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# THE DOXASTIC ZOO

Pascal Engel

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## *Summary*

*The doxastic zoo contains many animals: belief, acceptance, belief in, belief that, certainty, conjecture, guess, conviction, denial, disbelief in, disbelief that, judgment, commitment, etc. It also contains belief's "strange bedfellows": credences, partial beliefs, tacit beliefs, subdoxastic states, creedal feelings, feelings of knowing, in-between believings, pathological beliefs, phobias, aliefs, delusions, biases, besires. How to order the zoo? I propose to distinguish doxastic attitudes from non-doxastic epistemic attitudes. The criterion is the existence of correctness conditions. Most bedfellows do not have such normative conditions. So they should not be allowed in the Doxastic Club.*

Key words:

Belief, doxastic attitudes, propositional attitudes, norms, judgment

## ***1. Introduction : the menagerie of belief***

The task of classifying the species of belief seems to elude us. The very idea of asking what one believes at a given time, or how many beliefs a person has, or even whether someone believes rather than is in another state with respect to a given content, seems not to make real sense. Nevertheless we ascribe beliefs to ourselves and to others, we talk of acquiring or losing them, and we give them a number of properties, such as being silly or wise, rational or not, justified or not. Some philosophers tell us that belief is such simple and unanalysable notion that it cannot be defined.<sup>2</sup> Others, like Wittgenstein, suggest that it is so diverse that the best that we can say is that it consists in a motley of psychological states,

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<sup>1</sup> Versions of this article were presented in 2012 at the SIFA conference in Alghero, and in the Brazilian conference on analytic philosophy in Fortaleza. I thank my friends and participants for their invitations and comments.

The nature of belief and judgment are topics on which Eva Picardi wrote in various ways. I learnt a lot from her. It has been a great luck for me to come to know her.

<sup>2</sup> Hume, *Inquiry* (II) Mill (Mill 1843, book I, ch. v, § 1, :88), Brentano (1874, I, 64) and Stout (1896: 99) take belief and judgment to be primitive and undefinable. Cf Van De Schaar, 2013.

which bear with each other only family resemblances. But, as J.N. Findlay (1962: 94) remarked, this kind of answer is no answer, since it attempts to dispel our sense of unity inadequately brought out in a range of cases, without showing this sense to be ill founded. "Belief" may not be defined, but it indicates a place in the map of the mind, and we can at least indicate the role of this state among other states. I cannot here give a full picture of the family tree of belief, but at least hope to give a profile of this animal within the doxastic zoo.

Part of the difficulty comes from the fact that belief does not stand on its own among other mental states. Many psychological attitudes are related to belief, in the sense that they are often species of belief, or involve the possession of belief. In the most general sense, belief involves assent, or holding-true a proposition. Beliefs vary depending on the nature of the expression or vehicle. Believing may be a mere disposition to act, with no conscious or verbal expression. It may be merely tacit. It may be an inner conscious assent in the mind without verbal expression. It may be expressed in an act of linguistic assertion. It may be occurrent or long-standing. It may vary in degrees, ranging from merely subjective opinion, as a conjecture or hypothesis, a mere guessing, or a firm conviction. These degrees may depend on the weight of the evidence that subjects claim to have, in which case the beliefs are held with more or less confidence or certainty. But can these degrees of confidence be quantified? Are there degrees of beliefs and credences? Beliefs can also be associated to voluntary acts, as in judgments, decisions as acceptances, commitments, takings for granted, postulations and presupposition, anticipations or presumptions. They can be more or less firm, such as doubts, conjectures and convictions. There are attitudes related to beliefs or based on beliefs, although distinct from them, such as noticings, perceivings, intentions, regrets, hopes, expectations, or indeed judging. All of these attitudes may be related to different epistemic sources and variously to knowledge, to different emotions, they can be more or less firm, more or less long-lived. Some may be so deeply entrenched, such as "hinge propositions" that many philosophers do not take them as beliefs. All of these kinds of belief-like attitude I shall call beliefs' *cousins*. In what sense are they beliefs, and if they are, how do they relate to this genus? What is the shape of the family, and how remote are the cousins? Such questions have resurfaced very often in the history of philosophy, but they have become even more complex when contemporary epistemology and psychology have investigated various kinds of mental states, which one might call belief's "strange bedfellows" (Bayne (2014). First, there are the "tacit beliefs" (Lycan 1985), which that one has not never thought about but that one is disposed to believe when told, such as "Kant's earlobe is saller than the Sea of Tranquility".

There are “subdoxastic states” (Stich 1986) , which are informations, and perhaps representations, processed in our perceptual or memory systems when we perform various cognitive tasks (such as sketches in visual processing, or “mental models” in reasoning) but which are not properly believed. There are delusions, or pathological beliefs, such as Capgras’ syndrom, where people “believe” that their friends or family have been replaced by impostors, or Cotard’s delusion, where people “believe” that they are dead (Davies and Stone 1992, Bayne and Pacherie 2006). There are the “feelings of knowing” (Koriat 2005), feelings of familiarity, of “déjà-vu” or of strangeness. Finally, there are the so-called *aliefs* (Gendler 2008), which include phobias, and various emotion-induced feelings and representations, and *biases* which are supposed to influence our attitudes and our reasoning about various subject matters (Brownstein and Saul 2015) . In each of these cases, there is a debate as to whether such states are beliefs at all. These issues loom large in contemporary philosophy of mind and epistemology, and I cannot hope to solve these problems case by case, or to go into the widely discussed topics of the relations between belief and emotion, belief and inference, belief and mental representation, belief and the will, which stand behind these issues<sup>5</sup>. Nor do I hope to produce a full taxonomy of belief-attitudes or of the doxastic realm. My main aim here is to discuss the methodology of the philosophy of belief, one of the main problems of which is to establish a classification of beliefs and other related attitudes. I shall try to give a criterion to individuate beliefs and locate them with respect to other epistemic attitudes.

## ***2. What’s in a belief, that ink may character?***

Let us try to give the usual profile of belief. This should not be a definition, but a set of characteristics which are typically ascribed to beliefs. These are the following:

- (i) Representational content: Beliefs are attitudes with a (linguistic or not) content
- (ii) Direction of fit: beliefs “aim at truth” and are supposed to be adapted to the world
- (ii) Causal or motivational profile: beliefs are dispositions to act as if their contents were true
- (iv) Reason and evidence: beliefs are supposed to have reasons, which consist in evidence
- (v) Involuntariness: belief are not (normally) under the control of the will
- (vi) Degree: beliefs have degrees, in being more or less certain
- (vi) Inferential integration: beliefs are supposed to be inferentially coherent

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<sup>5</sup> I have often discussed these issues , e.g in Engel 1998, 1999, 2000, 2013, *to appear*

- (vi) Immediate access: most beliefs can be in principle consciously accessed
- (vii) Context independence: believing is not relative to context
- (vii) Emotional impact: beliefs have at least some causal relations with emotions
- (viii) Phenomenology: some beliefs at least have a certain phenomenology.

These traits have to be spelled out through various theories of belief, which conflict on crucial points. Thus dispositional or functionalist theories emphasise the dispositional and causal features of beliefs, which entail that they are not necessarily conscious and that they are necessarily action-oriented, whereas “Cartesian” theories stress this very feature and say that the practical properties of belief are not primary. Some philosophers deny that beliefs have degrees, while others take the latter to be degrees of subjective probability. Some take belief contents to be semantic, meaning that they are necessarily linguistic. Some hold that beliefs can be voluntary. Not all theorists agree that beliefs have a specific connection to emotions and have a phenomenology. In spite of these differences, everyone agrees that at least some beliefs possess some of these features. Moreover these features apply mostly to *rational* beliefs, those which are supposed to be true, consciously accessible, held for reasons, and inferentially coherent, whereas the strange bedfellows are most of the time *irrational* beliefs, if they are beliefs at all. Some, perhaps most, beliefs arise from causes which have nothing to do with the evidence or reasons that one has for them. Some people are prone to wishful thinking and do not care for having true beliefs. Most religious beliefs are not held for reasons having to do with evidence or coherence. This raises the question whether these eight features can really characterize beliefs in general. As soon as one raises such questions, one is tempted to locate the characteristics under another heading: acceptances, commitments, credences, etc., which in turn differ from credences and dispositional beliefs. Are these *modes* of belief or distinctive *kinds* of doxastic states? A mere taxonomy, however, cannot solve a philosophical problem.

Our problem is to individuate beliefs and to locate them within the broader territory of propositional attitudes, and most specifically of epistemic attitudes. The latter are attitudes aimed at truth and that depend upon evidence. In this respect, not only belief, but also perception, judgment, inference, supposition, some cases of imagination, and knowledge itself can count as epistemic attitudes. But there is a problem about the frontiers of the epistemic domain. Not only is belief sometimes hard to distinguish from other attitudes, but it is also central to other psychological states, which often presuppose the possession of beliefs. Perceiving as an experience is not believing, but it often depends on beliefs and leads to

beliefs. To be surprised is to discover that P when one believed that not P. Imagining is not believing but is hard to understand without the existence of belief. Can one have desires without having beliefs about what one desires? Most attitudes and emotions presuppose belief: if one regrets something, one believes that it is the case and desires that it had not been the case, , if one is angry at someone, one believes that someone did something offensive, , etc. Belief is as much characterized by its causal and logical links with other attitudes as it is characterisable as a single and isolated state.

So why not characterize belief in functional terms instead of trying to define belief, by describing it as the state which is the conjunction of the platitudes (i)-(viii), conjoined in a Ramsey sentence? It would look like this:

( $\exists$  S) such that ( $\forall$  X) ( $\forall$  p)

- (i) X is in some state which represents p
- (ii) If X believes that p x is disposed to act as if p
- (iii) X believes that p on the basis of evidence
- (iv) If X believes that p, p is not under the control of X's will
- (v) if X believes that p and q can be inferred from p X is disposed to believe that q
- (vi) If x believes that p, x is disposed to be in some emotional state
- (vii) X believes that (s)he believes p
- (viii) If X believes that p, there is a certain phenomenology.

These are the most common features of belief, and its cousins and bedfellows instantiate them in most, but not all cases. The minimal core of beliefhood would be the representational property (i) and causal functional property (ii): belief is a kind of contentful state which has certain causes and certain effects. This very wide characterization would certainly allow us to include among beliefs the so-called “aliefs”, such as the kind of vertigo which one often experiences in elevators with glass floors, epistemic feelings such as *déjà vu*, as well as attitudes like acceptance, where one can take a proposition for granted without believing it. Such states share some of the characteristics of the general profile (i)-(viii), but not all: they involve representations, have a causal profile, a phenomenology and an emotional tone, but they are not in general associated with a reflective mode or with a rational and evidential role. But this functionalist strategy yields too loose a categorization. Virtually every state which involves a belief, either as a cause or as a consequence, becomes a belief. Thus attitudes such as hope, regret and a number of emotions also involve the minimal core of representation *cum*

causal profile, but it would be wrong to include these within beliefs. If, however, we cut our doxastic cake too narrowly and exclude from the doxastic club all but the states which conform to the (i)-(viii) features, we risk chauvinism. Moreover, we should not multiply kinds of beliefs beyond necessity. Consider cases of negligence or forgetfulness. I take my broken watch for repair at the watchmaker. A few moments after leaving the shop, I want to know what time it is, and consult my empty wrist: I forgot that I had left my watch for repair. Do I believe that my watch is on my wrist or not? Maloney (1990) suggests that there are two kinds of beliefs, those which are dispositional and action-oriented and not necessarily conscious (“A-Beliefs”) and those which are consciously entertained or accessible (“C-Beliefs”). A very simple-minded reaction would be to say that I believed that my watch was on repair, but forgot it, hence temporarily ceased to believe it, or revised my belief. Is it necessary here to postulate two kinds of beliefs? It is always costly to posit too many entities, but such examples are enough to show that among the features (i)-(viii) one can privilege the dispositional and motivational ones, or those which stress the conscious, linguistically manifestable aspects. The philosophy of belief in this sense is not exceptional in leading to an opposition between the functionalist third-person perspective on the mind and the first-person “Cartesian” perspective. If we privilege the former, we take belief to be mostly a dispositional/ causal profile, and take accessible beliefs to be merely epiphenomenal. Thus we are able to include many states which, like aliefs, delusions and epistemic feelings, are unconscious or semi-conscious, but we run the risk of excluding those beliefs which are the products of our commitments and of our “judgment sensitive attitudes” (Scanlon 1998)<sup>8</sup>. Alternatively, we could envisage a third category: Dennett (1978) talks of “opinions”, Sperber (1985) talks of “quasi-beliefs”, and Schwitzgebel (2001) talks of “in-between believings”. These might be located in between the conscious and dispositional ones. Dennett has a distinction between beliefs as well entrenched dispositions, and “opinions” which are merely verbal and short-lived assents to a sentence. Of many of the contents which float in our minds we are unsure whether they are beliefs or not, in the sense of being apt to be expressed as assertions. As Bernard Williams says: “It is far from being true that every thought swimming around in one’s mind is already the content of a belief as opposed to some other mental state such as a guess, a fancy, or (very importantly) a wish. [...] in many ...cases, it is not merely that we do not know what we believe (though this is of course often true), but that a given content has not come to be a belief at all.” (Williams 2002: 82)

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<sup>8</sup> A number of writers have emphasized this dimension of belief: Cohen 1992, Hieronymi 2007, Gilbert 2013, Holton 2014

So the category of “in between believings” is very large indeed. It contains all our short-lived assents, our tacit beliefs and it can include aliefs and other epistemic feelings or emotions. The problem with the strategy of dubbing these beliefs “in-between” is not that such phenomena aren’t real, but that it is difficult to suppose that there is a specific category of intermediate believings. Aren’t in one sense *all* believings “in between” believings? But if we make this move, we simply rehearse the functionalist strategy: for the intermediary beliefs are those which possess all the features of belief which are action-oriented. How to draw the line? Compare with colours (Zimmermann 2008). We can improve our colour scheme by locating an intermediary colour, say purple, between blue and indigo. But we cannot improve the scheme by adding a colour dubbed “in between blue and red”. If we apply this strategy to belief we are led to ask whether the state of mind a person is in is a belief. We could improve the scheme by showing that there are genuine psychological states, presumably physical, which underpin the so-called “in-between believings”. The notion of “in-between believing” at best deflates our attempt to taxonomise the varieties of beliefs, and at worst has eliminativist consequences. For it acknowledges that most of what we call “belief” does not fall within one category or another, and is at best a mere instrument of prediction at the service of an “intentional stance”. The only way in which we could remove this fuzziness is by locating the neurophysical states responsible for the entities of our folk psychology. We would encounter the same sort of problems if we used a distinct scheme, such as the one inspired by the famous “two minds” or “two systems” view of cognition advocated (Kahneman 2010) Should we say that there are two kinds of beliefs, those which are the products of System 1 and those which are the products of system 2? The same problem would arise if we managed to locate beliefs within three familiar divisions of the brain: procedural with the cortex cerebellum and striatum, declarative with the hippocampus, emotional with the amygdala. Should we say that dispositional beliefs are in the first, conscious and asserted beliefs in the second, and that all the strange bedfellows, such as aliefs and feelings, are in the third? Or should we say that there is only one kind, belief, which spreads over the three brain systems? Such divisions do not help.

We find similar difficulties when trying to add a new kind of animal to our doxastic zoo, *credences*. Credences are not beliefs, in the sense of full beliefs, but degrees of belief or partial beliefs, the states in which we are when we are not fully confident that a certain proposition is true. According the Bayesians, these degrees are degrees of probability. Notice



that, for Bayesians, all beliefs are *essentially* probabilistic. Probability is not in the content of some beliefs, but in the attitude of belief itself. It is not that we believe that something is, say, 0.5, or 0.7 probable. It is that we have a 0.5 or 0.7 credence in it happening. Every belief is thus a probabilistic belief (even if the credence happens to be 1 or 0). But the same problem as with in-between belief arises: should we say that full belief and full disbelief are a degree of belief 1 and 0, that half beliefs are not beliefs? Or should we say that there are full or all-out beliefs which do not have degrees on the one hand and credences or degrees of belief on the other hand (Kaplan 1996)? These difficulties are well known. But for our purposes here, which have to do with descriptive and psychological adequacy, the main difficulty is that Bayesianism is implausible if it amounts to the reductive claim that *all beliefs*, and all the members of the doxastic family, have degrees which are degrees of probability. Bayesianism may be defended as a theory of what rational belief ought to be, but not as a descriptive theory. A lot of psychological work shows that humans are not good Bayesians, and that full beliefs cannot be reduced to partial beliefs (Holton 2015). If we want to preserve the idea that credences are a specific kind of belief, we have to say that they refer to one kind of belief only, perhaps a certain kind of dispositional belief, whereas our flat-out or full beliefs constitute another kind.<sup>10</sup>

These considerations favor a pluralistic or layered view of belief and its cousins and bedfellows, each forming a specific kind. Chauvinism, which reduces belief to one privileged dimension would leave out too much. The deflationary functionalist strategy leads to the view that there are no real differences between beliefs proper and in-between beliefs. It unifies the domain of belief-attitudes at the cost of blurring the categories: we lack any proper way of individuating beliefs and distinguishing them from their subspecies. Nor can we classify beliefs into dualistic schemes, such as those which have a definite dispositional profile in opposition to those which are conscious or accessible to reflection, or between full beliefs and credences. For these divisions are not exhaustive. We need a better criterion.

### ***3. A normative account of belief***

The account of belief I propose belongs to the “essentialist” (Hazlett (2013)): it takes belief to have a distinctive nature, which allows us to set this attitude apart from other doxastic attitudes and from the bedfellows. The main argument in favour of this view is that the list of platitudes (i)- (viii) leaves out the normative dimension of belief. We evaluate beliefs as

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<sup>10</sup> Leitgeb 2017 defends this “independence option”.

rational or irrational, as justified or not, as well confirmed or not, as good or bad to have, as obligatory or not. Mere feelings, experiences, dispositions, or mental episodes, are not evaluated as good or bad: one can only say that one has them, or that one tends to have them in many circumstances. The same would be true about sentiments in the moral domain: if these were mere psychological states of approval, we could not say that they are good or bad, rational or not, evaluable as right or wrong. The same applies to belief. It involves a normative essence. States that conform to one or the other of the features (i)-(viii), may resemble belief and sometimes are called “beliefs”, but if they are merely defined in causal terms, they will be called “beliefs” only by courtesy. Without the normative dimension, a mental state, however close to belief, is not a belief. This is not to deny that belief has a causal and natural profile. Beliefs can have all sorts of causes and effects and are psychological states in the mind. But *qua* beliefs, they are evaluable. A state which one could not characterise *both* in causal and in normative terms would not be a belief.<sup>11</sup>

What kind of normative properties are distinctive of belief? Evaluative or axiological ones, such as good or bad, valuable or not valuable? Or deontic ones, such as right or wrong, correct or incorrect? Some philosophers prefer the concept of *reason*. There are a number of debates on this issue. One way to avoid these debates is to use a generic notion, that of *correctness*. The normative properties relevant for attitudes are *correctness properties*, and that such properties involve the presence of specific *norms*. Belief is governed by a norm of truth: *a belief is correct if and only if it is true*. The exact form of the norm, and the kind of guidance which it is supposed to give us is a matter of discussion.<sup>12</sup> This norm is unique to belief, and sorts it out from the other attitudes and belief-like states. I defend two claims:

- (i) All attitudes have specific correctness conditions
- (ii) Belief is the only attitude whose correctness condition is truth.

The correctness condition of an attitude is the condition in which it is appropriate or “fit” to its object. This is related to the familiar idea of the “directions of fit” of attitudes, but it is distinct: directions of fit are supposed to be either mind-to-world (epistemic attitudes) or world-to-mind (conative attitudes), but within attitudes of each kind there can be distinct kinds of objects to which they are fit. Each kind of attitude has a certain typical object, to which it is supposed to adapt or which is adapted to it. This object is neither the *type* of

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<sup>11</sup> *Contra* see Bennett 1991 and Papineau’s 2013.

<sup>12</sup> See Bykvist & Hattiangadi 2007, Mc Hugh 2010,

intentional or propositional content of the attitude nor its *token* content (e.g. beliefs as a type have an intentional content, which in a particular occasion may be such or such a proposition). Intentional content is not individuating of the attitudes, for the same intentional content can be the object of different attitudes. Thus I can believe that Trump is president, desire that Trump is president, be horrified that Trump is president, regret that Trump is president, etc. And attitudes are not individuated by their intentional content since a single attitude, say desire, can have many different intentional contents. The correctness thesis says that there are types of content which are appropriate to each attitude. It is better formulated in terms of the traditional distinction between the *formal object* of an attitude and its intentional object.<sup>13</sup> The formal object of an attitude is the kind of object to which typically the attitude is directed to. It contrasts with its particular object, which is the specific object of the attitude in a given circumstance. This idea is more familiar in the case of emotions. The formal objects of emotions are in general evaluative properties. Thus the formal object of fear is what is *fearable*, the formal object of love is what is *lovable*, etc. The particular object of fear could be on a given occasion an earthquake, a monster or a spider. The particular object of love could be Juliet or Romeo or my cat Felix. If we extend this to other attitudes we would say that the formal object of desire is what is desirable, and that the particular objects of desire could be a beautiful person or a big amount of money. The objects may be individuals, propositions or states of affairs. Thus one can be afraid that an earthquake arrives, or that a spider is on the wall, or desire that Juliet loves one. The obvious problem with this proposal is that it looks trivial or false, since there does not seem to be a class of things which objectively have these evaluative properties. Some spiders are worthy of fear, others not, some people or animals are worthy of love, others not. But let us leave that difficulty aside, and let us see how it can apply to epistemic attitudes. The formal object of belief is not the believable, since any proposition can be in principle believed (except perhaps paradoxical ones, such as “This proposition is believed by no one”). Rather, it is truth, and truth makes the attitude properly *epistemic*. The fact that truth is the formal object of an attitude should not be confused with the fact that a number of attitudes which are not epistemic can be expressed as having a propositional content. Thus conative attitudes have this feature – to desire that P is often to desire that P *is true*, to hope that P is to hope that P *is true* – and a number of attitudes or emotions such as imagining, fearing, can take propositional complements. Neither is the fact that the formal object of an epistemic attitude is truth to be confused with its direction of fit.

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<sup>13</sup> The distinction is a medieval one, taken up by Brentano and his disciples, reintroduced by Kenny 1963 See also De Sousa 2005, Teroni 2007, Mulligan 2007..

Why? Because the fact that one can construe attitude verbs with a propositional complement, hence with contents susceptible of being true or false, does not imply that the direction of fit and the formal object of these attitudes is truth. Although imagining involves a relation to propositions – one can imagine that one is an Oxford don, or that China invades the U.S – is it not clear that the *aim* of imagining is truth, *i.e.*, that one imagines that P *with the aim of accepting P only if it is true* (Velleman 2000). One can perfectly imagine or hope situations one does not believe or imagine to be true: the point of imagination and of hope is to be able to do so. The potentially propositional nature of the content of such attitudes entails that the predicate *is true* can automatically be affixed to these contents. But it does not entail that their formal object is truth. The formal object of an attitude is the object to which the attitude is “fitted” in the sense of being the *appropriate* or *correct* one, for this attitude. Correctness is the feature an attitude has when it is fit to its formal object. But the latter is not the direction of fit. We should distinguish the correctness condition from the *satisfaction* condition. In the case of belief and other epistemic attitudes, the satisfaction condition is that the belief is true or that the corresponding state of affairs obtains. It is, as Mulligan (2007) puts it, *because* the belief is true that it is satisfied. In the case of a desire, or a hope, or a wish, the satisfaction is that desire, the hope or the wish be satisfied or realized. In the case of conjectures, these are satisfied when they are probable. But the belief, or the desire, may be satisfied by sheer luck: for instance my belief that  $225+333 = 558$  may be satisfied by pure guess. The correctness condition says more: it says that if one has a belief P it *ought to be true* if it is to fulfill its satisfaction condition. So the satisfaction condition involves necessarily a normative term. It does not matter at this point whether this term is a deontic or an evaluative one, and what kind of guidance it can give to believers<sup>15</sup>. But it has to capture the idea that the attitude *requires* a certain kind of object and that the object *has* to be appropriate to the kind of attitude. So this formal object is a normative property.

Contrast now belief with different attitudes. Some attitudes, like conjectures, hypotheses, suppositions, assumptions<sup>16</sup> and possibly guesses, do not have truth as their formal object and as what fulfills their correctness condition: their formal object is what is probable. This is very plausibly the case for credences, or states of confidence. Conative attitudes have distinctive formal objects, which are plausibly the good, or the appearance (the guise) of the good.<sup>17</sup> Interrogative attitudes such as questions have as formal object what is question-

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<sup>15</sup> See Glüer and Wikforss 2009, Steglich-Pedersen 2010.

<sup>16</sup> On assumptions see Meinong 1902.

<sup>17</sup> Velleman 2000, Deonna and Lauria 2017.

worthy or questionable, doubts have as formal objects what is doubt-worthy or doubtable. Emotions have value properties as formal objects, and are correct when these objects are appropriate (Teroni 2007). I shall not here attempt to offer a list. Let us consider now belief. Why is it special among the attitudes? The formal object of belief, as an epistemic attitude, is truth. Other epistemic attitudes, such as perceivings, noticings, discoverings, surprises, some kinds of suppositions and hypotheses, and indeed knowledge can have truth as their formal object. Surprises are plausibly epistemic emotions, which arise from a contrast between what one believes to be true and what one expected to be true. But the correctness of a belief is specific. It does not consist simply in the fact that it is “aimed at truth” in the sense that it has a direction of fit. It consists in the fact that, as Williams says, it is a “fatal” flaw for a belief to be false: something is wrong, in the sense that the belief cannot be held or maintained if it is shown to be false. Belief is the only attitude which is correct only if true. The correctness condition involves the nature of the success of the attitude. A belief is successful if true, and it fails if false. In a sense truth as the correctness or success condition seems to apply as well to suppositions, guesses, or surprises. A guess which is true is indeed successful, as well as a supposition. But one can make a good guess which does not hit truth, and which is only almost true. And one can suppose successfully without one’s supposition being true. One can be surprised at something which turns out to be false. The success of a guess or of a supposition does not depend crucially on its being true, but on the way in which evidence has been collected. Indeed the best suppositions are those which are true, but a supposition which turns out to be false is not necessarily wrong. Imagining has an intentional object, and to imagine that P is to imagine that P is true, but the success of an act of imagination does not depend on it delivering true outputs. The correctness condition of supposing consists in respecting a different norm from truth: evidence. Evidence is indeed evidence for truth, but supposing, can be successful even when the truth target is not hit. Similarly for guessing: a true guess is indeed successful, but it is not simply correct when true. Thus in a quiz it is as important to guess quickly as to guess truly (Owens 2003). Belief, in contrast, is correct if and only if true. There is no room for balancing the aim of truth, or the correctness condition of being true, with other aims<sup>18</sup>. This sets belief apart from other epistemic attitudes. A question might arise, however, about knowledge. Isn’t its correctness condition truth? Indeed it is, but its correctness condition is *automatically* fulfilled: knowledge is factive, since it entails the

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<sup>18</sup> Engel 2013, 2013 a, *contra*, Reisner 2008.

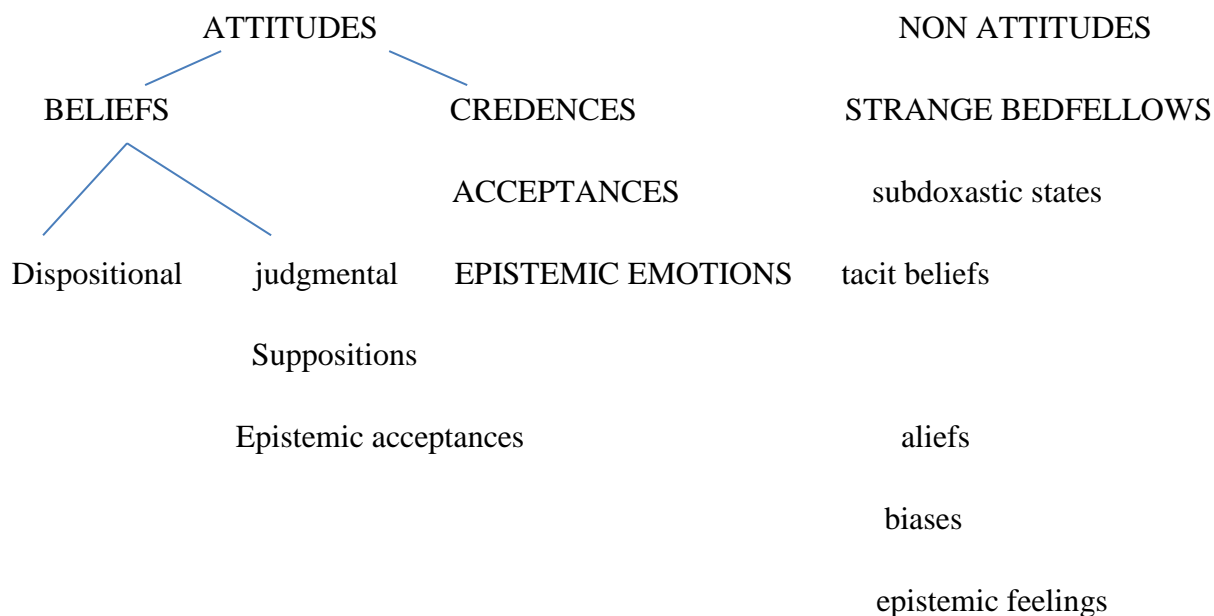
truth of the content. This is not the case for belief. Thus, knowledge and belief share their correctness condition, although in the case of knowledge this condition cannot fail to obtain

#### 4. *The doxastic taxonomy revisited*

The taxonomy I propose does not amount to a theory of belief, but it presupposes it. In the first place, I reject eliminativism: I take most states admitted by common sense psychology to be real. I am less sure, however, that the states which philosophers have designated as “in-between” beliefs or “aliefs” belong to the doxastic zoo, although these may be close of some species (for alief, close to beliefs and to emotions). Second, I agree with the functionalists, pragmatists and dispositionalists about belief that belief is at least a disposition to act and is in part individuated by its causal role. Belief is certainly a complex, multitrack disposition (Ryle 1949)., But this does not place it apart from other dispositional states, such as epistemic feelings and epistemic emotions, such as surprise, wonder, or feelings of familiarity. Nor does the dispositional theory allow us to differentiate belief from such strange bedfellows as “aliefs”, tacit beliefs, and biases on the one hand, for all these states have a behavioral and dispositional profile. The dispositionalist view does not allow us to distinguish belief from the higher-order judgmental attitudes such as suppositions, conjectures, acceptances, commitments, because these states are clearly not simply dispositions to act. The criterion I have proposed is: *belief is the only attitude whose correctness condition is truth*. This separates off belief from states which are not attitudes and most of its strange bedfellows. There are no correctness conditions for epistemic feelings, such as feelings of familiarity, feelings of knowing or feelings of *déjà vu* (Dokic 2012): these can be successful, and make us able to locate in memory the content we try to retrieve, but they can also fail to deliver any content. There is no rule or norm for their success, or any condition which could constitute what it is for such states to be correct. They are not *attitudes* at all, since it is not clear that they have a propositional content. They certainly are based on some kind of evidence, but it is always unclear where this evidence lies for the agent, and to what use it can be put to infer anything. It is not even clear what their contents are, and in this sense they do not have formal objects. They do not have reasons, and cannot be held for a reason. Their content in some cases is exhausted by their phenomenology, and we can therefore be skeptical that there be a “cognitive phenomenology” in their case (Bayne and Montague 2012). One may doubt that aliefs and tacit beliefs be kinds of belief, in spite of the fact that they may involve or be

related to beliefs (*ditto* for biases). I would also reject delusions as clear cases of beliefs, although I would be prepared to take them into an intermediary status (Bayne and Pacherie 2005) because they do not have correctness conditions. By disqualifying most of the bedfellows as beliefs and as attitudes and by excluding them from the doxastic club, it seems that I take as the criterion of an attitude the fact that these are under the agent's control and that one can be responsible of the attitude that one takes. This is true of some attitudes, those of the judgmental kind, but not of all attitudes. Emotions, by most criteria, are attitudes which have correctness conditions and formal objects. But in most cases we do not control our emotions and are not responsible for them. Epistemic emotions, such as surprise and wonder, are not attitudes for which we are responsible, or which involve any kind of agency. But like all emotions, including non-epistemic ones, they are based on beliefs which are their cognitive bases, even though they are not beliefs, because they do not have truth as their correctness condition. Nor can we include *hinges* within beliefs. They do not have truth and correctness conditions, are not subject to epistemic norms, and in this sense are not attitudes at all (Engel 2015).

In driving a wedge between beliefs and their strange bedfellows, it seems that I exclude *credences* from beliefhood. Bayesians would disagree. Actually it is arguable that credences share a lot with beliefs in that they have correctness conditions, obey norms (Buchak 2014) and are sensitive to evidence and to principles of rationality. Thus, they are not strange bedfellows, but close cousins. Yet, by definition their correctness condition is not truth, but high probability. According to the normativity and correctness criterion proposed here, only judgmental attitudes or attitudes which are judgement-sensitive are beliefs properly so called: judgments, epistemic acceptances and commitments all qualify, because they all can be taken as premises for one's reasoning. These may or may not be voluntary in a strong sense: for some acceptances may be only implicit. But they are all categorical or all out, and do not have degrees. They are all subject to a correctness norm, which is truth. Some acceptances are pragmatic, contextual, and voluntary (Cohen 1992). In this sense they are not beliefs. But some kinds of acceptance, those which have an epistemic aim, such as hypothesizing, or taking certain things for granted, are clearly judgmental attitudes. On the basis of these classifications, one could try to give the following preliminary taxonomy:



A lot more should be said to refine these categories. To classify a state under the heading of *belief* implies that i) it has a causal role, iii) is non voluntary iii) is sensitive to reasons and to evidence, and most of all is an attitude which has truth as its correctness conditions. Some beliefs can be purely dispositional in the sense that they are revealed in behavior (including verbal) and are not reflectively conscious. Others are judgmental, in the sense that they are the object of a conscious and all-out assent (not necessarily verbal). They can be voluntary, not because they can be willed for non-epistemic reasons (such as pleasure or comfort), but because in holding them one commits oneself to them, and to the inferences to which they lead. Some of them are parts of rational plans and strategies, such as epistemic acceptances. Credences enjoy an intermediary status, being both very close to dispositional belief by being in large part non reflective, attitudinal, and normative. But their correctness condition, probability, is not truth, hence they are not beliefs. Pragmatic acceptances are attitudes with correctness conditions, aimed not at truth, but at utility. There can be also intermediary epistemic attitudes, such as conjectures, suppositions, expectations, presumptions and hypotheses, with correctness conditions, but not clearly truth oriented. Hypotheses are closer to epistemic acceptances, and presumptions closer to dispositional beliefs. But they are not judgmental in the sense that a thinker does not commit himself to them as he usually does in



the case of judgments. All other states fail, in one way or another, to be attitudes, to have correctness conditions, and to be evidence oriented. They are all epistemically loaded, as they involve the processing of information. They all have a causal and behavioral profile, but they do not involve the kind of assent, reason and normative basis that goes with belief. They can, phrase, constitute “seeds of knowledge”, but they are not in the business of knowing (Dokic (2012)).

I have not included knowledge among these attitudes because knowledge is, strictly speaking, neither a species of belief nor an attitude, although it entails belief. Knowledge entails truth, but it would be wrong to say that truth is its correctness condition. Knowledge is not only justified or warranted belief, but justified and warranted belief entailing truth. It is actually the norm of belief, what belief aspires to. Knowledge is the ideal of belief., I shall content myself to indicate how it relates to the nature of belief, when we compare it to other attitudes. Our attitudes, such as belief, desire, hope, etc., are associated to various presuppositions about the kinds of judgements, inferential relations, causal profiles, and strategies that they involve. These presuppositions are in many ways contingent and can vary, depending on social, historical, or cultural factors. They are in various ways tied to our nature, and can depend on all kinds of individuals’ circumstances: some people are afraid of spiders, many believe and desire weird things. These contingencies, however, do not affect the essence of belief. Each attitude has an ideal profile, one which it ought to have. It is particularly the case for belief: it is an attitude which is associated, implicitly or not, in a believer, to what he takes himself to believe, to what he considers that he ought to believe. I have called this feature here “correctness condition”, but one could call it the ideal of belief. This ideal gives to belief the primacy within the doxastic zoo. Ideals are limits, and one can be more or less far from the ideal. In the case of belief with respect to other epistemic and doxastic attitudes, the purest form of the ideal is *judgement* (Findlay 1962). The closer a belief kind of state is to this ideal, the closer it is to the core of believing. The farther it is from this ideal, the less it is part of the doxastic realm.

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