

Propositionalism and the Metaphysics of Experience

The view I've been defending in the theory of justification I have termed 'propositionalism'.¹ It counsels beginning inquiry into the nature of justification by adopting a particular form of evidentialism, according to which the first task is to describe the abstract relation of evidencing that holds between propositional contents. Such an approach has a variety of implications for the theory of justification itself, and many of the motivations for the view are of a standard internalist variety. Some of these motivations will be described in due course, but there is also a further motivation to mention here as well. Such a theory, beyond enabling a theory to satisfy typical internalist strictures, also allows a strong relationship between the theory of justification and more standard confirmation theory where claims are confirmed and disconfirmed by information gleaned from experiments and other sources. It is a natural and pleasing result if confirmation theory can be embedded within the theory of justification developed in the context of more traditional epistemology.

The alternatives to propositionalism are doxasticism, the view according to which one begins the theory of knowledge by focusing on beliefs rather than on their contents, and a third position that can be described only by contrasting a source of disagreement between doxasticism and propositionalism. The background of the disagreement involves noticing that justification can be predicated of a variety of things, among them being mental states such as beliefs, the contents of which I will here call propositions, and persons. I believe these are the fundamental things of which justification can be predicated, and I think there is a somewhat complex argument that shows that we can understand justification attaching to persons in terms of

justification attaching to beliefs.² I will assume the cogency of that argument here rather than rehearse it. Doing so leaves two locutions, one expressing doxastic justification, the kind of justification that attaches to beliefs, and propositional justification, the kind that attaches to propositional contents, whether or not they are believed. The doxasticist claims that the fundamental kind of justification is doxastic, maintaining that propositional justification should be explained in terms of doxastic, and the propositionalist maintains the opposite order of explanation.

Given these two positions, there is a hybrid view, according to which neither kind is explicable in terms of the other. If I'm wrong about the claim that personal justification—the kind attaching to persons—can be explained in terms of doxastic justification, that might be another reason for denying that there there is a basic notion of justification. Since I'm assuming the cogency of the argument for understanding personal justification in terms of doxastic justification, however, the hybrid position here will be understood simply as the position that maintains that neither doxastic nor propositional justification is more basic than the other.

The propositionalism/doxasticism distinction cuts across the usual distinctions in epistemology. The obvious examples of doxasticism are these: the reliabilism of Goldman,³ the virtue epistemology of Sosa,⁴ the intuitive tracking view of Nozick,⁵ and the proper functionalism of Plantinga.⁶ In each such case, we begin with the class of beliefs and try to sort which ones are justified on the basis of the preferred conceptual apparatus of the theorist in question: perhaps the licensed beliefs are those produced by reliable processes, or generated by intellectual virtues, or are the result of properly functioning cognitive equipment in an appropriate environment, or are ones that are sensitive to the truth. Since each of these

approaches count as versions of externalism, one is thus tempted to think in terms of externalism when thinking of doxasticism, but that is not quite right. Pollock's experiential foundationalism⁷ is a version of doxasticism as well, even though on some accounts of what internalism is, it's a version of internalism. Moreover, there are versions of foundationalism and coherentism in all three camps, in spite of the expectation that both would count as versions of propositionalism. So the idea that the propositionalism/doxasticism distinction is just the internalism/externalism distinction using different terms should be resisted.

In the past, I've argued as follows for propositionalism. The hybrid view is obviously incorrect because one can easily explain doxastic justification in terms of propositional. All one needs is the notions of evidence and proper basing: a belief is doxastically justified for a person if and only if that person bases their belief properly on the evidence they have for the belief. We will see later why this argument is not compelling as it stands, but if we grant it for now, that leaves only the option that each kind of justification can be defined in terms of the other. For there to be any hope for doxasticism, we would need to be able to find some construal of propositional justification in terms of doxastic justification.

There are several types of troubling cases for any such attempt, one of them concerning propositions one does not believe. In order to explain such propositional justification in terms of doxastic justification, an imaginative situation will have to be envisioned containing a belief that does not exist in reality. The argument against such an approach takes the form of showing that the problems that plague nearly every counterfactual account in philosophy are going to plague a doxasticist account of propositional justification regarding such examples.⁸ Imagining what things would be like if the belief in question were added to the already-existing corpus of beliefs

faces the problem that belief itself can create additional evidence for its content and can also undercut evidence for its content. Additional difficulties arise for doxasticists when one considers increasing degrees of cognitive admirability, beginning with individuals who wouldn't believe anything without good reason all the way to possible individuals who are essentially cognitively admirable, incapable of believing anything unjustified or false. Suitable adaptations of these kinds of cases can be found to undermine any version of doxasticism, or so I have argued.

Given these points, what's left is propositionalism. In philosophy, there are the wide and narrow roads as well as in religion, and the wide road that leads to destruction involves the smugness of thinking that one can establish one's own view merely by undermining the alternatives. Defenders of a view owe us not only objections to alternatives, but also a worked out version of the view that can withstand scrutiny on its own. I will begin that project here, focusing on what I take to be the central problem plaguing any version of propositionalism. That problem concerns the role that experience plays in the story of justification, and the tension between allowing experience its proper role while at the same time insisting that fundamental evidential relationships are proposition in character. The result I aim to achieve is a limited defense of propositionalism, to the effect that allowing experience to play an appropriate role in the theory of justification does not present an irresolvable difficulty for propositionalists.

Formulating Propositionalism

To begin to see the problem caused for propositionalism by allowing experience to play a

role in the theory of justification, consider the propositional account of doxastic justification:

S's belief that p is doxastically justified iff (I) S believes that p; (II) S has evidence for p; and (III) S's belief that p is properly based on S's evidence for p.

This definition counts as a version of propositionalism because the fundamental items that are justified or not are propositions. To complete the story of justification, we need to know something of what occupies the other position in the relation of justification. There is the thing which is justified—a proposition—and the things which justify. To have a theory fully deserving of the appellation 'propositionalism,' one would expect the following story about the things that justify: the things that justify are one's evidence; to *have* evidence is to be in relevant mental states such as the state of believing or the state of experiencing; but what it is for one thing to *be* evidence for another is a relationship between contents of possible mental states rather than being in the mental states themselves. So a fully propositional theory of justification will endorse not only the above account of doxastic justification in terms of propositional justification, but will also endorse the claim that:

All evidence is propositional evidence.

But why think that? Shouldn't we think that some evidence is propositional and some evidence isn't? Sometimes information exists that provides a sound argument for a claim; in such a case, the evidence for the claim may perhaps be thought to be propositional. Other times, the evidence doesn't fit well with the argument model, but instead arises in the form of experience. Worse yet, why think that when the argument model is appropriate, the evidence is propositional? Why not think, for example, that sometimes one's evidence is in the form of beliefs and sometimes in the form of experiences.

Let's start with the last question, the question about whether the evidence is best conceived in terms of beliefs and experiences rather than propositions. At one level, the claim is correct—the evidence you have is either in the form of beliefs or experiences, but that point doesn't undermine the propositionalism I'm proposing. If we put experiences to the side for the moment, we need to ask what makes a particular belief evidence for whatever it is that it is evidence for. It is here that propositionalism has the right answer. If you believe that p, and that belief is evidence for q, which you may or may not believe, it is evidence for q in virtue of its content. So the straightforward answer is this: the having of evidence will certainly need to be understood in terms of mental states such as believing and experiencing, but the existence of evidence, what it is for there to *be* evidence for a given claim, need not be understood in terms of the mental state of believing but rather in terms of the content of a possible mental state.

A qualification is important here, though it is a detour from our primary goal here. The qualification is important, however, to prevent misunderstanding of the type of propositionalism I am proposing. The motivation for this approach to justification is not merely to offer an adequate theory of justification, but to offer a theory of a certain kind. The approach to epistemology I favor is value-driven epistemology, and the relevance of that point here is that we want an account of justification that helps explain why any steps we take beyond true belief in attempting to clarify cognitive achievements adds to the value we already find in true belief. Though I won't lengthen this detour further in order to explain and argue for this approach, the kind of value that survives this test is the value that accrues to a claim in virtue of a display of a kind of autonomy displayed in cognition so that the cognizer finds the truth of a claim in question intelligible and understood on the basis of the evidence for it. The kind of autonomy in question

cannot be the sort involving voluntariness, since cognition doesn't typically work that way. Instead, the kind of autonomy has a more Kantian flavor, involving the following of rules given to oneself as a rational being. As I said, I won't pursue this line of thought further except to point out an implication of it for the kind of content relevant to the propositionalism I propose. The content in question must be the kind that is immediately present to the mind in order to satisfy this requirement of intelligibility and understanding, and the evidential connection must equally be the kind that connects to the truth of what it is evidence for in such a way that the epistemically internalist stricture here articulated is preserved. Having evidence for a claim renders the truth of that claim intelligible, understood, grasped, and appreciated by the person who has that evidence in such a way as to properly base such a belief on that evidence (though of course we must be careful here to understand this point in a way that allows it to be compatible with justified false belief). Not just any kind of content and not just any theory of evidence can do that. In particular, external content seems ill-adapted to such a task. What is needed is narrow content instead, and in what follows, when I speak of propositional content, it is to be understood that what I intend is narrow rather than wide content.

Returning to the main path of inquiry, however, the important point is that the evidence one has is in the form of beliefs only when the content of the belief is itself evidence for certain claims and not for other claims. To have evidence is to have beliefs or experiences; to be evidence is, according to the propositionalist, to be a proposition.

Granting this point turns our focus to the other difficulty facing a fully propositionalist theory, the difficulty of what to say about the role of experience in the story of justification. The problem a full propositionalism faces here is much more difficult than the problem of what to say

about the role of beliefs in the theory of justification.

The difficulty experience presents for this account is, in large part, a matter of coming to grips with Sellars' problem.⁹ We can put this problem in the form of a dilemma. Either experience has propositional content or it does not. If it does not, then it cannot justify a belief. If that point is not compelling in itself, and it is not, it is compelling here, since the justificatory relation demanded by the present version of propositionalism needs to render the truth of supported beliefs intelligible to the believer. But how could an experience generate intelligibility unless experiences have content? Without an appeal to content, all we have is some mindless mechanism of belief production, to which Father God or Mother Nature appends some feeling or sense of intelligible truth of belief. Such a story makes intelligibility an extrinsic feature of the justificatory connection between evidence and belief, but that is precisely what we don't want. The value of justification over true belief is not a matter of such extrinsic appurtenances, but rather something intrinsic to the evidential relation between experience and belief.

The other horn of the dilemma, however, claims that if experience has propositional content, then it must be adjudged in some normative terminology before passing scrutiny for purposes of generating justification for belief. For example, suppose you are appeared to elephant-ly. In some circumstances, such an experience is fully appropriate to your circumstances (e.g., when there is an elephant in full view) and passes scrutiny for the capacity to justify a belief. But, the Sellars' Problem would have it, not always. If you have that experience while focusing intently on the words of this sentence, you're a cognitive mess and your experience can't take you any way down the road from true belief to knowledge even if in fact you find your appeared to elephant-ly and there really is an elephant in the room.

There are mistakes in this argument, but also a serious challenge. One mistake is that we won't get an adequate theory of knowledge if we let abnormal experiences of the truly clinical variety count as evidence. That point would be correct if we didn't have additional filters on what gets justified and which justified beliefs count as knowledge, but we do have such filters. Experience doesn't automatically render a belief justified, since the evidence provided by experience must not be undermined by internal defeaters. Moreover, even when it is not undermined by internal defeaters, it may be undermined by external (nonmisleading) defeaters, and hence not be a candidate for knowledge. So there is no particular reason to be found here for insisting that we sort experiences into those that provide evidence and those that do not.

In addition, even if the argument were correct that experiences are going to have to be sorted into those that have confirming power and those that do not, it is not clear that this point has any direct implications for propositionalism. In the context of attempting to solve the regress problem regarding justification, this issue is central and unavoidable. But propositionalism itself has no dog in this fight. A propositionalist of the pure variety maintains that anything that justifies has propositional content, but the view certainly does not require that everything with propositional content has confirming power. So if some experiences lack that power, propositionalism itself is not threatened.

Even given these points, however, there is still a challenge here. If we've reached the conclusion where experiences are evidence for belief only if they have content, the question is how to sustain this view and what the content might be. That there must be some relationship of content between experience and belief is required if we attend carefully to the lessons of the following example. We can call it the case of Hume and the missing shade of blue. Hume has

never had an experience of the missing shade of blue, and has developed the following dispositions in every color experience he has. He always notices both the color in question and notices the distinction between it and the missing shade of blue, fascinated as he is with the fact that he has seen all colors except this one. So he is reliably disposed, tracks the truth of in virtue of a stable disposition, functions properly in forming his beliefs, and satisfies any other non-content-based requirement one might wish to impose in the theory of justification, to the following effect: to believe that the object is the particular color it is perceived to be and in addition to believe that the object is not the missing shade of blue. After years and years of so believing conjointly, Hume finally encounters the missing shade of blue. What is the rational thing for him to believe? One thing is that the object in question is blue, but if he forms a rational belief involving the concept of the missing shade of blue, it had better not be the belief that this is not the missing shade of blue. His experience undermines the rationality of that belief. So he needs to form the belief, if he forms one, that the object is the missing shade of blue. What explains this distinction? It can only be something about the content of his experience. No information about truth-tracking, reliability dispositions, recognition skills, and the like that fails to advert to the content of the experience can explain why Hume should believe that he has finally found the missing shade of blue.

Even so, there's a further challenge. Call it the Pollock challenge.¹⁰ The issue is that the very same content can be present in a variety of mental states, from beliefs to experiences to wishes and hopes and desires. In Pollock's view, accommodating this point requires maintaining that it is the mental state itself, and not its content, that functions as evidence for a belief state.¹¹

This objection is important but not decisive. A first point to note is that we can

distinguish between affective and cognitive states, and note that for the purely cognitive purposes in epistemology, the only kind of reasons that are relevant as a basis for a belief are going to be cognitive reasons. This point doesn't address Pollock's challenge, since cognitive reasons still include both beliefs and experiences, but it does keep us from having to worry about what to say about other states if we can determine what to say about experiences. Hopes and fears don't provide epistemic reasons for belief since they are affective states; beliefs and experiences provide such reasons because they are cognitive states.

Regarding the distinction between belief and experience, it is clear that an adequate defense of propositionalism must distinguish the evidentiary role that an experience with content p plays from one played by a belief with content p . The simplest reason why is that the former is evidence for the latter, but the latter is not evidence for itself. So even once we have reached the present point of needing to find content in experiences that are capable of justifying, Pollock's challenge is still threatening since we must distinguish the justificatory role of a given content depending on how it is encoded mentally.

Recent work in the theory of consciousness and phenomenal content suggests a possible response, however, in terms of the self-representational character of phenomenal content.¹² On this view, intrinsic to the character of experience is an awareness of the very experience itself in addition to the outward awareness of the primary focus of the awareness. Consider the following expression of the idea:

Suppose, for instance, that you suddenly hear a distant bagpipe. In your auditory experience of the bagpipe you are aware primarily, or explicitly, of the bagpipe sound; but you are also implicitly aware that this auditory experience of the bagpipe is your

experience. That is, you are aware of yourself as the subject of experience.¹³

Notice that, as described, the experience of hearing is accompanied by an awareness of the experience as one's own. Moreover, the awareness of self has a particular content to it: it is an awareness of the self as "the subject of the experience in question." Of course, that is an external description of the awareness, meant to describe in general terms a phenomenon that has particular instances involving more particular descriptions. It is not intended to particular description that a given individual would give to himself or herself in the experiencing itself. Perhaps we can capture the particularity of each by saying that it is an indexical awareness of oneself as the subject of *this very experience*. That is, the content of the awareness includes an essentially indexical awareness of the state itself.

It is this indexical character of experience, tying any conscious awareness indexically both to the existence of the individual having the experience and indexically to the very experience itself that provides the type of content necessary for a defense of propositionalism. I cannot undertake here a defense of this approach to the nature of conscious experience, so in an important sense I will not be offering a solution to Pollock's challenge. Instead, the defense of propositionalism here presented should perhaps be stated in conditional form: if the self-representing account of conscious experience can be defended, propositionalism can be adequately developed so that the fundamental relationships of evidence in the theory of justification are relations between propositional contents.

A conscious experience, on this self-representational approach, is representational, making one aware primarily of the (typically external) object of awareness but secondarily of oneself as the subject of the experience. The full experience is thus a composite entity, including

a representation R involved in the focal awareness in question, and an indexical awareness R* that includes R as a component in virtue of the fact that R* involves an indexical reference to itself that includes R. In virtue of this indexical character of R*, the content which is R* is propositional content, involving following elements: R itself, the subject of the experience, the total experience R*. The content in question implies that an experience involving R is occurring in this very subject in virtue of this very R* experience. R* is thus evidence for a number of claims, including the claim that something exists having the character specified in R, that the subject of the experience exists, and that the subject in question is having the very experience which is the secondary focus specified in R*.

When R* is encoded in an actual experience of the relevant individual, the description of the case changes from there being evidence for such claims to the having of evidence for such claims. But what happens when R* is encoded in the form of belief? Must we say that the person in question has evidence then as well for the claims in question?

The answer is “no.” There are two ways to conceive of R*. Perhaps R* intrinsically and essentially involves the experiential modality because of its self-referential character. Perhaps, that is, R* cannot itself be encoded in the form of a belief because it cannot be encoded in any mental state other than an experiential one because of its self-referential character. How could this be, one might ask? How could the *content* limit, metaphysically, possible encodings? I’m not sure it can, but here is a possible line of reasoning to that conclusion. In order for a belief to involve R* in any way, the person in question will have to change focus. Recall that an experience having R* as content involves a primary focus on R and a distal focus on the self as the subject of the experience. Perhaps in order to form a belief involving R*, one would have to

bring into primary focus the self-referential aspect specified in R^* , and in so doing will form a belief, not with content R^* , but with the content that R^* is the content of one of his or her experiences. So it may be plausible to maintain that the particular content R^* simply cannot be the content of a belief but can only be the content of an experience.

Perhaps this line of reasoning is correct, but I remain skeptical of it. Even if this line of reasoning is mistaken, however, so that R^* can be the content of a belief, the belief will be utterly incoherent. It will involve the obvious absurdity of confusing a belief and an experience. It will be a belief to the effect that this very experiencing is occurring in me, and the having of such a belief is a state of utter confusion and incoherence. In such a case, the propositionalist is under no requirement of treating the person in question as having evidence that includes R^* . Just because the evidence one has is in the form of experiences and beliefs is no reason for thinking that every belief one has is part of the evidence one possesses. It is typical in the theory of justification to insist that one cannot arrive at a further justified belief by inferring from premises that are irrational for one to believe, even if in fact one believes them. Given the obvious absurdity of the belief in question, there is no need for the propositionalist to hold that it is among the evidence one has, and in such a case R^* will be explanatorily otiose in the justificatory status of any claim for the person in question.

Whether such an approach to the theory of justification can be sustained has not been settled by these considerations, but that has not been my goal. The goal instead is to show that propositionalism does not succumb in any immediate way to the fact that evidence comes in the form of both experiences and beliefs. The fundamental evidential relationship between representational contents, or propositions, becomes evidence available to a person when the

evidence is encoded in the form of beliefs or experiences. The significance of the above approach to conscious experience is that it offers a content which can function as evidence for a person only when encoded in the form of experience. If so, the content in question can be counted as evidence for the propositions it confirms without having to be counted as evidence for a person regardless of whether it is encoded in the form of belief or experience.

Objections and Extensions

One question that might arise here is the question of what to make of experiences that are not conscious. When they are not, the theory in question does not claim that they have any self-referential character, and without such a character, the above solution is unavailable to the propositionalist regarding them.

It is plausible to think that non-conscious mental states involve no such self-reflexive character. Freudian states are typical examples of such mental states, whether the states are desires, beliefs, or experiences. So are cases of simple absent-minded perception, as when I'm focusing on writing this article while being inundated with the country music in the background that certain parts of my family find enjoyable. Blindsight provides a further example of the same. The question, however, is whether there is any necessity to counting the contents of such states as among the evidence that a person has. At this point, the propositionalism I propose adverts to epistemological axiology in its defense. Even though there may be concepts of justification or rationality regarding which such states should be allowed to play a role, there is also a concept of justification for which it is entirely appropriate to refuse to count the contents of

such states as being part of the total evidence one has. The notion of justification in question is closely connected, as noted earlier, with concepts such as insight and understanding. Good evidence makes the truth of a further claim intelligible to the individual in question, and such intelligibility, insight, and understanding is at the heart of why the property of justification is a valuable one for a belief to have. In the context of this defense of the value of justification, it is perfectly appropriate to construct a theory of justification that refuses to count non-conscious mental states of providing one with evidence. This point remains true even if such states play a role in other central epistemological concepts such as the concept of knowledge.

This response raises a further worry, however. If we adopt it, aren't we quite a ways down the path of overintellectualizing justification? Haven't we adopted an approach to the nature of justification that makes it inexplicable how animals and small children can have good evidence for what they believe? The reflexive feature identified as solving a serious problem for propositionalism appears to do so only at the expense of pretending either that animals and small children cannot have evidence for their beliefs or of pretending that such creatures have vastly greater reflective abilities than is plausible.

I have two responses to this objection. The first grants the point that there may be epistemic successes for creatures that have no conscious experiences. But even if there are such successes, there is no reason to require that all such successes depend on the notion of justification. There is, for example, no analytic connection between the concept of knowledge and the concept of justification, so even if we grant that small children and animals know quite a bit, that is no reason in itself to think that they must therefore have justified beliefs.

More important, though, is the following point. There is simply no reason whatsoever for

thinking that small children and animals do not have conscious experiences. There may be some further phenomenon that we may wish to call self-consciousness that we wish to deny to small children and animals, but self-consciousness and consciousness should not be identified. One might worry that the self-representational theory of conscious experience employed here reduces all consciousness to self-consciousness, but such a conclusion would be incredibly hasty at this point. Hence, the charge of overintellectualizing experience is misplaced. Having the kind of awareness of self involved in conscious experience in no way commits one to the view that the self-consciousness displayed by reflective adult humans is also displayed by Lassie and Trigger (well, maybe by Lassie: his mental abilities seem to surpass most of ours. . .).

The original problem though was how to account for the role of experience in justification, when the idea was to rely on propositional contents alone. The answer is that the content of experience is self-referential in character, so that either it can't be taken up into any other mental state other than experiential states, or if it can, it can't be taken up into the belief box without making the belief obviously incoherent. The belief would be a belief to the effect that this very experience has a certain content, but that claim needn't be thought of as a content of a belief acceptable to count as evidence, since it is so obviously incoherent.

The other part of the Sellars' Problem insists that experiences need to be appropriate to their environment in order to justify anything, but that if they need to be appropriate, they are subject to some normative assessment, and thus that they will have contents that need themselves to be justified. This point is, I believe, simply mistaken. The worry can only be that allowing any and every conscious experience to function justificationaly will leave us unable to explain

what is wrong with beliefs by psychologically abnormal individuals. Such a complaint is, however, confused. There are many ways in which psychologically abnormal beliefs can be subjected to criticism, and it is a poverty to think that normative evaluation can only proceed through the concepts of justification and rationality. So there is no need to require that an experience be appropriate to an environment before allowing it to function justificationaly.

Even given this endorsement of full subjectivity at the experiential level, there is a further problem concerning appearance states that are not experiential states. It seems to me that Bush is deluded, but this seeming state may not itself be an experiential state. It may be that the seeming state that is generated as an offshoot of the conclusion I've come to from the experiences I have had. Those experiences have confirmed for me that Bush is deluded, and now it also seems to me that he is (which is typical of beliefs states, though of course not necessary). We get a type of conservatism in epistemology if we let these latter seeming states count as evidence, since they are generated on the basis of or in conjunction with the belief in question. That sounds problematic, and if it is, we need to distinguish between belief-based seemings and phenomenal seemings, with only the latter suitably counted as containing evidential contents.

The lesson, then, is that even if we endorse full subjectivity in the theory of justification by insisting that conscious experiences, no matter how bizarre or abnormal, can still function as (defeasible) evidence for belief, such full subjectivity does not require us to draw no distinctions among appearance states in the story of justification. There is, of course, no reason to saddle propositionalism with any particular answer to the question of which conscious appearance states are allowed to function as evidence and which are not, but the point to note is only that an appropriately subjective approach to the role of conscious experience in the theory of

justification does not require that each and every conscious appearance state be treated the same.

Conclusion

Propositionalism is the view that the fundamental items to which the epistemic property of justification attaches are propositions. It comes in a variety of forms, but the purest form is where the fundamental property of justification is taken to be a relation on items of the same kind—namely, propositions. One reason is that doing so allows a strong relationship between the theory of justification and more standard confirmation theory where claims are confirmed and disconfirmed by information gleaned from experiments and other sources. Information, however, is propositional, and it is a natural and pleasing result if confirmation theory can be embedded within the theory of justification developed in the context of more traditional epistemology. The most difficult problem for a pure form of propositionalism, however, is what to say about the role of experience in the story of justification. The usual way of doing so is to adopt a form of doxastic coherentism, in which nothing but beliefs can play any justificatory role at all. I have not argued against such forms of coherentism here, but the literature is filled with embarrassing moments for such a view. My goal has been to grant the point that experience plays a role and see if the pure form of propositionalism can be defended anyway. Recent work on the self-reflexive character of conscious experience provides a metaphysical underpinning for such a view, since it provides content suitable for explaining why the content of an experience can play a different functional role in the story of justification than any belief with the same content.

Endnotes

1. In "The Basic Notion of Justification," Christopher Menzel, co-author, *Philosophical Studies* 59 (1990), pp. 235-261; *The Intellectual Virtues and the Life of the Mind: On the Place of the Virtues in Contemporary Epistemology*, (Savage, Maryland, 1992); "Plantinga's Proper Function Theory of Warrant," *Warrant and Contemporary Epistemology*, J.L. Kvanvig, ed., (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); "Zagzebski on Justification," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 60 (2000), pp. 191-196; "Propositionalism and the Perspectival Character of Justification," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 40.1 (2003), pp. 3-18; and "Simple Reliabilism and Agent Reliabilism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 66.2 (2003), pp. 451-457.
2. The details of the argument can be found in "The Basic Notion of Justification."
3. Alvin Goldman, "What is Justified Belief?" in George Pappas, ed., *Knowledge and Justification*, (Dordrecht, 1979), pp. 1-25; and *Epistemology and Cognition* (Cambridge, 1985).
4. Ernest Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective: Selected Essays in Epistemology*, (London, 1991).
5. Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*, (Cambridge, 1981).
6. Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate and Warrant and Proper Function*, (Oxford, 1993).
7. John Pollock, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*, (Totowa, New Jersey, 1986).
8. The source of the argument that counterfactual accounts are nearly always inadequate is Robert Shope's "The Conditional Fallacy in Contemporary Philosophy," *Journal of Philosophy* 75 (1979), pp. 397-413.
9. The *locus classicus* of this problem can be found in Wilfrid Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," in *The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Vol. I*, ed. by H. Feigl and M. Scriven

(Minneapolis, 1956).

10. The challenge is expressed very clearly in "Belief Revision and Epistemology," co-authored with Anthony Gillies, *Synthese* 122 (2000), 69-92.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 74 Pollock and Gillies write, "Reasoning begins with percepts and moves to beliefs. Most reasoning is from beliefs to beliefs. When the belief that P provides a reason for believing Q , we can conveniently express this by saying that P is a reason for Q , but it must be borne in mind that it is really the beliefs, and not their contents, that are reasons for each other."

As an aside, however, it is worth noting that later in the this paper (section 3.4), Pollock and Gillies allow that things that are not believed can function as defeaters, and defeaters are reasons of a certain sort. Some defeaters are *provisional defeaters* and they prompt the following remark: "Thus more than beliefs (undefeated conclusions) must be included in a representation of an agent's epistemological state." If so, however, reasons are not always in the form of beliefs or experiences, though nothing of interest to Pollock's project seems to turn on this point.

12. See Uriah Kriegel, "The Same-Order Monitoring Theory of Consciousness," in U. Kriegel and K. Williford, eds., *Self-Representational Approaches to Consciousness*, (Cambridge, MA, forthcoming).

13. Uriah Kriegel, "Consciousness as Intransitive Self-Consciousness," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 33 (2003), pp. 103-132.