Prime Time (for the Basing Relation)*

Errol Lord
University of Pennsylvania

Kurt Sylvan
University of Southampton

Abstract

It is often assumed that believing that *p* for a normative reason consists in nothing more than (i) believing that *p* for a reason and (ii) that reason's corresponding to a normative reason to believe that *p*, where (i) and (ii) are independent factors. This is the *Composite View*. In this paper, we argue against the Composite View on extensional and theoretical grounds. We advocate an alternative that we call the *Prime View*. On this view, believing for a normative reason is a distinctive achievement that isn't exhausted by the mere conjunction of (i) and (ii). Its being an achievement entails that (i) and (ii) are not independent when one believes for a normative reason: minimally, (i) must hold *because* (ii) holds. Apart from its intrinsic interest, our discussion has important upshots for central issues in epistemology, including the analysis of doxastic justification, the epistemology of perception, and the place of competence in epistemology.

1 Introduction

Sometimes we believe things for reasons. For example, Sam's reason for believing that Billy is kind is that he gives to Oxfam. Lois's reasons for believing that the paper should be accepted are the paper's excellent ideas and examples. Sam and Lois differ from Jean, whose belief that Abuja is the capital of Nigeria was caused by a blow to the head. While there is a reason *why* Jean believes what she does (i.e., an *explanatory* reason), there are no reasons *for which* she believes what she does (i.e., no *motivating* reasons).[1]

*Thanks to David Black, Bob Beddor, Pat Bondy, J. Adam Carter, Daniel Greco, Ram Neta, and anonymous referees for several journals. Thanks especially to Joe Cunningham for engaging with this paper in Cunningham (FC). We fail to discuss the details not because we think it is not required but because we don't want to rob Joe of his achievement by changing the paper he's responding to before it appears in print. We plan to engage with Joe's work in the future.

[1]We follow Schroeder (2007) in not using "explanatory reason" and "motivating reason" synonymously. On this usage, all motivating reasons are explanatory reasons, but not all explanatory reasons are motivating

Sometimes we also believe things for sufficient *normative* reasons, which are factors that count strongly enough in favor of our beliefs to provide justification for them.[2] Billy's charitable giving may be a sufficient reason to believe that he is kind. And the paper's examples and ideas may be good enough to justify believing that it should be accepted. If this is so and Sam and Lois believe these things because they have these sufficient normative reasons, then they are not only to be distinguished from Jean, but also from Freddie. Freddie's reasons for believing the temperature on April 12th will be 48 degrees are that $12 \times 4 = 48$ and that the temperature on any day is the product of the number of the month and the number of the day. Freddie too believes for reasons—just crazy ones.

In this paper, we are interested in what it takes to believe for sufficient normative reasons.[3] Many may find this question less interesting than the broader question of what it takes to have certain considerations as one's motivating reasons for belief. This is partly because it is natural to think that Freddie has more in common with Sam and Lois than he does with Jean. Sam, Lois, and Freddie are all believing for reasons—Sam's and Lois's just happen to line up with sufficient normative reasons.

Thus, it is tempting to think that the main question to ask is the broader question of what it is to believe for reasons, period. Believing for sufficient normative reasons is merely a special case, on this tempting view, of the more general phenomenon of having certain considerations as one's motivating reasons for belief. Yielding to this temptation leads people to tacitly assume:

> **The Composite View:** Believing that p for a sufficient normative reason r involves nothing more than (i) believing that p on the basis of a motivating reason r, and (ii) r's

reasons. In speaking of motivating reasons for belief, we are not assuming doxastic voluntarism. We are using "motivating reasons for belief" as a semi-technical locution to refer to the reasons for which we believe, for lack of a better locution.

[2] Despite the prominence of reasons in post-Gettier epistemology (see Shope (1983) for a fine catalogue of prominent theorists using reasons to do epistemology) and the recent resurgence of reasons-based epistemology, many epistemologists are allergic to reasons talk. But as long as they are congenial to appeals to evidence, there is something to be learned from our discussion. This is because we think that all normative reasons for belief are pieces of good evidence. Thus, by giving an account of believing for normative reasons, we are giving an account believing on the basis of good evidence. We focus on normative reasons instead of evidence because we think that there are reasons to withhold belief about p that needn't be evidence that p or evidence that $\neg p$. It is important to recognize this fact in order to solve some problems that face traditional evidentialists (see Schroeder (2012), Schroeder (2015a), and Lord (MS) for more on this).

[3] We focus throughout on belief for normative *epistemic* reasons. We take no stand here on whether there are non-epistemic reasons for doxastic attitudes. We will focus on *sufficient* normative reasons merely for ease of exposition, and intend our view to generalize to the case of belief for *pro tanto* normative reasons. When we speak of a sufficient normative reason to believe p, we just mean a reason that is weightier than the reasons to disbelieve and to suspend judgment on p. See Lord & Maguire (2016), Lord (2018a), Schroeder (2012), Schroeder (2015a), and Schroeder (2015b) for discussions of sufficiency in our sense. Notice that we do not define sufficiency in terms of doxastic justification. We view reasons and their comparative weights as more fundamental.

> corresponding to a sufficient normative reason to believe that p, where (i) and (ii) are conditions that could obtain independently of each other.[4]

If this view were true, the question that interests us would reduce to two questions: (i) the question of what it takes for a consideration to be one's motivating reason for belief, and (ii) the question of what it is for something to be a sufficient normative reason for belief. Once we answer (i) for subjects like Sam and Lois, we can just tack on that the considerations for which they believe line up with sufficient normative reasons and thereby answer our question. End of story.

The Composite View is widely assumed in epistemology, rarely flagged explicitly, and never defended. (Audi, 1993, 267), for one, gives eloquent voice to it:

> Since believing for a good reason is believing for a reason (one that is good), the account [of believing for a reason] clarifies believing for a good reason. [...] Indeed, if an indirectly (prima facie) justified belief is simply a belief held for at least one good reason, then if our conditions [for believing for a reason] are supplemented with an account of what constitutes a good reason, we shall have all the materials we need to understand one of the main kinds of justified belief and, in good part, one of the main kinds of knowledge.

Revealingly, this passage occurs in a short section in a long paper on believing for reasons. Here we see confidence that a satisfactory account of believing for normative reasons will fall out as a special case of an account of motivating reasons for belief.

What we see in Audi surfaces elsewhere. Often one finds lengthy discussions of what it takes for a consideration to be one's motivating reason for belief that are followed either by brief discussions of believing for normative reasons, or by no discussion at all. Consider (Armstrong, 1973, 96):

[4] What is it for a motivating reason to *correspond* to a normative reason? On one view, a motivating reason corresponds to a normative reason iff the former is a proposition made true by the concrete state of affairs that is the normative reason. On another view, a motivating reason corresponds to a normative reason iff the motivating reason is literally identical to the normative reason, which might then be viewed either as a true proposition or as a concrete state of affairs. The second kind of view has become popular due to Dancy (2000), who insists that only an ontology of reasons that allows for motivating and normative reasons to be identical in good cases can do justice to the idea that we can act for good reasons. We agree with Dancy that motivating reasons are not mental states, but we are neutral in this paper about whether they are the sorts of things that can be identical to normative reasons (and disagree amongst ourselves); see Mantel (2017) for further discussion.

A further note of clarification is in order. In some of the literature in epistemology, a view close to the Composite View is held but phrased not in terms of reasons but rather directly in terms of justification. On this view, believing with doxastic justification is a matter of (i) having propositional justification for believing p constituted by some justifier J and (ii) believing that p on the basis of J (where it is left open whether one of these conditions depends on the other). This view is more general than the view addressed in our paper, since one might allow with Goldman (1999) and Lyons (2009) that there are justifiers that aren't reasons. The Composite View we are considering would, however, converge with this view if one restricted justifiers to reasons.

> In all this discussion of what it is for a proposition actually to function in a man's mind as a reason for belief, nothing has been said about the goodness of such reasons. This is because the goodness or badness of a reason has nothing essential to do with its actually operating for somebody as a reason.

As in Audi, this passage appears in a short section on believing for normative reasons that follows a lengthy discussion of believing for reasons.

Some who tacitly assume the Composite View don't even go so far as to separately discuss believing for normative reasons. (Swain, 1981, 82) starts a section on basing beliefs on reasons by saying: "Let me note at the outset that I am concerned in this section to define the basing relation without regard to justificatory considerations." While he goes on to say nothing about basing beliefs on normative reasons, he does appeal to his account of basing beliefs on reasons in giving an account of doxastic justification. Such moves make sense if, and perhaps only if, the Composite View is granted.[5]

As we will see later, the Composite View is also crucially assumed in recent work on the relationship between propositional and doxastic justification, and on whether reasons can play a fundamental explanatory role in epistemology.[6] It is required to support some of the surprising claims that have recently been made about these topics. So the Composite View is an important view, in spite of the fact that it is never foregrounded in discussion.

Of course, part of why it has never been foregrounded is that it strikes many as too obvious to be worth discussing. It admittedly has some attraction. But it is worth thinking about why. For the Composite View is, we believe, mistaken.

As we will see in §2, the reasoning needed to support the Composite View is non-trivial. Indeed, the similarities that this reasoning bears to manifestly problematic reasoning in other areas (e.g., the philosophy of perception) will lead nicely to an argument we will give in §3 against the Composite View. Having given this argument, we will turn in §4 to our alternative to the Composite View, and in §5 to payoffs and broader morals.

2 The Non-Triviality of the Composite View

2.1 The Reasoning Behind the Composite View

In this section, we consider two arguments that may seem to make the Composite View irresistible. As we will see, there are very general reasons for finding these arguments suspect; structurally similar arguments in other areas are obviously flawed, and it is easy to see how the flaws could extend to the case at hand. So, if anything, the fact that these are the only obvious

[5] Compare with the opening pages of Evans (2013).

[6] We have in mind Turri (2010), Goldman (2011), and Sosa (2003). Turri will be discussed at length in §5.1 and Sosa in §5.2. Since Goldman bases his conclusion on the same kind of example and discusses the issue more briefly with a focus on Conee and Feldman's evidentialism we will not separately discuss him.

arguments for the Composite View should *reduce* our confidence in the view, not increase our confidence.

The first argument starts with the plausible thought that Sam, Lois, and Freddie all have something important in common. This is not to deny that Sam and Lois achieve something that Freddie does not achieve. But there is a single thing that Freddie, Sam and Lois are doing. Since it cannot be true that they are all believing for normative reasons—Freddie is insane, after all—it must be that what they all have in common is that they believe for reasons. Now we can ask: what *more* do Sam and Lois achieve? Well, the reasons for which Sam and Lois believe line up with honest-to-goodness normative reasons. Given this, it is tempting to think that the main difference between Sam and Lois on the one hand and Freddie on the other hand is that Sam's and Lois's motivating reasons line up with sufficient normative reasons, where this further fact is an independent fact—i.e., one that obtains independently of the fact that they believe for those motivating reasons. This independent fact accounts for their achievement.

So, it may seem that the achievement of believing for sufficient normative reasons amounts to nothing more than (i) having some motivating reasons for belief, where (ii) these motivating reasons happen to line up with sufficient normative reasons, and where (i) and (ii) are independent factors. Here the success factor at which the achievement aims is the correspondence of the motivating and normative reasons; this is, of course, a 'success' in a somewhat wider sense than that normally intended when epistemologists talk about successes and achievements.

While this reasoning may seem impeccable, notice that it is an instance of the following broader pattern of thinking:[7]

Mere Composition from the Bad Case

(1) One identifies some achievement—say, seeing that p, intentionally producing an outcome, or believing for a normative reason.

(2) One notes that there is a feature in common between the achievement case and a botched case—say, having an experience as of p when p corresponds to no fact, intending an outcome without the outcome's occurring, and believing for a motivating reason that corresponds to no normative reason.

(3) One infers that the state in the botched case must be independent of whatever success factor is present in the achievement case (e.g., the intended outcome's occurring, the world's being as represented by the experience, and the motivating reason's corresponding to a normative reason).

(4) One concludes that the achievement is a mere composite of the state in the botched case and the success factor.

[7] Compare with Johnston (2004)'s discussion of Conjunctivism about fully successful perception.

This pattern of reasoning is bad. Perception provides a vivid illustration of why it is bad. Seeing that p cannot just be having an experience as of p, plus p's corresponding to a fact. Veridical hallucination is a clear possibility. Even if we follow Grice (1961) and company in thinking that what we need to add is a causal relation between the fact that p and the experience as of p, we will also face the problem of deviant causal chains. The fact that this pattern of reasoning is dubious should lead us to doubt the first line of support for the Composite View.[8]

Let's consider a second line of support for the Composite View. It rests on the thought that the following sort of argument is obviously valid:

Substitution Argument

(1) Sam's motivating reason for believing that Billy is kind is that Billy gives to Oxfam.

(2) The fact that Billy gives to Oxfam is a sufficient normative reason to believe that Billy is kind.

(3) So, Sam has the belief that Billy is kind for a motivating reason that corresponds to a sufficient normative reason.

(4) Therefore, Sam believes that Billy is kind for a sufficient normative reason.

We can stipulate that (1) and (2) are true. The move from (1) and (2) to (3) is obviously valid. And the move from (3) to (4) looks unexceptionable.

But looks are deceiving. The final move is in fact questionable. Once again the case of perception is revealing. Consider the following analogous argument.

Bad Argument

(1*) Sam's visual experience has the content that the house is on fire.

(2*) That the house is on fire is a fact.

(3*) So, Sam has a visual experience with a content that corresponds to a fact.

(4*) Therefore, Sam visually experiences the fact that the house is on fire.

The move from (3*) to (4*) is not valid. Once again, cases of veridical hallucination and cases involving deviant causal chains will be cases in which (3*) is true but (4*) is false. Perhaps we can get ourselves to hear "experiences a fact" as meaning *has an experience with a content that corresponds to a fact*. But even if that phrase could be heard in that way, there is another relation we can naturally take to be picked out by this phrase, and this relation is not a composite one.

[8] Again, compare with *johnston2004*.

This obvious precedent in the philosophy of perception should at least make us pause when we hear the case for the Composite View. One might naturally worry that just as a deviant connection between (i) the fact that *p* and (ii) an experience as of *p* can prevent one from seeing that *p*, so a deviant connection between (i*) the fact that a consideration happens to correspond to a normative reason and (ii*) the fact that this consideration is one's motivating reason can prevent one from believing for the normative reason to which the motivating reason corresponds.

We will develop this worry for the Composite View in detail in §3. For now, we are simply marking that there are general reasons for being wary of the kind of reasoning that supports the Composite View. The symmetry between the Substitution Argument and the Bad Argument should make us expect that there is an important relation that is not a mere composite of having a motivating reason for belief and that reason happening to correspond to a normative reason. This relation will stand to the relation of having a motivating reason for belief as the relation of seeing that *p* stands to having an experience as of *p*. The basic point of this paper is to present a case for the existence and importance of this relation.

Naysayers might insist on stipulating that "believes for a sufficient normative reason" should be understood to mean *has a motivating reason for belief that corresponds to a sufficient normative reason*, just as some might conceivably insist on stipulating that "experiences the fact that *p*" be understood to mean *has an experience with a content that corresponds to the fact that p*. But in both cases, what really matters is that there is another recognizable relation worthy of the name that cannot be understood compositely. This is the relation, we claim, that constitutes a genuine achievement. Moreover, we think that in the case of believing for normative reasons, the relation to which epistemologists should appeal in doing the important theoretical work is the one that constitutes an achievement.[9] Thus, if we can establish that there is a recognizable and important relation that we can bear to normative reasons worth calling "belief for a sufficient normative reason" that is not composite, we will have achieved everything we wanted to achieve.

2.2 What Alternatives?

The points from the last subsection should at least make us take alternatives to the Composite View seriously. But what are the alternatives? Perhaps because the Composite View has always been a tacit assumption, alternatives to it have never been clearly articulated. In this subsection, we will outline the basic structure that any satisfactory alternative must have. Later in the paper (§4) we will develop and defend a specific alternative.

The first constraint on any successful alternative is that it must entail that believing for a sufficient normative reason is *prime*, where

[9] This claim will receive support later when we argue that our analysis of believing for normative reasons is the only one that can save the view that doxastic justification is belief for sufficient normative reasons. Any composite relation will fail to save this natural view of doxastic justification.

> a condition (e.g., some property or relation) is prime iff it cannot be analyzed into proper parts that can obtain independently of each other.[10]

The Composite View entails, of course, that believing for sufficient normative reasons is not prime. This is because the conjuncts that constitute the analysans can obtain independently of each other. As we will see, this feature of the Composite View exposes it to counterexamples.

Importantly, failure to secure primeness is also what dooms the bad views in the philosophy of perception mentioned in the last subsection. The problem that arises in cases of veridical hallucination is that there is not the right connection between having an experience as of *p* and the fact that *p*. By building into the analysis that these two conditions do not obtain independently of each other, prime views go a long way towards blocking cases where the right connection is missing.

Of course, one cannot avoid problems of deviance simply by adopting a prime view. One can see this by thinking about a simple-minded causal theory of perception. On this view, seeing that *p* is analyzed in terms of (i) having an experience as of *p*, (ii) it being a fact that p, and (iii) condition (i) holding because condition (ii) holds. This view is prime. The conditions on the right hand side cannot be met independently of each other. However, this simple-minded view is also open to counterexamples involving deviant causal chains. Our ultimate view of believing for sufficient normative reasons will avoid analogous counterexamples. It will not be a simple causal view but rather a sophisticated *dispositional* view.

Still, the first step towards the truth is to adopt a view on which believing for sufficient normative reasons is prime, in the sense that the relation that one bears to a normative reason in believing for that normative reason is not independent of the fact that the reason is a normative reason. In the same way that classic arguments tell against composite accounts in the philosophy of perception, our case against the Composite View will show why the question 'What does it take to believe for a normative reason?' is not a special case of the question 'What does it take to have a motivating reason for belief?' To believe for a normative reason, there must be a connection between the fact that what one has is a normative reason and the fact that one believes as one does. If there isn't, there will be room for deviance of a kind that precludes one from believing for a normative reason.

A common view in the philosophy of perception is that seeing that *p* and having an experience as of *p* are two different relations, though they have things in common.[11] *This* is what

[10] This terminology is obviously inspired by Williamson (2000). But we do not commit to any further Williamsonian ideas here. The core notion of primeness that played a role in Williamson's argument does not entail unanalyzability or straightforwardly motivate it, as Brueckner (2002) noted in critiquing Williamson's case from primeness to unanalyzability. So, our prime view of believing for normative reasons will not entail that this achievement is unanalyzable—just that it is a distinctive achievement.

[11] A distinct but equally common view is the view that seeing an F and having an experience as of an F are different things. Indeed, only sense-datum theorists who insist that one sees the same thing in the good and the bad case think otherwise; cf. Millar (1996). Virtually everyone who rejects the sense-datum theory accepts this view, and it would serve our analogy equally well. Because more of the relevant classic literature (including Grice) is about object seeing rather than propositional seeing, it is easier to find explicit acceptance

the counterexamples show, many think. Seeing that *p* is more than having an experience as of *p* plus something else independent.[12] Our view resembles this view in the philosophy of perception. Believing for a sufficient normative reason and believing for a motivating reason are two different relations, though they have things in common. This is what the counterexamples to the Composite View show. Just as seeing that *p* is not just having an experience as of *p* plus something else independent, so believing for sufficient normative reason is not just believing for a motivating reason plus something else independent.[13]

Thus, we think that the failure of the Composite View calls for two things. Firstly, it demands that we hold that believing for sufficient normative reasons is prime. Secondly, it demands that we hold that the believing-for-sufficient-normative-reasons relation is a different relation than the believing-for-reasons relation, even plus independent factors. In §4, we will defend an account that has these features. Before doing so, however, we will further explain why the Composite View fails.

3 The Deviance of the Composite View

3.1 The Core Argument in Outline

Our core argument against the Composite View is simple:

1. If believing on the basis of a sufficient normative reason were a mere composite of two independent components—viz., (i) having a motivating reason for belief *r*, and (ii) *r*'s happening to correspond to a sufficient normative reason—then cases where the connection between (i) and (ii) is deviant would be cases of believing for a sufficient normative reason.

2. But subjects do not believe for sufficient normative reasons in these cases.

3. So the relation of believing for a sufficient normative reason is not a mere composite of (i) and (ii) (and thus the Composite View is false)

of this view than the view that seeing that *p* and having an experience as of *p* are different states (though with something in common). But the rationale is the same. If the relation that one bears to *p* were the same in the good and the bad case, seeing the fact that *p* would be a mere composite of the experience as of *p* and the fact that *p*. But it obviously isn't, due to veridical hallucination and deviant causal chains.

[12]This view is not necessarily a disjunctivist view. A full-blooded disjunctivist view will entail (i) that there is no common feature in the good and the bad cases (other than indistinguishability) and (ii) that there is a single phenomenon—e.g., perceiving that *p*—that is disjunctive in nature (like, e.g., jade is disjunctive in nature). A two-relations view need not entail these conclusions (and obviously will not entail (ii)).

[13]As we will see later, however, it is still true that believing that *p* for a normative reason *entails* believing *p* for a motivating reason that corresponds to that normative reason, just as seeing that *p* entails having an experience as of *p*.

In the next two subsections, we explain and defend (1) and (2), which will suffice to refute the Composite View. It will not suffice to establish our specific alternative. We save that task for §4.

3.2 Independence and Deviance

The deviance that plagues Composite Views arises in cases like the following:[14]

> **Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer**. Sam wonders whether Terry took the bus to work. He knows that Terry's car is in the driveway. This is, in fact, a sufficient abductive reason to think that Terry took the bus. Sam also believes that if Terry took the bus, then Terry's car is in the driveway. But he comes to believe that Terry took the bus by infering that he took the bus from his belief that Terry's car is in the driveway and his belief that if Terry took the bus, then Terry's car is in the driveway by following the invalid deductive rule: *from <if A then B>, and <B>, infer <A>*. Sam hereby manifests a general consequent-affirming incompetence.

By stipulation, the fact that Terry's car is in the driveway is a sufficient reason to believe that Terry took the bus.[15] And Sam believes Terry took the bus on the basis of the consideration <*Terry's car is in the driveway*>. But intuitively he doesn't believe for a sufficient normative reason. (If you don't find that intuitive, we will argue for it at length in the next subsection.) For one thing, he affirms the consequent! More importantly, he is insensitive to whether the fact that Terry's car is in the driveway is actually a good reason to believe Terry took the bus.

To see some evidence for this, consider an extension of the story. Suppose the fact that Terry's car is in the driveway isn't always a sufficient reason to believe Terry took the bus. For Terry carpools on Wednesdays. But today is Tuesday, and so the fact that the car is in the driveway is a sufficient reason to believe that Terry took the bus. Notice that in this revised scenario, it is true that Sam would have been motivated by the same considerations even if it were Wednesday and the fact were an insufficient reason. This is evidence that Sam is insensitive to what makes the driveway fact a sufficient reason to believe that Terry took the bus. Indeed, as long as Sam believes the car is in the driveway, he will believe Terry took the bus.

Now, to see why premise (1) is true, note that as long as the fact that a believer's motivating reason corresponds to a sufficient normative reason is independent of her having that motivating reason, there will be room for deviant connections like the one in Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer. If the Composite View is true, one believes for a sufficient normative reason even in these cases. So, (1) is true.

[14] Cases like this have been in the epistemology literature for a long time. See (Armstrong, 1973, 98), (Swain, 1988, 467), (Millar, 1991, 57), Turri (2010), and (Goldman, 2012, 7) for similar cases. We certainly do not claim to have discovered these cases. We claim only that the correct moral has never been drawn from them.

[15] Some might dispute whether this stipulation can be made. We will undermine the reasons for thinking so at the end of this subsection.

An objection should be addressed. Notice that in Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer, it is stipulated that Sam's reason for believing that Terry took the bus is that Terry's car is in the driveway and that if Terry took the bus, Terry's car will be in the driveway. A friend of the Composite View might ask: "If this is Sam's *complete* reason for believing that Terry took the bus, why can't we just say that it is a bad reason, and that Sam's belief is unjustified because his reason is bad?"

This objection fails for a simple reason. We can imagine subjects who reason from the same beliefs as Sam but who manifest abductive competence rather than deductive incompetence. These subjects *will* be doxastically justified in holding their conclusion beliefs. But their premise beliefs will be the same (or so we can stipulate). So, one cannot escape the problem by calling the reason bad: this will lead us to wrongly regard as unjustified those who move from the same premises to the same conclusion while manifesting abductive competence.

Of course, real people who reason abductively may well have further premise beliefs (e.g., that the observed effect is best explained by the posited cause). But not all competent abductive reasoners must have these further beliefs. One can imagine competent abductive reasoners who are just virtuously disposed to reason (e.g.) from effects to causes in a way that manifests sensitivity to the deeper explanatory relations, without having explicit beliefs about these relations.

This last point also disposes of a more ambitious version of the objection. One might have instead objected that that Sam's complete reason for believing that Terry took the bus must include either the false belief that affirming the consequent is a valid deductive rule, or a belief in the conditional that, for all p and q, if $p \rightarrow q$ and q, then p. One might have then insisted that that makes his complete reason bad, and this is why Sam does not believe for a sufficient normative reason.

But we can stipulate that Sam lacks any such belief in the case, and our intuition doesn't change if we do. More importantly, the objector's move will require overintellectualization to have traction across the board. People usually do not have beliefs about the validity of certain patterns of thought or about the conditionals whose truth would ensure that what they are treating as normative epistemic reasons are normative epistemic reasons. More often, people simply use their inferential competence (or incompetence) to move directly from premises to conclusions, whereby they systematically conform to good (or bad) rules. And so not all cases of deviance must involve false beliefs about normative relations: they need only involve manifestations of inferential incompetence.

In any case, even when people understand the rules to which they systematically conform, these rules will not figure in their reasoning as believed premises; Carroll (1895) showed that we cannot replace all rules with extra believed premises. The rules serve instead as enabling conditions. For the objector's move to rule out all cases of deviance, the distinction between normative reasons and enabling conditions would need to be wholly collapsed. This is a mistake.

There are many cases where we do not need to know why something is an epistemic reason to stand in the relation to it that lets us get justified by it. This is vivid for noninferential justification. Children can gain justified beliefs about the world *via* experience without having the concepts needed to understand why this is so. Children do not need to have the concept of an experience or of a reliable connection in order to gain justified beliefs from experience. This suggests that on views on which reliability is part of what explains why experience gives normative reasons, the reliable connection will serve as an *enabling condition*.

The core point is not local to reliabilist stories. Internalists also tell stories about why experience gives normative reasons that need not be grasped by justified believers. Suppose the story has to do facts about the phenomenology of perceptual experience. Such facts are not ones to which a subject needs reflective access to gain justified beliefs. Yet they may explain why experience gives reasons anyway. They would do so as enabling conditions, not as further reasons.

The point also holds in the inferential case. A person may not have the fact that p as a reason to believe q, where p entails q *via* some inferential route, unless this person has certain inferential competences. But if a person has these competences to a minimal degree, she does not also need to believe that p entails q in order to be in a position to get a justified belief in q from p. She just needs to exercise her competence. So while propositions about the links underwriting the inferences *could* serve as further premises, they *need not* serve as further premises.

So, the objection will fail in deviance cases involving subjects with unsophisticated psychological profiles—i.e., subjects who manifest inferential incompetence while lacking the psychological sophistication either to represent the bad rules to which they reliably conform or to have *de dicto* beliefs about the normative relations that would need to be in place for these rules to be good rules.

3.3 Deviance and Belief for Normative Reasons

While (2)—the claim that Sam and his ilk don't believe for sufficient normative reasons—is a more controversial premise, we think it is intuitively plausible on its face, as we have indicated. Sam and subjects like him simply do not believe for sufficient normative reasons. If true, this would capsize the Composite View.

But it is possible that not everyone will share this intuition. So in this subsection, we will offer some independent arguments for (2) from some platitudes. Since we already explained in §2.1 why there is no valid intuitive argument for the opposite conclusion, we will rest content with these independent arguments.

Let's consider the first argument. Intuitively, when you base your belief in p on x rather than y, your believing p is explained by certain features that x has that y does not have. This is an instance of what we take to be the intuitively obvious principle that if a condition C rather than C* explains some state of affairs, this must owe to a difference between C and C*; after all, if C and C* had all the same features (including relational features), then how could C rather than C* explain the state of affairs? Call this the *Explanation Platitude*. Now, if you base your belief on a normative reason r, what features of r will have to explain your belief?

A natural answer is that the very fact that *r is a normative reason* in favor of your belief must explain why you have that belief. Otherwise your believing *p* isn't explained by the presence of a normative reason. It is just explained by your having a certain consideration in mind, which you may *take* to be a normative reason without being sensitive to the real normative relation that makes it a normative reason. The fact that this consideration corresponds to a real normative reason will be explanatorily irrelevant. This is what we see in deviant cases like Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer. Plausibly, then, subjects in deviant cases do not believe for normative reasons, but just for motivating reasons that by luck correspond to normative reasons.

Let's put this argument more officially:

i. If one's belief is based on *x* rather than *y*, one's belief must be explained by a distinctive feature that *x* has that *y* does not have.

ii. So, for one's belief to be based on a normative reason as opposed to a motivating reason that merely happens to correspond to this normative reason, the very fact that there is a normative reason in favor of one's belief must explain why one has that belief. (We will call this claim *Explanation by Normative Reasons*, and refer back to it by this name in the next section.)

iii. In deviant cases like Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer, the very fact that there is a normative reason in favor of the deviant subject's belief does not explain why the deviant subject has that belief.

iv. So, in deviant cases, the subject will not believe for a sufficient normative reason as opposed to a motivating reason that merely happens to correspond to a sufficient normative reason.

(iv) restates premise (2) in our core argument. So (2) is true.

A similar argument can be given from a different platitude. In order to base your belief in *p* on *x* rather than *y*, your belief must be sensitive to certain features that *x* has that *y* does not have as such.[16] Call this the *Sensitivity Platitude*. Now, if you base your belief that *p* on a normative reason *r* that you have to believe that *p*, to what features of *r* must you be sensitive?

A natural answer is that you have to be sensitive to the normative relation that *r* bears to your belief in virtue of which *r* counts as a normative reason for believing that *p*. Otherwise you aren't sensitive to the normative reason that you have to believe that *p*. In deviant cases like Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer, subjects aren't sensitive to the normative relations that make their motivating reasons correspond to normative reasons. Plausibly, then, their beliefs aren't based on the relevant normative reasons. Putting this more officially:

[16] We are understanding sensitivity in its intuitive sense—as a *competence* resident in the thinker. We are not understanding it in a Nozickian sense. Sensitivity in the counterfactual sense may be *evidence* of sensitivity in the competence sense. But the competence is not constituted by the truth of any such counterfactual, thanks to the conditional fallacy (etc.).

I. If your belief in p is based on x rather than y, your belief is sensitive to a distinctive feature that x has that y does not have.

II. So, for one's belief to be based on a normative reason as opposed to a motivating reason that merely happens to correspond to this normative reason, one's belief must be sensitive to the normative relation that holds between such reasons and such beliefs. (We will call this claim *Sensitivity to Normative Reasons*, and refer back to it by this name in the next section.)

III. In deviant cases like Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer, the subject's belief will not be sensitive to the normative relation that holds between her reason and her doxastic attitude.

IV. So, in deviant cases, the subject won't believe for a sufficient normative reason as opposed to a motivating reason that merely happens to correspond to a sufficient normative reason.

(IV) simply restates premise (2) in our core argument. So (2) is true.

3.4 Deviance Deferred?

Our core argument appears to work. There is a last move that the friend of the Composite View could make that is worth addressing. The strategy involves trying to accommodate the intuition that motivates (2) in other terms.

The main version of this strategy begins with the claim that the only thing deviant subjects clearly lack is doxastic justification. The strategists then claim either (i) that something further beyond propositional justification and basing is needed to analyze doxastic justification, or (ii) that doxastic justification cannot be analyzed in terms of propositional justification at all, and that we should instead analyze propositional justification in terms of doxastic justification.

Turri (2010) suggests a view of type (ii) by appealing to cases similar to Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer. But he does not even consider the possibility of a prime view. As it stands, we think his argument should be reversed. It is plausible that justified believing just is believing for sufficient normative reasons. It is also, as we have seen, implausible that subjects like Sam really believe for sufficient normative reasons. Since Turri doesn't even consider the possibility of a prime view, and the prime view captures more than his view, cases like Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer are better seen as inputs to arguments for the prime view rather than for inputs to arguments against the traditional analysis of doxastic justification.

What about views of type (i)? Views of this type hold that cases like Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer show that we must add a condition to the standard analysis of doxastic justification. Alan Millar suggests a view of this sort in his Millar (1991). For him, doxastic justification requires the satisfaction of a basing condition, a "rational connection" condition (i.e., that the basis does provide a reason for the based belief), a competence condition, and also that, if the basis is a believed proposition, this belief is "legitimately taken for granted".[17] Millar's rationale for the competence condition was to solve what he called the "problem of the accidental rational connection", a problem generated by cases like Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer.

The reason to prefer our view to this view is similar to the reason to prefer our view to Turri's view. Millar's view fails to capture the compelling idea, motivated by the more general Sensitivity Platitude, that when one successfully bases one's belief on a normative reason, one is sensitive to the normative relation between that reason and one's belief. It also fails to capture the compelling idea, motivated by the more general Explanation Platitude, that when one successfully bases one's belief on a normative reason, the fact that one has a normative reason is what explains why one believes as one does. Moreover, the view adds unnecessary complexity to the standard analysis of doxastic justification.

Hence, prime views are to be preferred in virtue of their simplicity, explanatory power, and ability to aid analyses like the standard analysis of doxastic justification in terms of propositional justification and basing.

4 Developing a Prime Alternative

The Composite View is, as we have seen, implausible. While defenders of this view might gerrymander it further, we suspect that any extensionally adequate version of it will be less plausible than an adequately developed prime view. It is a further step from here to any specific prime view, however. In this section, we will explain and motivate a particular prime view. We start with some constraints on a satisfactory prime view:

I. **Transparency–Bad Case:** The view must explain why having motivating reasons for belief feels like believing for normative reasons from the first-person perspective, given the bigger gap between the two on prime views.

II. **Transparency–Good Case:** The view must explain the entailment from believing for normative reasons to having considerations that correspond to these normative reasons as one's motivating reasons for belief, given the bigger gap between the two phenomena on prime views.

III. **No Deviance:** The view must rule out all relevant deviant cases and provide an illuminating explanation of what is going on in them.

IV. **Explain the Platitudes:** The view should explain why Sensitivity to Normative Reasons and Explanation by Normative Reasons are true.

We will argue that our account provides an attractive way to meet these constraints.

[17] See (Millar, 1991, 57-64).

4.1 The View (and How It Accounts for III and IV)

We will introduce the core elements of our view by way of showing how it can explain our two platitudes—viz., Sensitivity to Normative Reasons and Explanation by Normative Reasons—and solve problems of deviance.

To warm up to this, focus again on the fortunate consequent affirmer. The consideration that is his motivating reason happens to line up with a sufficient normative reason. But there is a deviant connection between the fact that his motivating reason is that Terry's car is in the driveway and the fact that the corresponding state of affairs provides a good reason to believe that Terry took the bus. The trick is to find out what the right connection involves.

In order for there to be the right kind of connection, we think one must believe *q in virtue of* the fact that *p* is a sufficient reason to believe *q*, where this 'in virtue of' is understood in a broad sense consistent with a certain causal reading to be unpacked below. More officially:

> **Belief for Sufficient Normative Reasons (BSNR):** What it is for S to believe *q* for a sufficient normative reason *p* that S possesses is for S to believe *q* in virtue of the fact that *p* is a sufficient reason to believe *q* that S possesses.[18]

BSNR contains two new pieces of ideology that must be explained. First, the *in virtue of* relation in BSNR is a causal *in virtue of* relation. Here are some other examples of this relation: the building collapsed in virtue of the heat (not the force of the collision), and the laborer died in virtue of starvation (not the bad taste of the poor food he was able to afford).

One might worry that BSNR's appeal to this relation renders it unhelpful: it merely gives a name to what we need to solve deviance problems. But we have a particular view of what the *in virtue of* relation here involves.[19] It is a dispositional view.[20] Before we state the view, we should emphasize that like many metaphysicians,[21] we do not take dispositions to be subject to a conditional analysis. This includes dispositions that involve conditional expressions, like

[18] Analyses similar to BSNR have been defended in Arpaly & Schroeder (2014), Wedgwood (2006), and Lord (2018b).

[19] Arpaly & Schroeder (2014) refuse to analyze the *in virtue of* relation, to their detriment.Wedgwood (2006)'s analysis is close to ours, although there are differences in the details. This differences aren't important for our purposes here.

[20] Our view bears some similarities to Evans (2013)'s view. However, as he makes clear at the very beginning, his topic is not believing for normative reasons (or what he calls proper basing). Instead, he is just interested in believing for motivating reasons (or what he calls basing). Further, he provides perhaps the clearest statement of the Composite View when he writes 'I think many epistemologists have failed to keep this distinction in mind, but we can charitably read them as having sought theories of proper basing. Still, this is putting the cart before the horse. Basing is (at most) necessary for proper basing. It is also necessary for improper basing. It's best, then, to seek first an account of the basing relation—we can worry about propriety later. That, anyway, is how I shall approach the problem.' We obviously disagree that this is how the issues should be tackled. Still, Evans' view is a close cousin of the view of believing for motivating reasons we'll discuss in the next subsection.

[21] See, e.g., Bird (1998), Bird (2007), Martin (1994), and Molnar (2003), to name three among many others.

dispositions of the form *being disposed to ϕ if p*, which will figure in our analysis. That said, we think that very often there is a match between the possession of a particular disposition and the truth of corresponding conditional claims. Because of this, we will often use counterfactuals as a way to *test* whether someone has a disposition. As we've learned from the failure of conditional analyses, there isn't always a match between the possession of a disposition and the truth of some conditional. Thus, this test isn't infallible. It is, we claim, still helpful.[22]

With that disclaimer in mind, here is our way of unpacking the relevant *in virtue of* claim:

> **In Virtue Of:** What it is for S to believe q in virtue of the fact that S has a sufficient normative reason p is for S to be disposed to revise her belief that q if p ceases to be a sufficient normative reason S has to believe q.

This yields an unpacked version of BSNR:

> **BSNR–Unpacked:** What it is for S to believe q for a sufficient normative reason p that S possesses is for S to be disposed to revise her belief if p ceases to be a sufficient normative reason S has to believe q.[23]

The second piece of new ideology is *possession*. The idea here is that some reasons are poised to play certain normative roles only when they are in one's *epistemic ken*.[24] For example, the fact that Anne is smiling is a reason to believe she is amused. It is not a reason I possess, however, until it is in within my epistemic ken. To be in my epistemic ken, I least have to have some type of epistemic access to that fact. What this access amounts to is extremely controversial. Popular candidates include knowing the fact, merely believing the fact, and being in a position to know the fact.[25] A reason lacks the normative power to justify my beliefs when it is not in my epistemic ken (we will return to possession in the next subsection).

[22]These points are crucial for understanding how our view avoids a particular kind of deviant causal chain case. This kind of case involves the manipulation of someone across modal space. To use a case provided by an anonymous referee, imagine an angel causes one to believe the cat is hungry whenever its meowing is a normative reason to believe that it's hungry. The angel makes it the case that one wouldn't have the belief that the cat is hungry were the fact that the cat is meowing not a normative reason to believe it's hungry. If one had a conditional view of dispositions, this might be sufficient for having the disposition that we appeal to in our analysis below. We deny, however, that one does have the relevant disposition in this case. This is simply one of those cases where the counterfacutal test fails. There is a good explanation for why it fails, though; namely, the fact that the angel is manipulating one. We thank an anonymous referee for pushing us to make this explicit.

[23]While this statement of the view will work for present purposes, we will need to revise the view once more before this section is out. This will be in response to a worry about dispositions that we think is best saved for our discussion in the next subsection.

[24]To be clear, we are just claiming that being in one's epistemic ken is *necessary* for possession. It is not sufficient, as we show in §4.2.

[25]These three views are defended by Williamson (2000), Schroeder (2009, 2011), and Gibbons (2006) and Lord (2018b) respectively.

It is essential to avoiding problems of deviance that the normative property is what is doing the causal work. It cannot just be the reason-giving fact that does the causal work. This was the problem with the fortunate consequent affirmer. The fact that is the normative reason—the fact that Terry's car is in the driveway—plays a causal role in the formation of Sam's belief that Terry took the bus. But it is not the right role. This is because in Sam's case, the normative property—being a sufficient reason to believe she took the bus—doesn't do the causal work.

Now, some might balk at talk of causally efficacious normativity. But we think that when the relevant causal claims are explained dispositionally, such talk needn't be mysterious—not *more* mysterious than other normative talk, at any rate. If there are such properties as the property of *being a sufficient reason to* ϕ, we see no reason why a person couldn't be sensitive in their doxastic or other responses to the instantiation of these properties via their having a disposition. But plausibly, one way for some property instance to cause some response just is for the instantiation of that property to be the triggering condition for a disposition to have that response. (If one rejects this as a way for causation to proceed, then we are happy to drop talk of causal efficacy in favor of talk of dispositional sensitivity.)

Of course, if one understands the triggering of a disposition by a property instantiation as a kind of physical "pushing around", then it would indeed be mysterious. But we shouldn't understand all triggering of dispositions as a kind of physical "pushing around". No one should balk, for example, at the idea that some people can be sensitive to logical relations like entailment. But what is it to be sensitive to these relations? Plausibly, it is to be disposed to form beliefs in certain ways only on the condition that these logical relations are in fact instantiated. We think it is obvious that people can have such dispositions. But if they can, then certain abstract properties can serve as triggering conditions of dispositions.

While the *condition* to which we are appealing is more mysterious because it is normative rather than logical, it doesn't follow that the *relation* that it bears to the response is more mysterious. We don't see why it should be more mysterious to view the instantiation of a normative property as a triggering condition for the manifestation of some disposition than it should be to view the instantiation of a logical property as a triggering condition for the manifestation of some disposition.

Of course, one might ask: why bother appealing to the normative properties rather than the logical properties? In the epistemological case, won't certain logical properties just subvene the relevant normative properties? This response is forceful in the case of deductive reasoning. But when one turns from deductive to ampliative reasoning, one cannot plausibly avoid appealing to some epistemically normative properties unless one views the probabilistic relations in play as themselves logical *a la* Keynes (1921). Consider, for instance, someone who is sensitive to the probabilistic relation that underwrites the move from the perceptual appearance as of p in a case without defeaters to p. The relevant probabilistic relation is not a logical relation, barring some Keynesian account of epistemic probability.[26] Nor is it a re-

[26]Certain classical foundationalists think that skepticism is unavoidable without an account of epistemic probability along the lines of Keynes (1921); cf. Fumerton (1995). But this is a rare position, plausible only

lation of reliable indication if one agrees that it is present even in skeptical scenarios like the demon world. It is rather a relation of evidential probability. But that relation is epistemically normative in precisely the way that the relation of *being a sufficient epistemic reason to believe* is epistemically normative. So, if one wants a general account of the kind of sensitivity that underwrites good reasoning, one will have to appeal to epistemically normative properties.

With those clarifications in mind, we think that it is eminently plausible that all the deviance cases that we want to explain are cases where the reasons are doing causal work but in the wrong way. In all these cases, the reason-giving facts are playing a causal role, but the relevant normative properties of these facts are causally inert, in the minimal sense of "causally" discussed earlier. Our account solves the deviance problem by picking out the feature of the reason-giving facts that must do the causal work in order for it to be of the right type. That feature is the normative property. What else could it be?

That this suggestion is on the right track is further confirmed by the elegant explanations our account can give of Sensitivity to Normative Reasons and Explanation by Normative Reasons. Consider the former. Our account entails that in order to believe q for a normative reason p, one's belief must be held in virtue of the fact that p is a reason to believe q. Since our causal *in virtue of* relation was spelled out dispositionally, it is plausible that this by itself entails that when one believes for a normative reason, one is sensitive to the normative reason as such.

Similar things can be said for Explanation by Normative Reasons. When you believe q for a normative reason p, your belief that p is causally sustained by the fact that p is a normative reason to believe q. It is very plausible that when such causal relations exist, we can provide a correct causal explanation of the fact that you believe that q in terms of the fact that p is a normative reason to believe q. This is sufficient to capture Explanation by Normative Reasons.

4.2 Accounting for I and II

Let's turn to consider how I and II can be explained:

I. Transparency–Bad Case: The view must explain why having motivating reasons for belief feels like believing for normative reasons from the first-person perspective, given the greater gap between the two on prime views.

II. Transparency–Good Case: The view must explain the entailment from believing for normative reasons to having considerations that correspond to these normative reasons as one's motivating reasons for belief, given the larger gap between the two phenomena on prime views.

These constraints flow from two ideas that one might have taken to support the Composite View. Firstly, from the first-person perspective, the bad case seems just like the good case.

relative to an extreme variety of epistemological internalism.

When we believe *q* on the basis of *p*, we "see" *p* as a normative reason to believe *q*. Secondly, when we believe for normative reasons, we seem to endorse the reasons for which we believe in the same kind of way we do when we have merely motivating reasons for belief. These ideas put pressure on theorists like us who claim that believing for normative reasons is a distinctive achievement, not merely a special case of having propositions as motivating reasons for belief.

In order to explain these facts, we need to say something about how we understand motivating reasons for belief. As we have stressed throughout, our main goal is to understand believing for normative reasons. Accordingly, we will be brief in discussing our view of having motivating reasons for belief, and proceed to show how it helps account for I and II.[27]

The motivating reasons for which one believes are one's *rationale* for so believing: they render one's belief *intelligible*. We think the only way for a consideration to play this role is if one *treats* that consideration as a normative reason to have the belief, where such treating needn't be understood as an explicit mental state but could be constituted by an implicit attitude.[28] In order for a consideration to be one's rationale for believing something, one has to take it that the consideration has some positive bearing on the truth of the proposition believed. The following account of motivating reasons for belief can be extracted from these core ideas:

> **Motivating Reasons for Belief:** What it is for *p* to be S's motivating reason for believing *q* is for S to believe *q* in virtue of the fact that S treats *p* as a normative reason to believe *q*.

Once again, the *in virtue of* relation is a causal *in virtue of* relation, and more specifically a dispositional *in virtue of*. So, we can unpack the story as follows:

> **Motivating Reasons for Belief—Unpacked:** What it is for *p* to be S's motivating reason for believing *q* is for S to be disposed to revise her belief that *q* if she ceases to treat *p* as a normative reason to believe *q*.

We will say more later about the notion of treating something as a normative reason. For now, however, it is clear enough how to capture our two desiderata. Take Transparency–Bad Case first. It is essential to our account of the bad case that when one has a consideration as one's motivating reason for belief, one treats that consideration as a normative reason in favor of one's belief. Thus, whenever one has a consideration as one's motivating reason for belief, it will in a natural sense seem from the first-person perspective like one is believing for a normative reason. This is why it seems like one is believing for normative reasons when one has a motivating reason for belief, even if it corresponds to no normative reason.

Transparency–Good Case is less trivial. The key to explaining it lies in the nature of possessing a reason. In order to base one's belief in *q* on a normative reason given by the fact that

[27] For more on EL's views on this (which differ somewhat from the views expressed here), see (Lord, 2018b, ch. 6).

[28] See Sylvan (2015) for an appeal to treating in this sense.

p, one must possess the fact that *p* as a reason to believe *q*. Moreover, we think that in order to possess the fact that *p* as a reason to believe *q*, one must treat the corresponding proposition, *p*, as a reason to believe *q*. Finally, one needs to treat this proposition as a reason to believe *q* in virtue of the fact that the fact that *p* is a reason to believe *q*. A full defense of these claims would take us too far afield, but here is a sketch.

First, a brief defense of the claim that in order to believe *q* for a normative reason given by the fact that *p*, one must *possess* the fact that *p* as a normative reason to believe *q*. This is pretty innocuous in this context, since most epistemologists embrace a version of the thought. The driving thought is that only facts within one's ken can be normative reasons for which one believes.[29] If one is in the dark about the fact that *p*, one can't base a doxastic attitude on the fact that *p*. So one can't base one's belief on the fact that *p* if one fails to possess this fact as a reason.[30]

Now, possessing a normative reason is not just a matter of having access to the fact that gives the normative reason. There are cases where it is plausible that even though the fact that *p* is in one's epistemic ken and this fact is a normative reason to believe *q*, one does not have this fact as a normative reason to believe *q*, in virtue of lacking appropriate dispositional sensitivity to the normative relation between the fact and the belief.[31]

A variant of our case with Sam and Terry brings out why this is the case. Suppose Sam knows that Terry's car is in the driveway but is reasonably unsure that this fact is a reason to believe that Terry is at work: it is Wednesday and there were rumors that Terry's carpool was being discontinued. Sam might thus withhold judgment whether the presence of the car in the driveway is a reason to believe that Terry is at work. Suppose, though, that has not been discontinued. So, the fact that Terry's car is in the driveway actually is a good reason to believe she took the bus. Here Sam knows the fact that is the normative reason, but does not possess it as a normative reason to believe Terry took the bus. What's missing in this case and cases like it, we claim, is that Sam doesn't treat the fact that Terry's car is in the driveway as a reason to believe that Terry is at home. This is why he fails to possess that fact as a reason to believe Terry took the bus.

Finally, we will (briefly) defend the claim that in order to possess *p* as a normative reason

[29] Since 'ken' can be understood externalistically, this thought is not the property of internalists. Cf. Gibbons (2006), Lord (2014, 2018b).

[30] For similar arguments, see Gibbons (2001), Hyman (2006), and Hornsby (2007).

[31] We here assume with many writers in meta-ethics that the fundamental notion of a normative reason is that of an objective normative reason, which is objective in two senses: it is a fact to which one may lack access, and the reason-relation it bears to one's attitude may also be one that one fails to appreciate. It is nearly uncontroversial outside epistemology that there are such reasons, even among 'reasons internalists' in the philosophy of practical reason like Williams (1981). And this kind of objectivity is consistent with a range of subjectivist views about what makes a fact stand in that relation. A fact might, for example, help to explain why acting in some way would satisfy one's desires, and hence be 'desire-dependent' in a broad sense. But this fact would still give an objective reason in the sense at issue here, since one might fail to appreciate how this fact helps to explain why acting in that way would satisfy one's desires, as well as simply failing to realize that this fact is a fact.

to believe q, one must treat p as a normative reason to believe q in virtue of p's being a normative reason to believe q. This is plausible because one can know a fact and treat it as a reason to believe q, but thereby manifest a disposition to treat it as a reason in a confused way (and only in a confused way). Think of a consequent affirmer who is inveterately disposed to treat the fact that Terry's car is in the driveway as a sufficient normative reason to believe he took the bus only in the consequent-affirming way. If Terry cannot treat this consideration as a reason in any other way, it is hard to see how he can possess the relevant normative reason. After all, it is plausible that someone so confused lacks even propositional justification.

If all this is correct, then we can account for Transparency–Good Case. One will always treat p as a reason to believe q when one believes q for the normative reason p, because in order to believe q for the normative reason p, one must possess q as a normative reason to believe p, and in order to do that one must treat p as a normative reason to believe q. Thus, one will always endorse p in the right way when one believes q for a normative reason p. Moreover, if one is sensitive to p's normative relationship to q, then one will be sensitive to whether one possesses p as a reason to believe q. Since treating is a necessary condition on reason possession, it follows that when one believes q for a normative reason p, one's belief that q will be sensitive (in the dispositional sense elucidated above) to whether one treats p as a reason to believe q. But that is just what is required to have p as a rationale for q. So, when one believes q for a normative reason p, one has p as a rationale for q.

4.3 More on Treating

Our story appealed to the notion of treating something as a reason.[32] Although we think that this is a pretheoretically intelligible notion, one might object that our account is unsatisfying until more is said about this notion.[33]

We will say more about this notion, but we want to stress again that our focus in this paper is on believing for normative reasons and its relation to believing for reasons *simpliciter*, and not directly on believing for reasons *simpliciter*. Although our project may indirectly reveal important constraints on a theory of believing for reasons *simpliciter*, it would not undermine our project to take the latter notion for granted and to gloss treating something as a normative reason in terms of that notion. While we hope in future work to analyze believing for reasons *simpliciter* in terms of treating, doing so is not critical for the success of our project here.

What, then, is it to treat p like a normative reason to ϕ? To treat p like a normative reason to ϕ should not, we think, be understood in terms of beliefs that are explicitly about normative reasons (e.g., a belief with the content $<p$ is a normative reason to $\phi>$) or in terms of any other psychological state that would require possession of the concept of a normative reason. Some and perhaps many people who are capable of reasoning (e.g., bright young children) do not have the sophisticated concept of a normative reason. It is not even clear that they must

[32] See Schossler (2012) and Sylvan (2015) for more on treating something as a normative reason. For the related notion of conceiving something as a reason, see Lord (2018b).

[33] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pressing us to say more here.

have the simpler concept of a reason to be capable of reasoning. Nonetheless, these people can—and necessarily do, if they are engaging in reasoning—treat certain considerations as normative reasons of various kinds.

A better way to think about treating p as a normative reason to ϕ is dispositionally. A simple dispositional view would say that to treat p as a normative reason of some kind to ϕ is to be disposed to think or act in the ways that would be correct if p were in fact a normative reason of that kind to ϕ. One might, however, naturally worry in this context that such a disposition could be deviant in a way that would prevent it from illuminating the nature of reasoning. Accordingly, one might worry that having the disposition just mentioned cannot be *sufficient* for treating something as a normative reason.

To get a firmer grip on this worry, let's consider the more specific dispositions induced by the general disposition that the simple view claims is sufficient for treating. And for simplicity, let's focus on the more specific dispositions that one will have when one treats p as a *sufficient* reason to believe that q. The obvious more specific disposition is the disposition to form the belief that q upon forming the belief that p. Is it possible to have this disposition without treating p as a reason to believe that q? One might argue that it is in the following way. Imagine that someone has suffered a brain lesion that disposes her to believe that q upon believing that p, where it is the brain lesion that causes her to form the belief that q upon believing that p. Is this person treating p as a sufficient reason to believe that q? Not, some might insist, in any sense that will illuminate the nature of reasoning. This person is not, or need not be, reasoning from p to q.

One could insist in reply that treating p like a sufficient reason to believe that q involves dispositions *to reason* in certain ways. And one could clarify that when the simple view said earlier that to treat p as a reason to ϕ, one must do *the things that would be correct if p were a normative reason to ϕ*, these reasoning dispositions were included among the things that would be correct. But now there is a circularity worry: for these dispositions will presumably include the disposition to do what would count as *correct reasoning* if p were a normative reason to ϕ.

The worry should now be clear. If we want to understand treating as a disposition of a kind that will illuminate the nature of reasoning, the disposition can't be a deviant one of the sort induced by a brain lesion (at least not in the way mentioned above). But one might worry that a non-deviant disposition just will be a disposition to do things that would count as correct reasoning if the proposition that one treats like a reason to ϕ were indeed a reason to ϕ. Hence, one might worry that we face a dilemma: if treating is understood dispositionally, it will either be consistent with deviance of a sort that precludes reasoning, or have itself to be understood in terms of correct reasoning, which is our object of analysis.

We think that this dilemma is a false one. In particular, we think that there is a way to isolate the dispositions constitutive of treating that doesn't require them to be understood in terms of correct reasoning. This way involves opting for a kind of virtue epistemology. To avoid the dilemma, one can hold, following Sosa (2015), that the relevant dispositions are *competences*, that competences are a special case of dispositions of the sort mentioned earlier, but that the relevant concept of competence is (epistemologically) primitive, as virtue epistemologists suggest. We are happy with this result, since we independently want to defend a view we call *reasons first virtue epistemology* (cf. Section 5.3 below) and in fact regard this paper as the prolegomenon to a multiple-paper defense of this view.

This view is already appealing in the case of correct reasoning. Correct reasoning involves basing that is *apt*: basing which not only *aligns* a subject's rationale with a good reason, but does so *as a manifestation of a competence to form reason-supported beliefs in the presence of the relevant reasons*. Such a competence cannot be understood merely as a disposition to form reason-supported beliefs in the presence of the relevant reasons, as a variant on the brain lesion case above would suggest. But that does not show that the competence should be *analyzed* in terms of good reasoning (though of course it will *entail* a competence to reason well). Rather, it just suggests—in support of virtue epistemology—that the concept of competence is an indispensable one in epistemology, one that can't be eliminated in favor merely of the concept of a success condition and the concept of a disposition. Since there is independent reason to draw that conclusion that has nothing to do with reasoning,[34] it is not *ad hoc* to make this move in this context.

If competences in general are a special case of dispositions to meet some success condition but the notion of competence is (epistemologically) primitive, we can answer the earlier dilemma. To avoid the deviance horn of the dilemma, we invoke competences rather than mere dispositions. To avoid the circularity horn of the dilemma, we note that there is independent reason to regard the notion of competence as (epistemologically) primitive and hence note that a *competence* to do what is supported by good reasons when and only when those good reasons are present needn't be analyzed in terms of good reasoning.

Now, one might be puzzled by the move we have made. After all, we were originally proposing to rely on the notion of *treating something as a normative reason*. And we ended up agreeing that this notion can't be understood *merely* dispositionally. But isn't it clearly possible to treat something like a reason in a confused or radically mistaken way? If so, how could *competence* help us to understand treating?

Of course, the competence involved in treating something like a reason is not a competence to reason correctly, since one might treat p like a reason to believe q via affirming the consequent. But this doesn't show that there is no relevant competence in terms of which treating should be understood.[35] Here is a suggestion that follows some ideas in Broome (2013). Every rule of reasoning sets up a standard of correctness, though some rules are bad in a more substantive sense. One minimal kind of competence is a competence to make mental transitions in conformity with a rule. Perhaps that standard is a bad one. Still, it is a standard and that is all that we need to appeal to in order to get talk of competence, in the minimal sense invoked by reliabilist virtue epistemologists, off the ground.

[34](Sosa, 2015, 95) defends this conclusion with respect to the competences constitutive of *animal knowledge*, which is not essentially reason-based.

[35]There is a direct analogy with Sosa (2015), who analyzes intentional action in terms of aptness and thus competence. Just like we will do in the next paragraph, he appeals to a thin standard of correctness (viz., the intention's success condition) to define the relevant notion of competence.

With these ideas in hand, we can give a more satisfactory analysis of treating in terms of competence. To treat p like a reason to believe that q is to have a rule-relative competence to think in the ways that would be correct if p were a reason to believe that q of the kind encoded by the relevant rule. Those ways are ones that conform to some rule that permits one to move from p to q in certain conditions, where that rule encodes p's being a reason to believe that q of a certain kind (e.g., a deductive reason). One must then distinguish between mere rule-relative competences and robust competences, where the latter are competences relative to the correct epistemic rules.

Given this discussion, one might worry that all of our invocations of dispositions are doomed because of cases that are similar to the lesion case. We agree. Because of this, we think that a further change to our characterization of believing for normative reasons is required. Our settled view of believing for normative reasons should now be stated as follows:

> **BSNR–Competence:** What it is for S to believe q for a sufficient normative reason p that S has to believe q is for S's believing that q to be sustained by her competence to revise her belief if p ceases to be a sufficient normative reason S has to believe q.

Here the competence invoked is a robust competence, not merely a rule-relative competence. That is, it is a competence that makes one sensitive to the actual normative facts. This revision does not, however, have any negative impact on our stories about how our view secures the four central desiderata on a satisfactory prime view. Competences will do all of the requisite work in the same way we explained before.

5 Payoffs and Other Implications

We saw in the last section that our specific prime view neatly captures some central desiderata. We also think that going prime in the way that we have recommended has some substantial payoffs and implications. We turn to mention three.

5.1 Saving the Usual Analysis of Doxastic Justification

One payoff that we noted indirectly in §3.4 is that our account saves an elegant analysis of doxastic justification in terms of propositional justification—namely:

> **DJ=BPJ:** To be doxastically justified in believing that p just is (i) to have propositional justification for believing p, and (ii) to believe p on the basis of this propositional justification.[36]

[36] See (Turri, 2010, 313-14) for a list of people who accept this view, including Alston, Cohen, Conee and Feldman, Swain, and Pollock and Cruz.

DJ=BPJ has recently been attacked by Turri (2010). His argument is anchored in the thought that the specific way in which one "uses" reasons makes a difference to whether one gets doxastic justification from them and that DJ=BPJ is insensitive to this fact, since one can base a belief on certain reasons while using those reasons in the wrong way. Central to his argument are cases that resemble Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer. Here is one of his cases:

> **Spurs Win**. Mr. Ponens and Mr. F. A. Lacy know that the Spurs will win if they play the Pistons, and know that the Spurs will play the Pistons. Thus, they both possess sufficient reasons to believe that the Spurs will win. They both infer that the Spurs will win from those two propositions (and only those two propositions). But Ponens follows the *modus ponens* rule, while Lacy follows the *modus profusus* rule: *for any p, q, and r, infer r from p & q*.

But Spurs Win doesn't refute DJ=BPJ. One could reject the Composite View, say that Lacy doesn't believe for a sufficient normative reason, and note that it is natural to understand basing one's belief on propositional justification as believing for a sufficient normative reason. Lacy merely has a motivating reason that happens, by luck, to correspond to a normative reason. Yes, one can treat certain considerations as reasons for belief in the wrong way even if they happen to correspond to normative reasons. But this is simply evidence against the Composite View!

Once we realize this, the objection to DJ=BPJ is averted, so long as we assume that basing on propositional justifiers is the same thing as believing for sufficient normative reasons (as it is natural to think).

5.2 Experiential Justification and Speckled Hens

There is a more specific payoff related to the foregoing one. Our view provides a simple, principled way to protect the thought that experiences can justify belief from the problem of the speckled hen.[37] Specifically, it protects the following claims from assault by speckled hens:

> (*) The fact that one's visual experience has the content that *p* partly explains why there is a normative epistemic reason for one to believe *p* when one has a visual experience with this content. Believing for this reason suffices for doxastically justified belief (absent defeaters).[38]

It is common to reject (*) because:

[37] Sosa (2003) pressed the problem against classical foundationalism *a la* Fumerton (1995) and Bonjour & Sosa (2003). ButPace (2010) rightly notes that the problem generalizes to less radical views, like Pryor (2000)'s non-classical foundationalism. We have them in mind, though our conclusions extend to classical views.

[38] Note that (PJ) doesn't claim that all possessed reasons for perceptual beliefs are experience-given. It just says that *when* an experience is present, the experience plays a reason-giving role.

I. Perceptual experiences can have extremely precise contents (e.g., about the exact number of speckles on the facing side of a speckled hen),

II. Experience-caused beliefs in these extremely precise contents are not even *prima facie* doxastically justified for ordinary subjects.

But in cases that clearly illustrate (II), it is false that subjects hold their specific beliefs *because of specific fact* that their experiences represent the truth-makers of these beliefs. They are obviously insensitive to that feature of their experience. Yet according to (PJ), the fact that one's experience represents these facts is part of what explains why there is a normative epistemic reason for one to take them to obtain. If so, and believing for a normative reason requires sensitivity to that very fact—as our view suggests—(I) and (II) do not undermine (*).

Once we understand what it takes to believe for the relevant experiential reasons, these cases don't harm (*). For (II) does not show that subjects can believe for the relevant experience-given normative reasons. It just shows that subjects might be caused in some way by experience to believe the precise contents. It will be a deviant way, if these subjects really lack the discriminatory abilities to make out what precise facts are represented by experience. If so, these subjects also cannot take these precise facts to obtain *because* experience represents them as obtaining. If so, they cannot believe for the relevant normative reasons, on our view.

So, our Prime View also provides a neutral way to protect an attractive reasons-based epistemology of perception from the problem of the speckled hen.

5.3 The Unavoidability of (a Kind of) Competence

The foregoing point is, however, something of a double-edged sword for a reasons-based epistemology of perception. The problem of the speckled hen is often wielded by theorists who think that the epistemology of perception embodied in claims like (I) and (II) wrongly excludes competence from playing a role in perceptual justification. They suggest that what is missing in subjects who cannot get justified beliefs about the precise number of speckles is a reliable ability. Adding competence to the explanation of perceptual justification is necessary. Once it is added, these theorists insist, it becomes unclear how experiences as such are playing a significant role in justifying beliefs in these cases.

Now, that last claim is not well motivated. The reason why this claim is not well motivated is suggested by our account. Our diagnosis of these cases is compatible with the thought that experience as such is what is giving subjects epistemic reasons for belief, and hence propositional justification. Experience is not shown to have no significance as such by these cases. Indeed, it is also not shown that basing beliefs on experience-given reasons cannot give one doxastic justification. What subjects in these cases lack is the competence to coordinate their motivating reasons with the experience-given normative reasons.

But the other edge of the sword becomes visible at this point. One might have thought that showing that the whole story about doxastic justification in perceptual cases can be accounted for in terms of basing beliefs on experience-given epistemic reasons would constitute a blow to a virtue-theoretic epistemology of perception. This is not true. If believing for sufficient normative reasons is an achievement, doxastic justification will require the exercise of a competence.

6 Concluding Remarks

Let's take stock. We have argued that believing for sufficient normative reasons is not a mere composite of having certain motivating reasons for belief and those reasons happening to line up with sufficient normative reasons. The Composite View faces a deviance problem illustrated by cases like Fortunate Consequent-Affirmer. Intuitively and in the light of arguments from §3.3, it is implausible that subjects believe for sufficient normative reasons in these cases.

The Composite View is mistaken. This conclusion matters, as we have seen. It impacts how we are to understand the relationship between propositional and doxastic justification, the place of reasons in epistemology, and the place of competence in theories of doxastic justification that appeal to reasons.

The failure of the Composite View should not come as a surprise. Believing for sufficient normative reasons is an *achievement*. Our thinking about other achievements—e.g., perception and intentional action—cannot be correctly modeled by anything like the Composite View. Achievements are not mere sums of success factors and states that can equally well obtain in the good and bad cases. We should not expect the achievement of believing for sufficient normative reasons to differ.

This is not to say that a *disjunctive* account should be accepted. Nor is that what we have recommended. Consider again the perceptual analogy. Almost everyone since Grice (1961) has assumed that seeing that p is not merely a composite of the fact that p and one's having a visual experience as of p. But not almost everyone is a disjunctivist. They would only be if they added (i) that there is no common feature in the good and the bad case (save for indistinguishability), and (ii) that there is one phenomenon—viz., visual experience—that, like jade, turns out to be disjunctive. Most people believe instead that having a non-factive perceptual experience and seeing that p are just two relations, though they have things in common.

Our picture resembles this familiar picture in the philosophy of perception. On our view, there is an achievement (believing for normative reasons) and a lesser doing (believing for reasons). They have something in common. Believing for normative reasons entails believing for reasons, similarly to how seeing that p entails having a visual experience as of p. The key is that this common feature is not a common factor, in the sense of an *independent component* in both. It cannot be, given the achievement involved in believing for a sufficient normative reason.

References

Armstrong, D. (1973). *Belief, Truth, and Knowledge*. Cambridge University Press.

Arpaly, N. & Schroeder, T. (2014). *In Praise of Desire*. Oxford University Press.
Audi, R. (1993). *The Structure of Justification*. Cambridge University Press.
Bird, A. (1998). Dispositions and Antidotes. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 48(191), 227–234.
Bird, A. (2007). *Nature's Metaphysics: Laws and Properties*. Oxford University Press.
Bonjour, L. & Sosa, E. (2003). *Epistemic Justification: Internalism vs. Externalism, Foundations vs. Virtues*. Blackwell Publishing.
Broome, J. (2013). *Rationality Through Reasoning*. Blackwell.
Brueckner, A. (2002). Williamson on the primeness of knowing. *Analysis*, 62(3), 197–202.
Carroll, L. (1895). What the tortoise said to achilles. *Mind*, 4(14), 278–280.
Cunningham, J. J. (FC). Is believing for a normative reason a composite condition? *Synthese*.
Dancy, J. (2000). *Practical Reality*. Oxford University Press.
Evans, I. (2013). The problem of the basing relation. *Synthese*, 190(14), 2943–2957.
Fumerton, R. (1995). *Metaepistemology and Skepticism*. Rowman & Littlefield.
Gibbons, J. (2001). Knowledge in Action. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 62(3), 579–600.
Gibbons, J. (2006). Access externalism. *Mind*, 115(457), 19–39.
Goldman, A. (2011). Toward a synthesis of reliabilism and evidentialism? or: Evidentialism's problems, reliabilism's rescue package. In T. Dougherty (Ed.), *Evidentialism and its Discontents*. Oxford University Press.
Goldman, A. (2012). *Reliabilism and Contemporary Epistemology*. Oxford University Press.
Goldman, A. I. (1999). Internalism exposed. *Journal of Philosophy*, 96(6), 271–293.
Grice, P. (1961). The causal theory of perception. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume*, 35, 121–153.
Hornsby, J. (2007). Knowledge in action. In A. Lesit (Ed.), *Action in Context*. De Gruyter.
Hyman, J. (2006). Knowledge and Evidence. *Mind*, 115(460), 891–916.
Johnston, M. (2004). The obscure object of hallucination. *Philosophical Studies*, 120(1-3), 113–83.
Keynes, J. M. (1921). *A Treatise on Probability*. Dover.
Lord, E. (2014). The Coherent and the Rational. *Analytic Philosophy*, 55(2), 151–175.
Lord, E. (2018a). Epistemic Reasons, Evidence, and Defeaters. In D. Star (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*. Oxford University Press.
Lord, E. (2018b). *The Importance of Being Rational*. Oxford University Press.
Lord, E. (MS). Reasons to withhold and the failure of evidentialism. Unpublished Manuscript, University of Pennsylvania.
Lord, E. & Maguire, B. (2016). An Opinionated Guide to the Weight of Reasons. In E. Lord & B. Maguire (Eds.), *Weighing Reasons*. Oxford University Press.
Lyons, J. (2009). *Perception and Basic Beliefs*. Oxford University Press.
Mantel, S. (2017). Worldly reasons: An ontological inquiry into motivating considerations and normative reasons. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*.
Martin, C. B. (1994). Dispositions and Conditionals. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 44(174), 1–8.
Millar, A. (1991). *Reasons and Experience*. Oxford University Press.

Millar, A. (1996). The idea of experience. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 96, 75–90.

Molnar, G. (2003). *Powers: A Study in Metaphysics*. Oxford University Press.

Pace, M. (2010). Foundationally justified beliefs and the problem of the speckled hen. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 91(401-441).

Pryor, J. (2000). The skeptic and the dogmatist. *Noûs*, 34(4), 517–549.

Schossler, M. (2012). Taking something as a reason for action. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 41(2), 267–304.

Schroeder, M. (2007). *Slaves of the Passions*. Oxford University Press.

Schroeder, M. (2009). Means-End Coherence, Stringency, and Subjective Reasons. *Philosophical Studies*, 143(2), 223–248.

Schroeder, M. (2011). What does it take to 'have' a reason? In A. Reisner & A. Steglich-Petersen (Eds.), *Reasons for Belief*. Cambridge University Press.

Schroeder, M. (2012). Stakes, withholding, and pragmatic encroachment on knowledge. *Philosophical Studies*, 160(2), 165–185.

Schroeder, M. (2015a). Knowledge is belief for sufficient (objective and subjective) reason. In T. S. Gendler & J. Hawthorne (Eds.), *Oxford Studies in Epistemology*, volume 5. Oxford University Press.

Schroeder, M. (2015b). What Makes Reasons Sufficient? *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 52(2).

Shope, R. K. (1983). *The Analysis of Knowing: A Decade of Research*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Sosa, E. (2003). Privileged access. In Q. Smith & A. Jokic (Eds.), *Consciousness: New Philosophical Perspectives*. Oxford University Press.

Sosa, E. (2015). *Judgment and Agency*. Oxford University Press.

Swain, M. (1981). *Reasons and Knowledge*. Cornell University Press.

Swain, M. (1988). Alston's internalistic externalism. *Philosophical Perspectives*, (2), 461–473.

Sylvan, K. (2015). What apparent reasons appear to be. *Philosophical Studies*, 172(3), 587–606.

Turri, J. (2010). On the relationship between propositional and doxastic justification. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 80(2), 312–326.

Wedgwood, R. (2006). The Normative Force of Reasoning. *Noûs*, 40(4), 660–686.

Williams, B. (1981). Internal and External Reasons. In *Moral Luck*. Oxford University Press.

Williamson, T. (2000). *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford University Press.