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How to Use Cognitive Faculties You Never Knew You Had

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[Word Count: 8213]

**Abstract:** Norman forms the belief that *the president is in New York* by way of a clairvoyance faculty he doesn’t know he has. Many agree *that* his belief is unjustified but disagree about *why* it is unjustified. I argue that the lack of justification cannot be explained by a higher-level evidence requirement on justification, but it can be explained by a no-defeater requirement. I then explain how you can use cognitive faculties you don’t know you have. Lastly, I use lessons from the foregoing to compare Norman’s belief, formed by clairvoyance, with Sally’s theistic belief, formed by a *sensus divinitatis*. [Word Count: 100]

Keywords: epistemic justification; higher-level evidence; defeaters; proper functionalism; religious epistemology, social epistemology

**1. Introduction**

While eating lunch the other day, Norman found himself with the belief that *the president is in New York*. However, he couldn’t think of any reason for the belief. Later, when hearing a friend wonder aloud about the whereabouts of the president, the following dialogue ensued:

Norman: ‘He’s in New York.’

Friend: ‘Oh, okay. Did you see it on the news?’

Norman: ‘No, but he is in New York.’

Norman’s belief was formed by a clairvoyance faculty that he didn’t know he had. Call such a faculty an *unfamiliar faculty*. Many think that Norman’s belief was not justified, even if the clairvoyance faculty was in fact reliable, and I will assume in this paper that they are correct.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This illustration seems, at least initially, to show that one cannot use an unfamiliar cognitive faculty to form a justified belief. Yet, all of our cognitive faculties were unfamiliar to us at some point, and all of our justified beliefs were formed by those very faculties. How does this happen? How can one form justified beliefs by way of unfamiliar cognitive faculties? Crucial to answering these questions is the further question of whether justification has a higher-level evidence requirement or merely a no-defeater requirement.[[2]](#footnote-2) In this paper, I aim to answer these questions.

I end the paper by applying my answers to these normative epistemology questions to some interesting cases in philosophy of religion. Consider the following:

*Adult Theism*: Sally is an adult whom God has designed with a *sensus divinitatus*, a faculty designed to form true beliefs about God. One day, her faculty activates in the sort of environment for which it was designed and triggers the formation of the belief that *there is a God who loves me*.

Sally’s belief was formed by properly functioning, successfully truth-aimed faculties in the sort of environment for which they were designed – the very conditions which, according to Alvin Plantinga’s (1993b) theory, are necessary and sufficient for warrant. (Following a convention in epistemology, I’ll use ‘warrant’ to denote whatever it is that turns true belief into knowledge.) Furthermore, Adult Theism is the sort of example used by Plantinga (2000) to illustrate an instance of warranted theistic belief.[[3]](#footnote-3) But notice that Adult Theism bears some resemblances to the Norman case. Should we then infer that Sally’s belief is unjustified, just as Norman’s is?[[4]](#footnote-4) In the final section, I will use my discussion of unfamiliar faculty cases to illuminate cases like Adult Theism.

After presenting background in §2, I go on in §3 and §4 to formulate two possible explanations of why Norman’s belief is unjustified: a higher-level evidence theory and a no-defeater theory. I base the former on Conee and Feldman (2004) and Steup (2013) and show how it is immune to the standard objections commonly leveled against higher-level evidence theories. I base the latter on Bergmann (2005) and show how it illustrates the relevance of social epistemology to determining whether Norman’s belief is justified. In §5, I appeal to cases of infant knowledge from developmental psychology to defend new arguments for the no-defeater theory and against the higher-level evidence theory.[[5]](#footnote-5) In §6, I distinguish between mentalist and nonmentalist versions of the no-defeater theory. In §7, I draw lessons from the previous sections to answer the question of how to use unfamiliar cognitive faculties, which I then apply to cases like Adult Theism.

**2. Background**

Since I am discussing the case of Norman the clairvoyant, some philosophers may think that the aim of this paper is to contribute to the internalism-externalism debate. After all, the case was originally presented as a counterexample to reliabilism, a prominent version of externalism.[[6]](#footnote-6) However, that is not the aim of this paper. In this section, I will define some terms and explain why my discussion is orthogonal to the internalism-externalism debate.

Roughly, internalist theories of epistemic justification require for a belief’s justification that the believer be (actually or potentially) *aware* of something that plays a role in the justification of the belief. Externalist theories require that there be something that makes the belief justified, but they deny any such awareness requirement. Prominent versions of *both* theories include a no-defeater condition, which states that the believer not have a reason to give up his belief.[[7]](#footnote-7) Consider the following version of reliabilism, a version of externalism:

Reliabilism: If *S*’s belief that *p* is formed reliably and *S* has no defeaters for believing *p*, then *S*’s belief that *p* is justified.[[8]](#footnote-8)

We can see how reliabilism is an externalist theory because it does not require that the believer be (actually or potentially) aware that the belief was formed reliably. We also see how the case of Norman might be seen as a counterexample to reliabilism. Norman’s belief is formed reliably, and many assume that he has no defeaters.[[9]](#footnote-9) Yet, his belief seems unjustified. So, typically, the case of Norman figures prominently in the internalism-externalism debate.

However, Jack Lyons (2013) has recently argued that prominent versions of internalism also face potential counterexamples from unfamiliar faculty cases (although he does not call them ‘unfamiliar faculty cases’). Consider a view that is popular among internalists, what Jack Lyons calls *seeming internalism*:

If *S* is appeared to as if *p*, then *S* is prima facie justified in believing that *p* (2013, 13).[[10]](#footnote-10)

(Seeming internalism is a version of internalism since *S* can be actually or potentially aware of whether *S* is appeared to as if *p*.) Lyons writes,

Norman the clairvoyant is appeared to the-president-is-in-New-Yorkly… do we—does the *internalist*—want to say that anyone thus appeared to is prima facie justified in believing the president is in New York? … This does not strike me as the sort of view an internalist would want to endorse; nor is it very plausible in its own right. If I were to—suddenly and for no good reason—have a high level electroreceptive experience like that of an intelligent shark, and it seemed to me that here was an object about my size, producing certain electrical field perturbations, on the other side of the wall behind me, would I be justified in this belief? Surely not (26).[[11]](#footnote-11)

My point is not that Lyons’ unfamiliar facultycases are *successful* counterexamples to seeming internalism. My point is that they seem to be just as challenging to seeming internalism as they are to reliabilism. Unfamiliar faculty cases, therefore, cut across the internalist/externalist divide. So, I am not trying take a side in the debate between internalists and externalists, which is how the dialectic is often formulated. I am trying to answer the question of how one can come to form justified beliefs by cognitive faculties that one does not know that one has.

Answering this will require answering why Norman’s belief is unjustified. There is significant philosophical literature that attempts to pinpoint exactly which important necessary condition on justification Norman is missing: e.g., a correct etiology (Lyons 2009, 119), proper function (Bergmann 2006, 141; Graham 2014a; Graham 2014b), externalist reliabilist evidence (Comesana 2010, 582), and integration with the believer’s cognitive character (Breyer & Greco 2008, 175). Harmen Ghijsen (2016, 94–100) has carefully examined each of these claims and has argued – in my mind, convincingly – that they do not successfully explain why Norman’s belief is unjustified. I find his objections convincing and so will not focus on those theories.

Two types of theories that do not have unaddressed objections are higher-level evidence theories and no-defeater theories. I will discuss these theories in the following two sections, ultimately arguing in favor of the latter. It will also turn out that a virtue of my successfully explaining why Norman’s belief is unjustified will vindicate both reliabilism and seeming internalism.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**3. The Higher-Level Evidence Requirement**

A natural first response to the Norman case is to say that justified belief requires that one know (or justifiedly believe) that one’s belief was formed reliably.[[13]](#footnote-13) To help facilitate our thinking, I will follow Michael Bergmann (2005, 422) in using ‘*p\**’ to denote the proposition that *S’s belief that p was formed reliably*. Consider,

Higher-Level Justified Belief (HLJB): *S* justifiedly believes that *p* only if *S* justifiedly believes that *p\**.

Although HLJB is tempting, most epistemologists recognize that it leads to an infinite regress, and thereby, to skepticism. (If HLJB is true, then to justifiedly believe *p*\*, one must justifiedly believe (*p*\*)\*, and so on.)[[14]](#footnote-14) Since we have some justified beliefs, HLJB is false. Another problem, recognized by many epistemologists, is that HLJB overintellectualizes justification.[[15]](#footnote-15) Plausibly, children can have justified beliefs, even if they do not have the relevant, justified higher-level beliefs.

Although views like HLJB are widely rejected, *weaker* and more plausible higher-level evidential conditions on justification have been ignored. Conee & Feldman (2004) write,

We have collateral evidence to the effect that when we have perceptual experience of certain kinds, external conditions of the corresponding kinds normally obtain. For example, we have evidence supporting the proposition that when we have the usual sort of experience of seeming to see a book, we usually do in fact see a book… On the other hand, as BonJour describes his example, the clairvoyant has no confirmation at all of his clairvoyant beliefs (98).

Matthias Steup (2013) considers Ed, who believes that there is a goldfinch because it seems to him that there is one:

If Ed were to ask himself whether the kind of seeming on which his goldfinch belief is based is reliable, he would (let us stipulate) remember that seemings of the kind in question have rarely led him astray… there haven’t been any cases in which what seemed to him to be a bird was in fact a squirrel, or what seemed to him to be a dog was in fact a cat… if Ed were to consult his memory to check on the credentials of his visual seemings, his memory would tell him that they have an excellent track record (141–142).

Steup concludes that justified belief requires that one have in one’s memory evidence that the seemings upon which one’s belief is based are reliable.[[16]](#footnote-16)

I draw from these quotes the following condition on justification:

Higher-Level Evidence Requirement (HLE): *S* justifiedly believes that *p* only if *S* has good evidence for *p\** and is thereby in a position tojustifiedly believe *p\**.

Note that HLE does not require that *S* actually *believe p\**, so there is no threat that HLE will require, for justified beliefs, that *S* must form an infinite number of beliefs.[[17]](#footnote-17) Hence, HLE at least does not obviously lead to an infinite regress like HLJB does. Furthermore, children will have evidence for the reliability of, say, their vision by way of repeated usage and confirmation. A child could thereby have evidence that supports the proposition that *my vision is reliable*.

HLE also requires that *S* be *in a position to* justifiedly believe *p\**. Here is why. Suppose Holmes and Watson have both collected the same clues about a certain case. Although they have similar evidence, Holmes is in a position to form a justified conclusion about who committed the crime on the basis of his evidence; Watson is not able to draw together the information and infer such a justified conclusion. Now, consider the following case:

*Detective Norman*: Over time, Detective Norman has unknowingly picked up information that supports believing that he has clairvoyant powers. If he had Holmes-like powers and reflected deeply, he would justifiedly conclude, on the basis of that information, that he has clairvoyant powers. But he only has Watson-like powers and so makes no conclusion. One day, Norman forms the belief that *the president is in New York* by way of his clairvoyant powers.

Detective Norman has good evidence for believing that he reliably formed the belief that the president is in New York. Despite this evidence, he is not in a position to justifiedly believe that his belief was formed reliably. And, intuitively, he is not justified in believing that the president is in New York.[[18]](#footnote-18) (Note that a simple appeal to children’s beliefs will not make for an easy counterexample to HLE. Plausibly, a child is in a position to justifiedly believe that her vision is reliable, although she’d probably express this by saying, ‘I have good eyes’ or ‘I can see things well.’)

I take HLE to be a *prima facie* plausible explanation of why both Norman and Detective Norman’s beliefs are unjustified. Furthermore, unlike the battered HLJB, HLE has remained free of any attempted refutations, despite its being suggested by prominent epistemologists like Steup, Conee, and Feldman.[[19]](#footnote-19)

**4. No Higher-Level Defeat Requirement**

*4.1 The Condition Explained*

The sort of response to unfamiliar faculty cases that I develop in this section states that Norman’s belief is unjustified because he has a defeater. This was suggested, but not defended in detail, by Goldman (1986, 112) and Plantinga (1996, 377). Recently, Ghijsen (2016) has developed in detail a proper functionalist, defeat account of why Norman’s belief is unjustified. Ghijsen thinks it is because the proper functioning of Norman’s defeater system requires that he give up his belief. In this section, I also develop and defend a no-defeater condition on justification that explains why Norman’s belief is unjustified. However, it differs from Ghijsen’s by not committing to proper functionalism.

I endorse the following,

*No Higher-Level Defeater Requirement (NHD)*: *S* justifiedly believes that *p* only if it’s not the case that (in virtue of her background beliefs or knowledge, *S* should withhold or disbelieve *p\**)

The following two cases will motivate NHD. Let ‘G’ denote the proposition that *this is a guitar* and ‘G\*’ denote the proposition that *my belief that <this is a guitar> was formed reliably*. In the first case, Paula knows that she has taken a drug that makes 99% of people hallucinate guitars. In the second case, she knows she has taken a drug that makes 50% of people hallucinate guitars. In both cases, it turns out that she doesn’t actually hallucinate, she looks at a real guitar, and reliably forms the belief that G. Still, given her background justified beliefs and knowledge, it seems that she should disbelieve G\* (in the first case) or withhold G\* (in the second case). Furthermore, in both cases, it seems that her belief in G is not justified. It seems that her background beliefs (or knowledge) about the drug are a defeater. And what is true in this specific case seems true generally. For any belief that *p*, if one *should* disbelieve *p\** or withhold *p\**, then it seems that one is not justified in believing *p*.

Conditions like NHD are used not just to respond to the case of Norman but are independently and widely endorsed.[[20]](#footnote-20) Although they come in many forms, what they have in common is a requirement on justified belief that *p* that one not take some negative perspective (or be in an epistemic position to take a negative perspective) toward whether the belief that *p* has some valuable, epistemic property. They also have criticisms, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to address those criticisms as they might apply specifically to NHD.[[21]](#footnote-21) However, even if the dissenters are correct and Paula’s belief remains justified and undefeated, there is clearly *something* bad epistemically when Paula believes G. Dissenters can thereby take my discussion to be arguing that *this* badness is present in Norman, even if his belief remains justified. For example, Maria Lasonen-Aarnio (2014, 343) thinks that although the *beliefs* in cases such as Paula’s are justified, the *believers* are still being *unreasonable*. Lasonen-Aarnio could then take my paper to be about why Norman is unreasonable, and how to not be unreasonable when forming beliefs by way of faculties one does not know one has.

In NHD, I refer to background beliefs *or* knowledge. Some philosophers, those who endorse ‘knowledge-first epistemology’, might think that only background *knowledge* could make it so that one should withhold or disbelieve the relevant *p*\*.[[22]](#footnote-22) Others might think that *beliefs* that are suitably justified are sufficient. I wish to remain neutral on this question, although I will sometimes refer only to ‘background beliefs’. Those who wish can substitute ‘background knowledge’ or ‘background justified beliefs’ into my cases without my main points losing any force.

A reader who is familiar with the literature on higher-level defeaters might note that my normative component is put in terms of a ‘should’ instead of the more common ‘has justification for’. This is because ‘has justification for’ is read ambiguously between the weaker ‘have permission to’ and a stronger ‘is obligated to’ or ‘should’. I do not mean the former, and it is a less plausible condition. Suppose that Paula merely *may* disbelieve or withhold G\* instead of its being the case that she *should* disbelieve or withhold G*\**. The latter is more plausibly a case of defeat.

I also use ‘should’ talk instead of ‘obligation’ talk to retain more neutrality. *One* way to understand ‘*S* epistemically should believe *p*’ is as ‘*S* is epistemically obligated to believe *p*.’ However, there are other ways. For example, consider *proper functionalism*, a view often associated with Plantinga (1993b), but which has many proponents, including Millikan (1984), Bergmann (2006), Wolterstorff (2010), Graham (2012, 2014a, 2014b), McNabb (2015), Boyce & Moon (2016) and Ghijsen (2016).[[23]](#footnote-23) These proper functionalists might understand the *epistemic should* in something like the following way:

*Proper Functionalist View*: *S* epistemically should believe *p* if believing *p* is required by the proper functioning of *S*’s reliable, truth-aimed cognitive faculties.

I’ll say that some effect E is *required by* the proper functioning of faculty F in circumstance C if and only if the design plan of F specifies that E occur in C. (*Design plan* here does not automatically entail a personal designer; naturalists who are proper functionalists can interpret ‘design plan’ naturalistically.[[24]](#footnote-24))So, when someone says, ‘Everybody should believe that they exist, and no one should believe there are invisible bunnies flying around,’ one *could* take the person to be making a claim about what people are or are not epistemically obligated to believe. But one could also take the person to be making a claim about what belief is required by the proper functioning of humans’ truth-aimed and reliable faculties.[[25]](#footnote-25)

In the previous paragraph, I paused to explain proper functionalism in a little more detail for a couple reasons. First, it will be relevant to later parts of the paper. Second, I wanted to give an example of a popular, alternative understanding of the *epistemic should* to the more common understanding of it as *epistemic obligation*. That is why I use the more neutral *epistemic should* talk instead of the more loaded *epistemic obligation* talk. (On the other hand, NHD does not *presuppose* a proper functionalist account of the *should*, as Ghijsen’s does.)

*4.2 Application of NHD* *to Unfamiliar Faculty Cases*

Let ‘N’ denote the proposition that *the president is in New York* and ‘N\*’ denote the proposition that *my belief that the president is in New York is reliably formed*. Like Paula, Norman has background beliefs in virtue of which he *should* disbelieve or withhold N\*. Upon coming to believe N, Norman should reflect in something like the following way.

Monologue1: ‘The president is in New York? How would I know that? There are some things that I have the ability to know, and I’m skeptical that this is one of them.’

Why should he reflect like this? Is it because he knows *exactly* which powers he has, and he can thereby justifiedly rule out that he has clairvoyance? That would require training in philosophy and psychology, and we are assuming, with the exception of his clairvoyance, that Norman is an ordinary adult without such training.

Still, humans clearly have at least *imprecise* knowledge about which powers they have. We know that we can use our *vision*, for example, and we know the general conditions in which we can use it (in good lighting and when our eyes are open). Most of us recognize that though others have better vision than us, no human being has X-ray vision. We have enough of the right kind of these background beliefs that when someone asks, ‘Do you know Jupiter’s size? Or the cause of origin of life? Or the current location of the president?’ the only proper response is, ‘Given my current situation, I don’t have the ability to know those things.’

We can divide these background beliefs into two types:

α-beliefs: beliefs about what one is able to know in various conditions

β-beliefs: beliefs about what *members of one’s species* can know in various conditions and one’s belief that one is of that species.

Let ‘αβ-beliefs’ refer to their combination. Note that different people have different αβ-beliefs. An adult who has just undergone an eye exam might have more precise α-beliefs about her visual abilities than a child who has never had an eye exam. A trained psychologist might have more precise β-beliefs than lay people do about the sorts of cognitive powers that humans have. Furthermore, one’s αβ-beliefs will change over time, as one’s knowledge of one’s powers grows or declines. We can now apply NHD and say that Norman’s αβ-beliefs are why he *should* both reflect in the way exemplified in Monologue1 and also withhold or disbelieve N\*. This further explains why Norman’s belief in N is unjustified.

This explanation is neutral between internalism and externalism. First, NHD implies nothing about how a belief’s justification is *generated*, which is the major contention between internalists and externalists; rather, it only specifies conditions for blocking *defeat* – conditions that could be accepted by both internalists and externalists. To illustrate this neutrality, consider that both reliabilists *and* seeming internalists can employ NHD. When Lyons’ Norman has the experience of being appeared to the-president-is-in-New-Yorkly, or if we suddenly have a shark perceptual experience, αβ-beliefs will serve as defeaters for the relevant beliefs. A second way NHD is neutral between internalism and externalism is that it does not specify how to explicate the ‘should’. One could take a deontological view or a proper functionalist view or some other view. NHD is nonpartisan on this point as well.[[26]](#footnote-26)

**5. The Superiority of NHD** **Over HLE**

*5.1 Developmental Psychology and Infant Knowledge*

We have before us two explanations for why Norman’s belief is unjustified. NHD appeals to the *presence* of αβ-beliefs that make it so that he should disbelieve or withhold N\*. HLE appeals to the *absence* of background evidence for N\*. Both theories seem to require that Norman have background evidence for N\* in order to be justified in believing N.

The two accounts differ in that HLE makes background evidence a *general* requirement for justified belief, and NHD requires the background evidence for Norman only *to block defeat* from his αβ-beliefs. A way, therefore, to decide between the two theories is to examine cases where *S* believes *p* but has no αβ-beliefs that might serve as a defeater. NHD would predict that *S*’s belief that *p* is free from defeat, and HLE would predict that *S*’s belief that *p* is unjustified because of the lack of higher-level evidence. The problem is that virtually all of us adults have the relevant αβ-beliefs to serve as potential defeaters. Who doesn't have them?

The answer is infants. Unfortunately, there are methodological difficulties to learning about infants’ beliefs. First, we are not them, so we cannot use introspection. Second, most of us cannot remember what it was like to be them, so we cannot use memory. Third, we cannot ask them. Or we could ask them, but we would not get much of a response. So, how are we to proceed?

Studies on infant knowledge from developmental psychology can help.[[27]](#footnote-27) Mental representation of objects in the environment occurs within just a few hoursof birth. Newborns look longer at the now familiar face of their mother than at a female stranger. This indicates that newborns can distinguish one object (the mother) from another (the stranger), so there is some form of mental representation.[[28]](#footnote-28) By as early as three to four months, infants gain *object permanence*; they will stare longer in scenarios in which an occluded object *should* appear but does not (due to the manipulations of an experimenter) than in similar scenarios where there is no such manipulation.[[29]](#footnote-29) By six months, infants can successfully reach out and grasp for occluded objects on the basis of their trajectory and speed before they were occluded.[[30]](#footnote-30) By nine months, they can reliably engage in search behavior for missing objects.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Boyce & Moon (2016, 2996) argue that infants have knowledge in these object permanence cases. First, the infant’s reaching out and grasping for the occluded object in these experimental settings indicates that the infant *knew* that it was there. Second, even apart from experimental settings, it often appears obvious to parents and caretakers that infants are exhibiting knowledge in these cases; these everyday intuitions seem correct. Although some will resist Boyce and Moon’s conclusion, surely it is even more intuitive and plausible that infants would have simple *perceptual* knowledge. Consider,

*Baby Perception*: Ned is an ordinary, healthy 6-month-old infant. His eyes follow a moving ball. Ned believes that *that is moving* (where ‘that’ is referring to the ball).

Intuitively, Ned also *knows* that *that is moving*. In §5.2 and §5.3, I will use this case to support NHD and against HLE.

*5.2 Baby Perception is Consistent with NHD*

Let ‘M’ denote the proposition that *that is moving* and ‘M\*’ denote the proposition that *my belief that that is moving was reliably formed*. It seems that Ned’s belief in M is justified. Furthermore, Ned’s belief satisfies NHD: it is not the case that he should withhold or disbelieve M\* in virtue of his αβ-beliefs. First of all, Ned has few, if any, αβ-beliefs. Second, it’s not the case that he *should* take a doxastic attitude toward M\*. There are two reasons for thinking this. The first is a simple intuition. It just seems that there is nothing bad epistemically if he doesn’t take an attitude toward M\*.

The second reason is more theory dependent. Suppose we understand the *epistemic should* in terms of obligation. At six months, Ned *can’t* take an attitude toward M\*; it will be some time before he can form beliefs about reliability. This is evidence that he is not *obligated* to do it. (I assume here that obligation implies ability.[[32]](#footnote-32)) Suppose we instead understand the epistemic should in terms of proper function. Plausibly, part of being a healthy, well-formed human infant does not require forming an attitude toward M\*. This is evidence that it is not required by the proper functioning of Ned’s faculties. Perhaps there is another way to understand the *epistemic should*, but it is likely that we could say similar things about those options. So, Ned’s justified and warranted belief in M is not a counterexample to NHD and is consistent with it.

This discussion also helps us to see that there is nothing special about clairvoyance.[[33]](#footnote-33) Consider,

*Baby Clairvoyance*: Baby Norman is like any normal human infant except for his power of clairvoyance. At six months, he grasps for a moving ball while blindfolded. He used only his clairvoyance to track the ball.

Like Ned, it also seems that Baby Norman knew M.[[34]](#footnote-34) Furthermore, it does not seem that he has a defeater or that he should take a doxastic attitude toward M\*. This is confirmation that adult Norman’s αβ-beliefs serve as a defeater for his belief in N.

*5.3 Baby Perception Disconfirms HLE*

I now argue that Baby Perception is a counterexample to HLE. As a reminder, HLE requires for *S*’s justified belief that *p* that *S* have good evidence for *p\** and that *S* be in a position to justifiably believe *p\**. Now Ned, as we said above, appears to know (and have justified belief) that M. So, we have two questions.

Question 1: Does Ned have good evidence for M\*?

Question 2: Is Ned in a position to justifiedly believe M\*?

I’ll address each in turn.

Regarding the first question, here are some candidates for what Ned’s evidence for M\* might be. Perhaps it is his *beliefs* (or knowledge) stored in his memory about an earlier successful track record. (This was the case in the above examples of Conee, Feldman, and Steup.) Now granted, 6-month-old Ned likely has formed other beliefs before he formed his belief in M. However, none of these beliefs will be *about* his belief-forming powers. They will likely just be more beliefs with simple contents such as *there is food*, *there is mommy*, and *it’s uncomfortable*. Such minimal beliefs will not constitute good evidence that he has reliable perception.

Here is a suggestion inspired by Steup (2013, 142). Perhaps Ned’s evidence consists in his *memories*.[[35]](#footnote-35) When ‘memory’ is used as a count noun, it refers to what some philosophers of memory call ‘personal memory’.[[36]](#footnote-36) Memories are not identical to beliefs; rather, beliefs are often *based on* memories. Consider this monologue: ‘Now, what was the color of that car? Hmm, wait, I have a memory of it being maroon. Yes, that’s right, it was maroon!’ In this example, the person believes that the car was maroon based on his memory of it being maroon.[[37]](#footnote-37)

This suggestion is distinct from the suggestion that Ned’s evidence consists in *propositional memory*, or *remembering* *that* *p*. Personal memory is normally of events we have personally experienced; propositional memory need not be. For example, my students can remember that Socrates taught Plato, but they do not have memories of Socrates teaching Plato. Second, and more importantly, while personal memory does not entail belief, propositional memory does. One remembers that *p* only if one believes that *p*.[[38]](#footnote-38) So, the suggestion that Ned’s evidence for M\* is his propositional memory is not interestingly distinct from the earlier one that beliefs are his evidence. So, the personal memory suggestion *is* interestingly distinct from that one.

Now, perhaps infants begin storing memories at a very early age, and Ned has memories that constitute his evidence for M\*. He might have a memory of *its seeming that p* and *p being true*; *its seeming that q* and *q being true*; and so on. They might be memories that constitute a track record of his perceptual reliability, and thereby be his evidence for M\*. I think that this Steup-inspired view is the best way to flesh out a defense of HLE.

In response, I doubt that Ned has all these memories. Maybe infants as young as Ned can store memories of *being in a room* or *feeling happy*, but I’m skeptical that he’d have a memory of *its seeming that I am in a room*. So, this defense of HLE at least depends on substantive psychological claims that need further defense. On the other hand, I don’t have a knockdown argument that it is incorrect.

Let’s move to the second question. Is Ned in a position to justifiedly believe M\*? It seems that he is not. Suppose Ned *does* have the required memories mentioned in the above paragraphs. Even then, he would still be like Watson and Detective Norman, not Holmes. As an infant, Ned simply would not be in a position to draw together the information and believe M\*. Yet, he justifiedly believes M and knows M.

In conclusion, even if Ned has good evidence for M\*, he is not in a position to justifiedly believe M\*. Yet, he still justifiedly believes M. So, the case of Baby Perception is a counterexample to HLE. We should therefore embrace a theory like NHD, instead of HLE, to explain why Norman’s belief is not justified.

**6. Mentalist and Nonmentalist Interpretations of NHD**

I have argued that Norman’s belief in N is defeated because of his αβ-beliefs. *In general*, it seems that adult humans will have αβ-beliefs that serve as a defeater for the deliverances of any unfamiliar faculty. But is this always the case? I will argue that it depends on whether mentalism is true.

Mentalists think that *only* one’s mental states can be directly relevant to justification; justification supervenes on mental states.[[39]](#footnote-39) Nonmentalists deny this. A mentalist will likely hold that any normally developed adult will have αβ-beliefs that will, as a matter of necessity, make it so that she ought to disbelieve or withhold *p\** when an unfamiliar faculty produces some belief that *p*. Nonmentalists might agree that such αβ-beliefs *often* make it so that one ought to withhold or disbelieve the relevant *p*\*, but this is not necessarily so. For example, one way to accept nonmentalism is to accept *proper functionalism*. In that case, what one ought to believe supervenes, at least in part, on nonmental factors like the design of one’s faculties. (In particular, in the case of Ghijsen (2016, 105–106), it will depend on the design of one’s defeater systems.[[40]](#footnote-40)) The design plan might dictate that in *most* cases in which some unfamiliar faculty *F* produces in *S* a belief that *p*, *S* should disbelieve or withhold *p\** in the presence of the relevant αβ-beliefs. However, it is *possible* that the design plan allows for exceptions.

Accepting proper functionalism is only one way to accept nonmentalism; other nonmentalist theories might also allow for exceptions.[[41]](#footnote-41) I pick proper functionalism for two reasons. First, it provides an easy-to-grasp explanation of how it could be contingent what the αβ-beliefs support believing. Second, it’s a well-defended view that has already been applied to unfamiliar faculty cases.[[42]](#footnote-42) Hence, in the rest of this paper, I will use proper functionalism as the primary representative of nonmentalism; other nonmentalists can substitute their own theories for where I talk about proper functionalism and see if they get similar results.

Consider the following case,

*Dangerous Snake*: Jordan has grown up in the city with no exposure to a dangerous animal, either personally or via the media. One day, Jordan ventures outside the city and sees a slithering snake. He freezes, instinctively forms the belief *that creature’s dangerous*, and slowly backs away.

Some empirical evidence indicates that humans have modules designed to respond specifically to snakes.[[43]](#footnote-43) Even without learning, children perceptually identify snakes more quickly than nonthreatening animals,[[44]](#footnote-44) and there are neurons that seem to have the specific function of helping us respond to snakes.[[45]](#footnote-45) This is some modest evidence that properly functioning, truth-aimed, reliable modules produced Jordan’s belief.

Furthermore, despite Jordan’s beliefs about what powers he and his fellow humans have (his αβ-beliefs, which include no beliefs about the human ability to instinctively know that snakes are dangerous), when he forms the belief that *that creature’s dangerous* (call this proposition ‘D’), he does not withhold or disbelieve D*\**. Intuitively, unlike Norman, Jordan has both knowledge and justified belief that D. More surprisingly, his αβ-beliefs do not serve as a defeater for his belief. Why? It’s not the case that he *should* disbelieve or withhold D\*. Plausibly, the design plan of Jordan’s faculties does not require that he take an attitude toward D\* in this situation. For that reason, it’s *not* the case that Jordan should engage in the following dialogue:

Monologue2: ‘That creature’s dangerous? How would I know that? There are some things that I have the ability to know, and I’m skeptical that this is one of them.’

I think this case supports nonmentalism and proper functionalism.

Mentalists might reply that when we clearly imagine that Jordan has absolutely no knowledge of snakes and their threat, it *does* seem that he *epistemically* should disbelieve or withhold D\*; he *should* engage in something like the reasoning represented by Monologue2. Any judgment otherwise is driven by the fact that, *pragmatically*, he shouldn’t do any further reflecting and should be running away. This is how the dialogue between a proper functionalist nonmentalist and a mentalist might begin, and I do not mean to resolve the dispute. My main purpose is to note how one’s deeper epistemological commitments, such as one’s commitment to mentalism or nonmentalism, might influence how one applies NHD to certain cases.

**7. How To Use Unfamiliar Cognitive Faculties**

*7.1 The Procedure and the Age of Accountability*

How, then, should you use cognitive faculties that you never knew you had? First, start at an early age. You won’t have αβ-beliefs then to serve as defeaters for the *first* doxastic deliverances of your perceptual, memorial, inductive, and other basic faculties. And if you *did* have clairvoyance powers at that age, then this would be the time to use them without getting a defeater.

What if you don’t get started early? Then if you are a properly developing human, you will begin to undergo the following process described by Alvin Goldman (1980):

At the start a creature forms beliefs from automatic, preprogrammed doxastic processes; these beliefs are largely about its own immediate environment. At a later stage of development, at least in a sophisticated creature, beliefs are formed about its own belief-forming processes. The creature comes to believe that certain of its belief-forming processes often lead to error and that others are more reliable (47).

In other words, you’ll begin to have an established set of αβ-beliefs. Let the *age of accountability* for *S* refer to the age at which the deliverances of any new faculty of *S* will, at least typically, be defeated by αβ-beliefs. (I add ‘at least typically’ since exceptions might be allowed by the design plan.) All healthy adult humans will hit the age of accountability at some point. Depending on their development, when they hit the age will differ from person to person. After the age of accountability, if you use an unfamiliar faculty, then you are going to need independent evidence that you have that faculty to prevent defeat from your αβ-beliefs. For example, if a known trustworthy testifier told Norman that he had a clairvoyant faculty that could reveal to him where the president is, then when the belief that N forms shortly thereafter, Norman would not have a defeater.

Here, then, is the procedure for how to use cognitive faculties that you never knew you had:

1. Use the unfamiliar faculty *early*, when *all* your faculties are unfamiliar and before αβ-beliefs can serve as defeaters.
2. If it’s after you gain defeating αβ-beliefs (or after the age of accountability), then get evidence that you have the relevant faculty in order to gain a defeater-defeater for the defeater.

So, the next time you find yourself inexplicably believing that the president is in New York, this is the procedure you should follow.[[46]](#footnote-46)

*7.2 Norman the Clairvoyant and Sally the Theist*

Returning to the case of Adult Theism, let ‘T’ denote the proposition that *there is a God who loves me* and ‘T\*’ denote the proposition that *my belief that there is a God who loves me was formed reliably*. Adult Theism is under-described. In what follows, I will describe five cases that help fill out the details. There will be a clear epistemological verdict about the first three cases. The verdict about the last two cases will be less clear.

First, let us make the case so that Sally is clearly like Norman. Norman’s α-beliefs do not include any beliefs about *his* ever having formed true beliefs by way of clairvoyance, and his β-beliefs do not include any belief about *other humans* ever forming true beliefs by way of clairvoyance. The only people he sees reporting having clairvoyant powers seem weird and unreliable.

Similarly, suppose Sally’s α-beliefs do not include any beliefs about *her* ever having formed true theistic beliefs by way of a *sensus divinitatis* (or a divine sense), and her β-beliefs do not include any beliefs about *other humans* ever forming true beliefs by way of such a sense. Sally has grown up in a secular society where nobody reports experiences of God. The only people she sees reporting having religious experiences are on television, and she sees them the same way that Norman sees people who claim to have clairvoyant powers—as weird and unreliable.

Now suppose that Sally is having a nice stroll when she begins to have a strong feeling that God loves her; she comes to believe T as a result. Unbeknownst to her, this was because of the proper functioning of a reliable *sensus divinitatis*, which activated in response to God’s loving presence. If Sally is like Norman, then she should engage in the following monologue:

Monologue3: ‘There’s a God who loves me? How would I know that? There are some things that I have the ability to know, and I’m skeptical that this is one of them.’

Now, perhaps Sally should be *curious* about her experience and explore the issue further. But at the moment, it seems that she should doubt the reliability of her religious experience. (In other words, her αβ-beliefs should result in her withholding or disbelieving T\*.) And intuitively, her belief in T is unjustified.

However, this is not so clear if proper functionalism is true. Like in the Dangerous Snake case, Sally’s design plan might not dictate that her αβ-beliefs result in her withholding or disbelieving T\*. So, the cases of Sally and Norman might not be analogous in all epistemically relevant ways. In this case, her theistic belief could very well be justified and warranted. This design plan caveat should be assumed throughout all the scenarios.

Here is the second scenario. Suppose that Sally uses her *sensus divinitatus* as a little girl, before the age of accountability. If children have been designed so that they form their first theistic beliefs as they are forming their first perceptual, memorial, and other beliefs, then beliefs formed by the *sensus divinitatus* in a basic way will be just like these other beliefs. (Whether any people actually form theistic beliefs like this is discussed in the cognitive science of religion.[[47]](#footnote-47)) She will then not have αβ-beliefs that would make it so that she should withhold or disbelieve T\*. Like Baby Norman and Baby Ned, she will be younger than the age of accountability, and her theistic beliefs will be both justified and warranted.

Let us add to this scenario. (For individuation purposes, we can call it the *third scenario*.) Suppose that Sally grows up in a religious community where many people report times when they sensed God’s loving presence. Furthermore, these are theists who she finds to be both intelligent and generally reliable; she also believes that some of them have experienced God’s presence. In this case, Sally’s β-beliefs will include beliefs about humans having a reliable *sensus divinitatis* (or some reliable *way of sensing the divine*).

One day, Sally feels God’s loving presence and she believes T. She is also in the sort of scenario about which she has heard others reporting feeling God’s presence. (She might be praying or at a religious service.) Sally’s combined αβ-beliefs support her believing T\*. Hence, although Norman has a defeater because of his αβ-beliefs, in this third scenario, Sally’s αβ-beliefs will not serve as a defeater because they *affirm* the existence of a reliable way of sensing God’s presence in both herself and her fellow humans. In that case, believing T would be warranted.[[48]](#footnote-48)

The verdicts about these first three scenarios are relatively clear. Sally’s belief in T in the first scenario is very much like Norman’s belief in N; both beliefs are unjustified (minus the design plan possibility). On the other hand, Sally’s belief in T in the second and third scenarios better resembles other ordinary, human basic beliefs, such as perceptual, introspective, and memorial beliefs. These beliefs are warranted. My verdicts about the following two scenarios will be less clear and more controversial.

Here is the fourth scenario. Suppose that we take the child Sally of the second scenario and put her into the sort of society that the Sally of the first scenario is in. In other words, although Sally has early childhood religious experiences, she eventually learns that nobody else in her community has religious experiences or believes in God. In that case, as she grows up and passes the age of accountability, she will begin to have β-beliefs that support doubting T\*. Her thinking might go, ‘I’ve always thought I felt God’s presence, but nobody else around me does. The only people who seem to are on T.V., but they seem unreliable. I must be weird. Why think I would have this sort of connection with God?’ I am inclined to think that Sally should withhold belief in T\*, and thereby, in T.

However, this is not *obvious*, and I could see philosophers taking different stances. In the epistemology of disagreement, there are *conciliationists*, who tend to think you should suspend judgment in the face of disagreement from those you regard as epistemic peers, and there are *steadfasters*, who tend to think you should hold to your belief in such cases.[[49]](#footnote-49) The response of the previous paragraph is one a conciliationist would give and the one I am more inclined toward. However, steadfasters might deny that Sally should withhold T\*; they might think that Sally should stick to her guns and continue believing T, even when she finds that no one whom she trusts agrees with her. It is beyond the scope of this paper to settle the debate between steadfasters and conciliationists. I mention the debate to explain why I think my verdict about Sally in scenario four might be controversial. I also mention it because it highlights an interesting connection between the debate about the epistemology of disagreement and questions stemming from unfamiliar faculty cases (and religious epistemology), which should be further explored.

Here is the fifth scenario. Suppose that we take the child Sally of the first scenario and put her into the sort of society that the Sally of the third scenario is in. In other words, although she has no early childhood religious experiences, she grows up in a community of theists who she respects and who report having religious experiences. Suppose that one day, Sally senses God’s loving presence, and she in the sort of scenario that others have reported sensing God’s presence in. (She might be praying or at a religious service.) When she forms her belief that *there is a God who loves me* on the basis of her experience, will her αβ-beliefs support believing T\* or withholding T\*? I think it is unclear. Perhaps she should think, ‘I think I feel God’s presence, but I’m not quite sure that I’m sensing things as others are. But it likely is. So, I’ll believe T\* tentatively.’ Or perhaps she should be more skeptical and just withhold T\* with a leaning toward belief. Perhaps both are permissible. It is unclear. This unclarity about whether believing T\* is justified will result in unclarity about whether believing T is justified.

I have presented five relatively idealized scenarios. Of course, real humans are extremely complex, and I take my scenarios to just be starting points to help us think about messier scenarios. I’ll list just three specifications to help us think more clearly about how to apply these thought experiments to more realistic cases.[[50]](#footnote-50)

First, I have assumed that Sally has engaged in little or no natural theology or natural atheology. Most real humans will have engaged in some. For example, many theists often at least partly believe in God on the basis of rough approximations of theistic arguments; they might have rudimentary versions of a cosmological or design argument in their heads. Many atheists are brought to doubt that God exists by some form of the problem of evil. Arguably, these background beliefs will affect, at least indirectly, how a person should respond to the sort of experience that Sally undergoes.

Second, in the above cases, the societies and childhoods of Sally were either very pro-theistic or completely secular. Let’s say that a *society* is *pro-theistic-experience* to the degree that, by being a part of that society, one gains evidence that there are people in that society who have reliable theistic experiences. Furthermore, let a *childhood* be *pro-theistic experience* to the degree that, by having that childhood, one gains good evidence that one has a way of sensing God’s presence. In my examples, the childhoods and societies were either very pro-theistic-experience or not at all pro-theistic-experience. While there are real childhoods and societies like this, there are also more mixed ones. Some societies provide a *modest* degree of evidence that there are people who have a way of sensing God’s presence; some childhoods might include a *modest* degree of evidence that they have a way of sensing God’s presence. What will matter is how these pro-theistic-experience societies and childhoods affect the person’s *αβ-beliefs*, which will be a main determiner of whether the person is justified in believing T\*, and thereby, T.

Third, I have assumed throughout the paper that there is a God who created Sally with a reliable, properly functioning *sensus divinitatis* and that she is in fact sensing God’s presence. I have been reasoning something like, ‘*If* the conditions for *prima facie* justification or warrant are met, whether according to proper functionalist standards or seemings-internalist standards or some other standards, then here is what we should consider to see if her belief has a defeater.’ This leaves open whether the conditions for *prima facie* justification and warrant are met, and resolving *that* issue is beyond the scope of this paper.[[51]](#footnote-51)

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1. My Norman case is different from BonJour’s (1980) original Norman case because I do not stipulate, as he does, that Norman has no reason to think that he doesn’t have clairvoyant powers. Goldman (1986, 112) and Plantinga (1996, 377) point out that it’s difficult to read BonJour’s Norman as not having such a reason. I am more interested in the case in which Norman is like an ordinary adult human (except for his clairvoyant powers) and will leave the question of whether he has a defeater as a substantive question. See also footnote 46 and Lehrer’s (1990, 163) influential Truetemp case. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Relevant to this debate is that between the views James Pryor (2004) calls ‘liberalism’ and ‘conservatism’. According to the former, perceptual experiences provide us with immediate justification, even without any background justification for thinking that those experiences are reliable; according to the latter, such background justification is required. This debate is further explored by Neta (2010), Silins (forthcoming), and others. I do not frame the debate this way because discussions about Norman are typically not about perceptual experience. However, see footnote 5 for how this paper is relevant to that debate. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For recent work on Plantinga’s religious epistemology, see Moon (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A similar inference is made by Littlejohn (2012, 29), who draws from discussion by Bergmann (2006, 52). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In turn, my arguments will provide support for the view that James Pryor (2004) calls ‘liberalism’ and against the view he calls ‘conservatism’. See also footnote 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Sosa (1991, 131), BonJour (2002, 246), and Goldman (1992, 435) all list unfamiliar facultycases as one of the most difficult problems for reliabilism. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Some externalists, who Bergmann (1997, 408) calls ‘strong externalists’ and who Fred Dretske (2000) more colorfully calls ‘mad-dog reliabilists’, do not include a no-defeater condition. I will ignore these stronger externalisms for this paper. My rough characterizations of internalism and externalism follow chapter 1 of Bergmann (2006). See also chapter 1 of Littlejohn (2012) and Hatcher (forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This is one version of reliabilism, originating in Goldman (1979). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. However, see footnote 1 of this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Views similar to, or identical to, seeming internalism are endorsed by Audi (1998), Pollock and Cruz (1999, 157), Pryor (2000, 519), Huemer (2001), Wedgwood (2002, 276), Tucker (2013) and others. See Lyons (2011, 306 n1) and Lyons (2013, 13 n10) for some discussion of its various names and history. In the quote, I corrected a typo in the original which contains two ‘is’s in a row. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See also Lyons (2009, 115–116) (2011, 298). Unlike Lyons, however, I do not have the precise intuition that Norman’s belief is not *prima facie* justified, but simply that his belief is not justified (i.e., that he should give it up). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Although I think that a no-defeater theory is both correct and also correctly diagnoses why Norman’s belief is unjustified, this is *compatible* with drawing other lessons from the case of Norman. For example, a referee notes that Norman *also* lacks awareness of any reasons to believe that the president is in New York; perhaps this also explains why his belief is unjustified. Now, this would count in favor of, say, seeming internalism and against reliabilism, and that is a debate I’d like to stay neutral on. Still, the referee is correct that this could be another lesson we could learn from reflection on cases like that of Norman, and that lesson is neutral with respect to the main points I make in this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. BonJour’s (1980, 63) remarks suggest this. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. For examples of the infinite regress charge to views like HLJB, see Goldman (1986, 61), Alston (1989, 210–211), Bergmann (2006, 14–19), and Greco (2010, 155). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. For more examples of the charge of over-intellectualization to views like HLJB, see Goldman (1986, 62), Alston (1989, 209–210), and Feldman (2005, 95). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Cf. Steup (2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. This is made explicit in Steup’s (2013, 142–143) discussion of his view. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Detective Norman might still have what Robert Audi (1991) calls *structural justification*; he might have the materials which, if put together in the right way with some reasoning, would lead to justified belief. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ghijsen (2016, 101) notes that Steup’s (2013) account is incompatible with reliabilism. I do not take this to be an attempted refutation. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For endorsements, see Plantinga (2002), Bergmann (2005), Elga (2005), Feldman (2005), Kelly (2010, 158–159), Huemer (2011), Hazlett (2012), Smithies (2012), Greco (2014), and Titelbaum (2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. For criticisms, see Williamson (2011), Lasonen-Aarnio (2014) and especially Baker-Hytch and Benton (2015). See Horowitz (2014) for replies to some of these criticisms and also Christensen (2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Perhaps they think that only knowledge is evidence, as Williamson (2000) argues. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. For overviews of proper functionalism, see Boyce & Plantinga (2012) and Boyce (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. This point should assuage Ghijsen’s (2016, 105) concerns about appealing to design plan to explicate proper functionalism. I follow Plantinga (1993b, 22), who neutrally defines ‘design plan’ as ‘a set of triples: circumstance, response, and purpose or function.’ ‘[F]or each member of some class of circumstances [the design plan] specifies what the appropriate response is, what the thing in question will do if it is functioning properly.’ Ghijsen should not find talk of a design plan in this sense objectionable, since it is compatible with the sort of proper functionalist theory defended by Graham (2012, 2014a, 2014b), which Ghijsen endorses in his paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Consider Plantinga’s (1993a, 179) comment about John Pollock’s robot Oscar: ‘When Oscar fails to function in accord with her specifications, we may rightly think she is defective... but [t]he notions of duty, obligation, permission, exoneration, blameworthiness, justification—that whole deontological stable—these seem irrelevant to Oscar and her functioning. Here we have a conception of epistemic norm that differs *toto caelo* from the deontological conception.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. So, as mentioned before, my account differs from Ghijsen (2016), who understands the *epistemic should* explicitly in terms of a properly functioning defeater system. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. For an overview on the literature on initial knowledge, see Spelke (1994) and Spelke & Kinzler (2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. See Bushnell (2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. See, for example, Baillargeon and DeVos (1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See Hespos, S.J., Gredeback, G., von Hofsten, C., & Spelke, E.S. (2009) for more on *predictive grasping*. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. See Piaget’s (1954) classic experiments with his own children. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. This is not merely the familiar problem that epistemic obligation to believe seems to imply some sort of voluntary control (cf. ‘The Deontological Conception of Epistemic Justification’ in Alston (1989).) It’s not merely that Ned cannot *choose* to believe, but that he *can’t* believe; he does not have the conceptual resources to do it. Thanks to Chris Willard-Kyle and Simon Goldstein for helpful discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. See also Lyons’ (2009, 119) case of Nyrmoon, an alien who lives in a species where it is normal to have clairvoyance powers. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Strictly speaking, when Ned believes *that is moving* and Baby Norman believes *that is moving*, they are believing different propositions since their beliefs are about different balls. For simplicity, I will still refer to both propositions with ‘M’. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Steup does not appeal to memories, but to *memory data*. I am not sure what memory data is. Interpreted broadly, ‘memory data’ could refer to any information stored in the brain. But not just any old information in the brain can be evidence; Steup must sort out a specific type of memory data that could be evidence. I think the best candidate is those instances of memory data that are our memories. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. This was first noticed by Locke (1971, 81). For further discussion clarifying the word ‘memory’, see Moon (2012, 319–321) and the next two footnotes. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. See Moon (2017, 343) for more discussion of this case. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. For defense, see Moon (2013), where I argue that remembering that *p* entails knowing that *p*. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Conee and Feldman (2004, 53–55) use ‘internalism’ and ‘mentalism’ interchangeably. However, I have already defined ‘internalism’ in a different way above, so I will not follow their lead. Furthermore, Bergmann (2006, 48–64) gives some good arguments to not identify mentalism with internalism. Thanks to a referee for helpful comments. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Plantinga (1993b, 40 – 42) and Bergmann (2006, 170) also appeal to defeater systems, although Ghijsen is most explicit in applying them to unfamiliar faculties cases. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. For example, see Greco (2000, 173–174), Markie (2006, 118–119) and Jack Lyons (2013, pp. 13-21). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Ghijsen (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. For a book-length defense of the *snake detection theory*, the view that snakes played a large role in the evolution of our and other primate brains, see Isbell (2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Penkunas and Cross (2013) compare reaction times of South Indian children from the city and from more rural areas in which snakes are more common. All the children identified snakes more quickly than nonthreatening animals, and there was no difference in reaction times to snakes between the two sets of children. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. In their abstract, Van Le Quan, et. al. (2013) ‘report the existence of neurons in the primate medial and dorsolateral pulvinar that respond selectively to visual images of snakes. Compared with three other categories of stimuli (monkey faces, monkey hands, and geometrical shapes), snakes elicited the strongest, fastest responses, and the responses were not reduced by low spatial filtering.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Interestingly, Graham (2014b, 92) tells his unfamiliar faculty case using a 4-year-old boy whose clairvoyance power is the result of a mutation. Graham thinks the belief is unjustified, even though there is no defeater present at his age (p. 93), and this, he thinks, is because of a lack of proper function. (He is more explicit about this in 2014a.) In reply, I do not want to say that my procedure gives us *sufficient* conditions for justification; rather, it helps us to rule out a sufficient condition for lack of justification: the presence of a defeater. I’d like to leave open whether seemings or proper function or reliability are also necessary for justification. For criticism of Graham, see Ghijsen (2016, 96–98). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. For a discussion of the relationship between the *sensus divinitatis* and cognitive science of religion, see Clark and Barrett (2010). For some general introductions to these empirical issues, see Barrett (2004) and Leech & Visala (2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See Alston (1991), especially pp. 187–194, for a sophisticated discussion of religious belief formation in religious communities, and how it compares to perceptual belief formation. I think the view I am outlining in this section fits well in Alston’s framework, although space disallows me from exploring exactly how. I have been approaching this more from Plantinga’s framework and the discussions about Norman the clairvoyant. Thanks to Blake McAllister for helpful discussion, which made me realize the need for this footnote. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. For an introduction to the issues surrounding these two camps, see Christensen (2009). For a book-length discussion, see Matheson (2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. See Alston’s (1991) sophisticated discussion and footnote 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
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