about the relative goodness or badness of the action (2003, 2004). Knobe (2004) notes that the judgment that an agent did something intentionally is not always coupled with the judgment that the agent had an intention to do that thing. Nevertheless, someone might argue that Knobe's experimental findings suggest that in a variety of cases, judgments about the moral status of an action drive judgments about agents' intentions and attitudes, and not

Schwitzgebel does not tackle this question directly. But the view of folk-psychology on which his dispositionalism relies contains materials for a positive answer. Before developing this suggestion, I must first argue that an alternative strategy for defending the doxastic account can't succeed. It won't work, even though it looks easy, and appears to fall right out of Schwitzgebel's explicit commitments. This strategy would count delusions as cases of what Schwitzgebel calls 'in-between' belief.<sup>39</sup> In-between beliefs (or in-between believings) emerge whenever a person fails in at least some significant way to fit the full stereotypical profile for a belief one is interested in ascribing to her. Deluded subjects obviously are such a case, but so are self-deceived subjects, young children who may have mastered some but not all of the capacities drawn on in relevant dispositions, and one's own self when deeply fatigued or seriously emotionally conflicted.<sup>40</sup> In these cases, a subject's full dispositional profile falls short of the belief-stereotype for the relevant content *p*. In most such cases, the subject not only lacks dispositions relevant to that stereotype, but has dispositions relevant to another stereotype—perhaps that of believing not-*p*, or of wishing that *p*. Attributors will therefore feel a tug between one or more ascriptive choices, each corresponding to a standard folk-psychological stereotype.

Schwitzgebel holds that they can, and will, make standard ascriptions (of e.g. believing or wishing) when that is useful, and decline to use ascriptive shorthand entirely when deviations are profound. He is not suggesting that attributors will introduce new categories for ascriptive shorthand, and

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the other way around. My argument requires only that this isn't always so, and that we take our judgments in those cases seriously. The question pursued in the text is whether a dispositionalist can take us to be correct in giving the weight to such attitude ascriptions that we do.

<sup>39</sup> See Schwitzgebel, 2001 and 2002. The interpretation of the notion of 'in-between believing' that I am about to lay out is the proper way to understand Schwitzgebel's position in those papers. But the aspects of his position I will highlight are easiest to see in Schwitzgebel 2010. I am grateful to Kristin Andrews for pressing the question of what notion of 'in-between' Schwitzgebel actually uses.

<sup>40</sup> On belief-ascription in developmental contexts, see McGeer and Schwitzgebel, 2006.

is not proposing ‘in between belief’ as a new ascriptive choice.<sup>41</sup> In the 2002 paper on which Bayne and Pacherie draw, this is not completely clear. But in a later paper, Schwitzgebel explicitly rejects what we could call ‘analog’ accounts.<sup>42</sup> Such accounts introduce many fine-grained attitudes to cope with the fact that our dispositional profiles often fail to map neatly onto standard stereotypes. They increase the number of stereotypes that profiles could cleanly fit. On such an account, an attribution of an attitude exactly halfway between (say) believing and imagining could be simply accurate. The profile would perfectly match the new (at least to standard philosophical reconstructions of folk-psychology) stereotype. This is not what Schwitzgebel means by ‘in-between believing’. He means, rather, that our ascriptions are less full-voiced when the profiles of the subjects we discuss are imperfect fits for standard stereotypes.<sup>43</sup> But belief-ascriptions have to be full-voiced if their application to deluded subjects is to secure the doxastic status of their delusions.

Even if in-between beliefs were distinctive, determinate states, the doxastic account of delusion wouldn’t be saved by taking delusions to be instances of them. (That is, even if Bayne and Pacherie decided to adopt the view of ‘in between’ that I’ve just argued is *not* Schwitzgebel’s own, it isn’t clear this would help them.) Dispositionalism identifies beliefs with clusters of dispositions. Subjects with in-

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<sup>41</sup> Egan (2008), Gendler (2008a and 2008b), and Zimmerman (2007) all handle tricky cases by suggesting that subjects (in addition to possessing some relevant beliefs) are in a state for which folk-psychology does not at present have a label. Egan and Gendler introduce labels (*bimagination* and *alief*, respectively), and provide accounts of the states these labels determinately fit.

<sup>42</sup> The abstract for Schwitzgebel, 2002 does sound a bit like an advertisement for an analog account. But in discussing the trickiest cases of self-deception and mental illness in that paper, Schwitzgebel is clear that his account sees interpreters as simply (and properly) avoiding ascriptive shorthand altogether. In fact, the label ‘analog’ is used in that paper to reject the idea that the cases of interest to him could all be handled by sensitivity to subject’s varying degrees of confidence (Schwitzgebel, 2002, p. 261). I’m generalizing the use of the label, to cover all the kinds of views that are explicitly rejected in Schwitzgebel, 2010.

<sup>43</sup> For especially clear statements, see Schwitzgebel, 2002, p. 261 and Schwitzgebel, 2010, p. 535.

between beliefs are missing a significant number of dispositions important to the stereotype for believing the relevant content. We can't legitimately label a deluded subject's in-between belief a doxastic state—in the sense relevant to the dispute between Bayne and Pacherie and Currie—unless we have some way of counting her delusion as a belief. By hypothesis, she doesn't possess many of the relevant dispositions. So such possession isn't the way her delusion manages to count as a belief. But then in virtue of what *would* it count? Anything we propose that is strong enough to do the job—such as, for example, the presence of a particular kind of representation—is likely to take us away from pure dispositionalism. And it would likely take us toward an account of the kind that sent Bayne and Pacherie to dispositionalism in the first place: an account with other clear standards for belief that deluded subjects won't meet.

There is another reason why an attempt to defend the doxastic account of delusions can't proceed by treating in-between beliefs as determinate doxastic states. Dispositionalism proposes in-between states in order to solve certain puzzles about forgetful, self-deceived, and prejudiced agents. If in-between beliefs are genuine doxastic states, then the puzzles return.<sup>44</sup> Consider an agent who appears self-deceived about her employee's honesty. She has dispositions in the stereotype for believing he is honest, and dispositions in the stereotype set for believing he is dishonest. Supposing her to be in a determinate 'in-between' state that is also genuinely doxastic creates pressure to state *the* content of that state. But that can't be done without attributing a contradictory content. Once this is appreciated, the move to dispositionalism looks like a detour: we're back to the (puzzling) folk view on which the employer believes that her employee is honest *and* believes that he is not.

Pre-theoretic approaches to delusion, unlike pre-theoretic approaches to self-deception and prejudice, may attribute contradictory beliefs less often. So it might seem the problem just outlined wouldn't come up if we attempted to use determinate in-between states to defend the doxastic status of delusions. But there is a problem with the attempt nevertheless. It owes an explanation of why it is permissible to treat in-between beliefs as genuinely doxastic in the case of delusions, given that it is not

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<sup>44</sup> See Zimmerman, 2007, §7.

permissible in other cases. And it would have to deal with the cases in which pressing this line for delusory contents *would* invite the attribution of contradictions. Consider, for example, those sufferers from the Capgras delusion who have many of the dispositions in the stereotype set for believing that their loved one is not in danger. (They don't go out searching for him, they appear unconcerned about his welfare, etc.). That is enough to get them at least the in-between belief, if not the belief, that their loved one is safe. And on this account, each of those states is genuinely doxastic. But consider the in-between belief that is their delusion: that their loved one is missing and has been replaced by an imposter. If that is also a genuine doxastic state, they appear to be in contradictory doxastic states. Here too, the move to this form of dispositionalism hasn't made their situation any less paradoxical. Someone defending the doxastic account of delusions argues that we can understand most delusions as we understand beliefs. Introducing paradox doesn't serve their aims. For all these reasons, the notion of 'in-between belief'—either on Schwitzgebel's own understanding of that notion, or on the alternative 'analog' understanding—can't be pressed into the service of the doxastic account of delusion.

The ground is now clear to consider the question of whether attention to folk-psychological practice could give weight to our choices of ascriptive shorthand. As we've just seen, Schwitzgebel isn't introducing more attitude-labels for tricky cases, in order to increase the number of simply accurate ascriptions. But he is realistic about the fact that deviations from stereotypes will be fairly frequent. His account can construe our comfortable use of ascriptive shorthand—even in those cases—as reflecting more than the short-term convenience of individual interpreters, because of the use it makes of folk-psychology. Folk-psychology is the locus of the dispositional stereotypes for specific beliefs. But it is also the locus for rational, pragmatic, moral, and social norms prescribing specific dispositional profiles. These norms concern not just stereotypes for specific attitudes, taken individually, but also how dispositions belonging to different such stereotypes ought to combine. The scope of these norms, Schwitzgebel notes, is much broader than norms for procedural rationality. For example, folk-psychology includes a social norm, pertaining to the idea of personal integration, that one not avow a

preference for chocolate ice cream and then choose vanilla without offering, or feeling a need to offer, some explanation (Schwitzgebel, 2002, pp. 262-3).

Decisions about the relative importance of particular deviations drive folk judgments about which attributions to profile-deviating subjects will seriously mislead an audience. And folk exert significant pressure on one another not to deviate in important ways. We're not supposed to avow, 'We're having a drought,' while searching out rain-boots as part of a plan to go puddle jumping. And we're not supposed to preach about the virtues of veganism while munching a pastrami sandwich. There are many reasons why it is bad for agents to have deviant profiles. Take the obvious cases of holding inconsistent beliefs, or of acting on imaginings as if they were evidentially supported beliefs. We can see that an individual who deviates in these ways is likely to find herself making (perhaps costly) errors of reasoning, and find her plans ending in frustration. Other deviations from profile-shaping norms may be bad only because the deviation invites social disapproval or rejection. And there are many reasons why our dispositional profiles, more often than not, fit the norms. For example, when deviations are actually dangerous, one would expect our minds to have evolved in a such a way that, when functioning properly, they rarely risk that danger.<sup>45</sup> It is an empirical question how various factors work together to cause us to be, often, in conformity with these norms. But one significant factor is our prodding of one another (and ourselves) to conform.<sup>46</sup> We praise conformity, we call out and criticize deviance, and we encourage renewed conformity in a variety of ways. We do these things both for deviations whose cost will outrun social disapproval as well as deviations whose cost does not. (Sometimes we offer argument, but sometimes simply distraction or another means of shifting attention to move one another to conformity.) When we

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<sup>45</sup> Egan, after introducing 'bimagination', argues that the reason most of our states cluster not under that label but under 'belief' 'imagine' 'desire' and so on is that mixing the functional roles associated with these standard attitudes (as happens in bimagination) is non-adaptive (Egan, 2008).

<sup>46</sup> See McGeer, 1996, 2007a, and 2007b; McGeer and Pettit, 2002; and Zawidzki, 2008.



criticize deviance and praise conformity, we depend on and advance a folk-psychological assessment of which dispositions matter most to stereotypes for standard attitudes and to profiles for sensible persons.

This means that an attribution in the face of dispositional deviance can be all-things-considered-appropriate if it conforms to current folk-psychological judgment about what counts as important deviance. These attributions are appropriate because they conform to folk-psychological standards for attitudes, and the identity of those attitudes is determined by the standards. That is, folk-psychological judgments help produce and do not simply reflect sharp boundaries between beliefs with different contents and between attitudes of different kinds. And they do this in two related ways: they provide criteria that individuate attitudes, and they are used in folk practices of training, criticism, and exhortation that help bring it about that those attitudes are the ones we have.

So if dispositionalism is combined with the view that folk-psychology effectively describes us because it so effectively prescribes how we are to be, it has no need for a general error theory of our ascriptive talk. (That is, few ordinary ascriptive statements like, 'He really believes he'll win' need carry any sort of disclaimer.) This version of dispositionalism takes general folk-psychological practice as a court of appeal for individual ascriber choices, and takes it that there is no higher court. Individual ascriptions that lined up with general practice would be seriously, not trivially, appropriate. Since folk-psychology makes a firm distinction between believing and imagining, Bayne and Pacherie might argue that dispositionalist permission to ascribe delusory content as belief does amount to a serious defeat for the imagination strategy. The permission would reflect general judgments about which norms were individuating of certain attitudes, not just local interpreter convenience.

But that argument faces two hurdles. First, a clear distinction between belief and imagining is maintained only so long as folk practice makes judgments about the relative importance of particular dispositions to attitude-profiles, and so long as folk continue to act and think in ways that rarely violate folk expectations for person-level dispositional integration. But anyone with eliminativist, or even seriously revisionist, predictions to make about the future of folk-psychology will think this state of

affairs won't continue for ever.<sup>47</sup> So to the extent that Bayne and Pacherie might be inclined toward such predictions, they will need to explain how to fund a dispositional account of belief without appeal to folk categories, stereotypes, standards of explanation, and on-going folk willingness to self-regulate cognition according to those stereotypes.

Second, even in a pre-elimination short-term, everything depends on the extent to which folk-psychology really does recognize delusions as beliefs. (And everything depends on this in the event that folk-psychology can't be eliminated.<sup>48</sup>) There are at least two explanations—both compatible with the just-described version of dispositionalism—for why interpreters say a deluded subject (for example) *believes* he is dead. Perhaps the subject's deviations from the dispositional profile for believing that one is dead are deemed either excusable or unimportant in general folk-psychological practice. But perhaps, because of mutual awareness that the subject is brain-injured or actively psychotic, his non-excusable and important deviations from the relevant dispositional profile are not taken as a bar to ascribing certain beliefs to him. Maybe the speaker and audience already suspended their background folk-psychological assumption that this person will be predictable, explainable, and potentially correctable. Maybe they won't generate expectations for future behavior on the basis of a single ascription. Such communicators know they are unlikely to mislead with a single ascription because they know their audience is generally skeptical about the degree to which the deluded subject will fulfill *any* folk-psychological expectation. They know it is safe to lower the bar for the appropriateness of their ascriptive choices. Only by ruling out this last explanation for belief-talk about deluded subjects can Bayne and Pacherie give the significance they need to that ascriptive choice.

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<sup>47</sup> Schwitzgebel himself thinks that at some future date our apparatus for explaining human behavior and cognition will radically change. His dispositional account of belief is meant to hold only up to that date (Schwitzgebel, 2002, pp. 270-1).

<sup>48</sup> For a recent argument for the incoherence of eliminativism, see Lockie, 2003.

#### 4. Conclusion

In discussions of delusion, though not only there, we find complaints—from both philosophers and empirical scientists—that various (usually philosophical) accounts of belief simply make it too hard to have a belief. Such accounts, the critics continue, unfairly prevent animals, small children, and too many impaired adults from counting as believers. And they unfairly impugn the doxastic status of many of our belief-like states. After all, because we are the kind of creatures we are, we sometimes fall short of these accounts' standards for possession of particular beliefs—through forgetfulness, or localized irrationality. Because dispositionalism links belief-ascription to clusters of dispositions, it seems to avoid making any particular dispositions *necessary* to belief.<sup>49</sup> Thus, for example, that a creature without language can't avow a belief won't by itself be a bar to belief-ascription, because the disposition to avow is but one of many dispositions in the relevant cluster. Perhaps being able to give reasons for one's belief, or being able to explain why an apparent piece of counter-evidence isn't actually relevant, are similarly not necessary. After all, the stereotypes for each content/attitude pair contain many dispositions. It should be easy to find some other dispositions that together suffice for ascription, at least on some occasions. And so the excessive rigidity of more standard accounts can be avoided, and doxastic status conferred on a wider variety of the states of a wider variety of subjects.

Dispositionalism does let ascription go forward when stereotype deviation is not important. But it can't function as these critics hope unless we confuse two notions of importance that need to be kept separate. On the first notion, the distinction between important and unimportant deviance turns on what ascribers find convenient, with respect to their aims in communicating with their audience. If an ascriber

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<sup>49</sup> See Bortolotti, 2010 and 2005; Bortolotti and Broome, 2008; and Davies and Coltheart, 2000 for criticisms of overly idealistic accounts of belief. Bell, Halligan, and Ellis (2006) praise Bayne's and Pacherie's use of dispositionalism to secure a looser, less idealized view of belief that will fit better with empirical accounts of what belief actually is.

is speaking to an audience whose interest in a subject is very circumscribed, and who therefore has very few expectations to upset, ascription in the face of quite serious deviation may be permissible. Those deviations are unimportant with reference to that particular communicative exchange and its chances for success. It will be fairly easy for a theorist to find examples of communicative contexts in which the deviations of deluded (or self-deceived, irrational, or non-linguistic) subjects count as unimportant in this sense.

But deviations that are unimportant in this sense are not evidence that the deviating individuals are believers. This notion of (un)importance is tightly tied to communicative interests—some of which may even turn on audiences' *false* beliefs about subjects. It can't be used to license inferences from the permissibility of an ascription to facts about the interpreted subject. Section 3 argued that there was a way to license a version of this inference. What does the work is a second notion of (un)importance. Relative (un)importance of deviation in this sense reflects the general folk-psychological weighting of dispositions in stereotypes. Some dispositions play a more central role in the individuation of an attitude, and in the norms to which subjects with that attitude are supposed to respond. Suppose an ascriber follows this general weighting in deeming a deviation unimportant enough to allow ascription. We may then legitimately suppose that the significance of her ascriptive choice is not exhausted by the role it plays in helping her audience to avoid confusion. It reveals how the subject in question is positioned with respect to folk-psychological norms for individuation of that attitude. It reveals which norms he himself would see as guiding his behavior (with reference to this mental state). It also suggests that he is likely to have a good shot at conforming to those norms (either now or in the near future, with or without certain kinds of help). Finally, a subject who hears this ascription may do a better job of living up to it, and of

reducing his deviations from the standard profile. (After such reduction, the ascription might turn out to be simply accurate.<sup>50</sup>)

It will, however, be harder to find cases of deluded, self-deceived, irrational, or non-linguistic subjects whose deviations are correctly deemed unimportant in this second sense. Only this kind of unimportance, however, will let dispositionalism yield a substantive victory over accounts of belief that insist these deviations entail the absence of belief. We can't equivocate on the notion of 'unimportant deviation'. But then, unless we find an alternative way to give serious weight to our use of ascriptive shorthand for in-between dispositional profiles, dispositionalism can't be used to confer doxastic status on the states in question.

Dispositionalism does, however, prepare us to expect that subjects may be significantly different from standard believers in some key respects, even while behaving like them in other ways. And it gives us a nuanced way to talk about such subjects. This benefit of dispositionalism stems from its forward-looking character. Dispositionalism concerns how people are disposed to behave, think, and feel, in the present and future.<sup>51</sup> And the folk-psychological practices that dispositionalism can rely on to give weight to our ascriptive choices are also forward looking. Folk-psychology can be somewhat expansive about how different attitude states are in fact formed. But it—and so we ourselves—expect subjects to exercise virtual control over their attitudes.<sup>52</sup> Subjects may not always attend to their states, but when they do, we expect them to be interested in assessing them (and to be able to do so). And we expect this even of states that were not formed as a result of deliberation. Take beliefs, for example. Most subjects can point to evidence for their beliefs (or, at least, point to an absence of counter-evidence), even when the belief in

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<sup>50</sup> McGeer (in 2007a and 2007b) emphasizes the way knowledge of others' ascriptions affects subjects' behavior. Schwitzgebel (2010) suggests that some of our self-ascriptions of occurrent judgment are like promises that our behavior will be in line with the state we ascribe.

<sup>51</sup> See Schwitzgebel 2002, p. 266.

<sup>52</sup> The phrase is from McGeer (2007b, p. 106).

question was not consciously formed on the basis of evidence. Crucially, when they can't, they think they should get themselves into a situation in which they can. Generally, the folk-psychological norms that we use in assessing and correcting others' states are recognized by us as norms to which we ought to conform. To the extent that folk-psychology treats virtual control as crucial to our attitudes, and associates different kinds of control with different attitudes, to that extent seriously appropriate attitude-ascriptions depend on a subject's capacity for virtual control.

Subjects whose status as believers isn't always clear will differ in their capacity for exercising virtual control. Consider deluded subjects. (Similar points would apply to subjects who are non-standard in other ways.) Some of these subjects are capable of a fair amount of virtual control, of the kind distinctive of belief, over their delusions. For example, they can engage to some extent in the practice of offering reasons for their delusions (Bortolotti and Broome, 2008). They may be able to participate in folk-psychological practices of self-correction, and to respond effectively to correction from others. They may be able to work out, perhaps with help from others, whether they should give up the delusion, or work harder to fit the dispositional profile of someone who believed that content.<sup>53</sup> The situation of such

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<sup>53</sup> Perhaps these are the subjects who are most likely to benefit from cognitive-behavioral therapy for their delusion. (Jakes, Rhodes, and Turner (1997) found that the subjects who were most helped by a course of cognitive therapy were those whose conviction rating for their delusion varied within a single therapy session.) We are now, however, in a position to see why it is question-begging to take the success of cognitive-behavioral therapy for some deluded subjects to prove the general claim that delusions are doxastic states. First, such therapy aims at improving patients' situations on a number of distinct dimensions (O'Connor et al., 2007). One aim is to reduce the number of times a patient acts on a delusion in a way that causes distress to herself or others. In thinking about this aim, a therapist might be thinking of the delusion as motivating action in the way a belief would. But whether any state that plays a belief-like motivational role must in fact *be* a belief is precisely one of the questions at issue in the debate between the imagination and doxastic accounts of delusion. (More generally, those who want to keep fairly tight connections between belief and rationality will explicitly allow states other than belief to play belief-typical motivational roles, precisely in order to avoid having to count (for example) delusions as beliefs. See Gendler (2007) and Velleman

a subject seems quite like a situation in which any of us might find ourselves. We can be attributed a belief whose origins are somewhat dubious, and which we aren't quite sure how to defend, even though we recognize a responsibility to do so—and have made a start on offering reasons. In both cases, the ascription of belief is somewhat aspirational. But it still has weight beyond that of an individual ascriber's communicative convenience.

An aspirational approach to attitude ascription maximizes dispositionalism's capacity to give nuanced responses to different kinds of deluded subjects. For that matter, it maximizes dispositionalism's capacity to handle the foibles of subjects not suffering any pathology. The aspirational approach might appear to carry a steep cost, however. It might appear to entail some form of anti-realism about our attitudes. In particular, it might appear to raise trouble for psychological explanation: how could a merely aspirational ascription do real work in an explanation of a subject's action?<sup>54</sup> This worry rests in part on two assumptions: that folk-psychology primarily aims at the explanation and prediction of our fellows; and that folk-psychological practice (explanatory and otherwise) plays no significant role in the production of our fellows' behavior. But that is not the view of folk-psychology this paper has used to allow dispositionalism to treat some ascriptive choices as seriously appropriate. It is also an increasingly contested view of the content and aim of folk-psychology.<sup>55</sup> Some of those who contest it argue for the

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(2000.) Furthermore, even when the therapy aims at getting the patient to agree that there is little evidence for the delusion, and much evidence against it, we need not take this as proof that the delusion is a belief. Instead of the patient realizing that she has harbored a false belief, she might realize (if the aspirational account of ascription is correct) that she wasn't living up to the folk-psychological standards for believing the delusory content, and give up any attempt to represent herself as doing so. Since these re-descriptions of the therapeutic situation are possible, clinical successes with this method can't independently support the doxastic account of delusions.

<sup>54</sup> For a version of this worry, see Zimmerman, 2007, §7. For more expansive understandings of how even the purely explanatory tasks of folk-psychology could proceed, see Schwitzgebel, 2010, pp. 543-46, and Godfrey-Smith, 2005.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, many of the papers collected in Hutto and Ratcliffe, 2007.

alternative view relied on in this paper. The alternative view highlights the way our ascriptive practices—and all the questioning, criticizing, and prodding related to ascription—work to mold us into the kind of agents who make sense in folk-psychological terms. The alternative is urged on the grounds that it accurately depicts the range of skills involved in folk-psychological competence (McGeer, 2007a), and because it is easier to see how folk-psychological practices could have evolved if they include this kind of regulation (Zawidzki, 2008).<sup>56</sup> On this view of folk-psychology, many of our ascriptions are at least partially aspirational. They indicate a pattern of norms with which a subject is in the process of complying. Because we do often aim at, and manage, compliance, ascriptions can often be explanatory even in the more static way assumed by the standard model of folk-psychology. But they enable us to make sense of one another, and facilitate our mutual correction, even when compliance has not yet been fully achieved. So on this view of the role played by our ascriptions, the suggestion that some of them are aspirational is *not* prelude to a suggestion that they be eliminated.<sup>57</sup>

Dispositionalism fits well with this view of folk-psychology as a forward-looking, mind-regulating practice. The two together help account for our sense that we partially understand many deluded subjects. Dispositionalism about belief can't provide a blanket defense of doxasticism about delusions. It can't do that on either the analog approach to attitudes or the aspirational approach to ascriptions. But when dispositionalism joins forces with the view that folk-psychology is less a matter of explanation-at-a-distance than the production of states and behaviors that help us make sense to each other, it is nevertheless very powerful. It gives us the tools to take attitude ascriptions seriously while

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<sup>56</sup> Andrews (2009) argues that even the folk-psychological practice of explaining action in terms of reasons could only have developed if we were motivated to provide such explanations for actions that violated community norms.

<sup>57</sup> However, this account does make it impossible to extend seriously appropriate (even if aspirational) ascriptions to individuals who cannot exercise virtual control over their states, nor benefit from others' corrective efforts. Most non-human animals presumably fall in this group, as do very small children. Children, however, come to regulate 'their own experiences, feelings, thoughts, and actions...in accord with the intersubjective norms of a shared psychological practice' (McGeer, 2007a, p. 153).



enabling us to pay attention to the various ways in which those ascriptions can fail to be flatly true. Most ascriptions of belief in delusory content are likely to be merely convenient. Some deluded subjects may merit aspirational ascriptions. But for many more, such ascriptions are not appropriate. These subjects don't recognize the need to bring their dispositions in line with the belief ascription (or an appropriate ascription of an alternative attitude). If they do recognize this, they lack the capacity to make the necessary changes. Delusions rob most of those who suffer from them of their capacity to respond to the invitations implied by some ascriptions.

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