
THREE ARGUMENTS TO THINK THAT FAITH DOES *NOT* ENTAIL BELIEF

BY

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Abstract: On doxastic theories of propositional faith, necessarily, S has faith that p only if S believes that p. On nondoxastic theories of propositional faith, it's false that, necessarily, S has faith that p only if S believes that p. In this article, I defend three arguments for nondoxastic theories of faith and I respond to published criticisms of them.

1. *Introduction*

Pistology is on the rise. The study of the nature and value of faith was once the domain of biblical scholars, theologians, and the occasional philosopher of religion. Not anymore. Epistemologists, moral psychologists, and classicists, along with many philosophers of religion, have gotten into the act, in no small part because faith has become more readily seen as a widespread human phenomenon, rather than just a religious one, something at the center of human flourishing, not just religious flourishing – a view the ancient Greeks and Romans held, a view in recovery today (Morgan, 2015; Preston-Roedder, 2018; Tsai, 2017).

This renewed scholarly interest in faith thought of as a psychological attitude, state, orientation, or trait that can have secular contents or objects, not just religious ones, parallels recent social trends. One example: in his farewell speech, Barack Obama uses the *faith* lexicon seven times, but only once with religious content. He speaks of 'faith in reason and enterprise, and the primacy of right over might,' of 'faith in America and in Americans,' of 'faith ... in the power of ordinary Americans to bring about change,' and the like. Another example, recent media headlines: 'The June internationals offered a chance for the Wallabies to restore some faith in the Australian game'

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(*Reuters*), ‘Liverpool to Test Wenger’s Faith in Three-Man Defence’ (*Reuters*), ‘Australian Friendliness, Shopping, Faith in Government ... and Angst?’ (*NYT*), ‘Few Overseas Have Faith in Trump’s Leadership, Survey Finds’ (*NYT*), ‘In Romania, Faith in Globalization Survives’ (*NYT*). A third example: in their ‘Open Letter of Love to Kim Jong-un,’ David Kyuman Kim and George Yancy appeal to the dictator’s better nature: ‘Just as we have faith in our fragile and imperfect American democratic experiment, we have faith that you believe in something far more courageous than words of war’ (Kim and Yancy, 2017). Upshot: ‘faith’ is rapidly losing its status as a four-letter word in Western secular contexts.

Now: many different theories of faith have been put forward recently, and different distinctions, problems, and implications have been articulated. Chief among the distinctions is that between propositional faith and relational faith. Propositional faith is the attitude expressed by having *faith that p*, whereas relational faith is the attitude expressed by putting or maintaining *faith in* someone or something. Some pistologists reduce the latter to the former; others don’t. But no matter what one says on that score, another issue looms large: the doxasticism/nodoxasticism debate. On doxastic theories of propositional faith (*doxasticism*),

- Necessarily, S has faith that p only if S believes that p;

on nondoxastic theories of propositional faith (*nodoxasticism*),

- It’s false that, necessarily, S has faith that p only if S believes that p.

Proponents of both views can agree on everything else. Only the exhibited difference is at issue.

Why does this debate matter? For at least three reasons.

First, understanding is valuable as an end in itself. Thus, understanding faith – which includes understanding whether faith that p entails belief that p – is valuable as an end in itself.

Second, faith can contribute to a well-lived life. For example, absent faith that you are valuable and that your chosen life-goals are worthwhile, it is unlikely that you will personally flourish. Similarly, absent faith that human beings are generally decent, and absent faith that your intimates value you despite ups and downs in your relationships, it is unlikely that you will socially flourish. Whether faith can play these roles that the ancient Greeks and Romans emphasized may well depend on who’s right in the doxasticism/nodoxasticism debate.

Third, as of 2010, thirty percent of the planet’s inhabitants are Christians. As Teresa Morgan observes, ‘[t]he language of faith is central to Christianity as to no other religious tradition: without it, it is impossible to do justice to Christian understandings of the relationship between God and humanity’ (Morgan, 2015, p. 1). What does this faith involve? Does it require belief that the basic Christian story is true, or is it compatible with a sort of doubt that

precludes such belief? Philosophers can contribute to answering these queries and thereby help us understand the nature of the religious commitment of a third of the human population (Rath, 2017; Howard-Snyder, 2017a, 2017b).

In what follows, I aim to defend three arguments for nondoxasticism (Howard-Snyder, 2013), two of which were recently criticized in this journal (Malcolm and Scott, 2016). Malcolm and Scott also argue against nondoxasticism on the grounds that it allows religious fictionalists to have faith (pp. 14–15). I address that argument and others elsewhere (Howard-Snyder, 2016, 2018). Understanding why their criticisms of my arguments fail will, I hope, exhibit the plausibility of nondoxasticism and thereby improve our understanding of faith.

My arguments presuppose certain views about belief and doubt.

As for belief, I set aside graded belief and stick with folk psychology (2013, p. 359); moreover, I presuppose that belief is a dispositional state manifested under conditions like these: (i) if you believe that *p*, then if someone asks you whether *p*, you will tend to respond affirmatively; (ii) if you believe that *p*, then if you consider whether it is that case that *p*, you will tend to mentally assent to *p*; (iii) if you believe that *p*, then if you engage in practical or theoretical reasoning, you will tend to use *p* as a premise when appropriate; and (iv) if you believe that *p*, then, given your goals, aversions, and other cognitive attitudes, you will tend to act in appropriate ways.

As for doubt, I distinguish having doubts about *p*, being in doubt about whether *p*, and doubting that *p* (2013, p. 359). For one to have doubts about whether *p* – note the *s* – is for one to have what appear to one to be grounds to believe not-*p* and, as a result, for one to be at least somewhat more inclined not to believe *p*. For one to be in doubt about whether *p* is for one neither to believe nor disbelieve *p* as a result of one's grounds for *p* seeming to be roughly on a par with one's grounds for not-*p*. One can have doubts without being in doubt, and one can be in doubt without having doubts. We must distinguish having doubts and being in doubt from doubting that. If one doubts that *p*, one is at least strongly inclined to disbelieve *p*; having doubts and being in doubt lack that implication.

Malcolm and Scott do not question what I say about belief. Moreover, without attribution, they call my account of doubt 'our account' (2016, p. 4). This signals agreement, at least for the sake of discussion. Now to my arguments.

2. *The first argument for nondoxasticism*

Consider the following cases:

Case 1. Suppose we were talking about the sour economy and our retirement plans, and I said: 'I am in doubt about whether I'll recover my losses, but I still have faith that I will.'

Case 2. Suppose I confided in you, my friend: ‘I don’t know what to believe, whether she’ll stay with me or not; I’m in doubt about the matter. Even so, I have faith that she’ll stay.’

Case 3. Imagine that I disclosed to you in a heart-to-heart exchange: ‘I can’t tell whether or not what I’ve got to go on favors the existence of God. I used to think it did, but now I can’t tell. To be honest with you, I have to admit that I’m in doubt about whether there is a God. But even so, I still have faith that there is.’

Regarding these cases, I wrote:

You wouldn’t be perplexed, bewildered, or suspicious at all about what I said; at least you need not be. What I said wasn’t weird, or infelicitous; there’s nothing here that cries out for explanation. That’s because, given the standard uses of ‘faith that’ and ‘being in doubt about whether’ in contemporary English, being in doubt about something need not be at odds with having faith that it is so. But in that case, our concept of propositional faith allows one to have faith that *p* without belief that *p*. For, unlike faith that *p*, belief that *p* is at odds with being in doubt about it, not least because if one is in doubt, one will lack tendencies that one has if one believes, for example, a tendency to assert *p* upon being asked whether *p* (2013, pp. 360–361).

The prose is terse; even so, the idea is clear enough. Since there’s a defeasible link between felicitous and infelicitous usage of English words, on the one hand, and the contents of the concepts associated with standard usage of those words, on the other hand, we can use this sort of linguistic data to argue for nondoxasticism, as follows:

THE FIRST ARGUMENT FOR NONDOXASTICISM

- 1 The linguistic data are accurate.
- 2 If the linguistic data are accurate, then, given standard uses of ‘having faith that’ and ‘being in doubt about whether’ in modern English, it is conceptually possible for one to be in doubt about whether *p* while having faith that *p*.
- 3 One cannot be in doubt about whether *p* while believing that *p*.
- 4 So, given standard uses of ‘having faith that’ and ‘being in doubt about whether’ in modern English, it is conceptually possible for one to have faith that *p* without belief that *p*. (1-3, logic)

The conceptual possibility of faith that *p* without belief that *p* provides defeasible reason for nondoxasticism.

Malcolm and Scott criticize the First Argument by criticizing the arguments they label ‘the argument from doubt’ and ‘the argument from linguistic data’. The first, properly understood, is this:

THE ARGUMENT FROM DOUBT

- 5 It is possible that: S is in doubt about whether p and S has faith that p.
- 6 Necessarily, if S is in doubt about whether p, then S does not believe that p.
- 7 Necessarily, if S has faith that p, then S believes that p. (assume for reductio)
- 8 So, it is possible that: S believes that p and S does not believe that p. (5-7, logic)
- 9 So, it is false that, necessarily, if S has faith that p, then S believes that p. (7-8, reductio complete)

Nondoxasticism follows. According to Malcolm and Scott, doxasticists ‘can opt to reject’ (5) and (5) ‘is just question-begging’ (2016, p. 5).

I agree that doxasticists ‘can opt to reject’ (5), but that fact gives no one else a reason to do the same. As for begging the question, I don’t see it. That’s because you might affirm (5) without relying on (9), the conclusion. For example, suppose that you come to think that faith is conceptually compatible with doubt on the basis of the linguistic data. Moreover, you see nothing in the nature of faith that entails that one cannot have faith that p while being in doubt about whether p. Consequently, you affirm (5). Later, you theorize about doubt and come to endorse my view; thus, you affirm (6). You then hear someone assert doxasticism, the reductio premise (7). You reason to its falsehood via the valid inferences (8) and (9). Did you beg the question? No.

Notice also that the Argument from Doubt misrepresents my First Argument. The former has the conceptual compatibility of faith and doubt as the unsupported premise (5); the latter has it as a suppressed subconclusion supported by (1) and (2). Malcolm and Scott’s criticism of the Argument from Doubt does not address (1) and (2).

However, their criticism of the Argument from Linguistic Data does address these premises. According to Malcolm and Scott, the ‘basic strategy’ of this argument ‘is to find cases in which we attribute to S faith that p without it being a truth condition of that utterance that S believes that p’ (2016, p. 7). That is not my strategy, however. Rather, as we’ve seen, I aim to find cases in which (i) we attribute to S faith that p *while S is in doubt about whether p*, not cases in which (ii) we attribute to S faith that p *while S lacks belief that p*. Having found such type (i) cases, I judge that such attributions can be normal, felicitous, and non-mystifying; I then use my theory of doubt to infer that, in those cases, S lacks belief that p. Malcolm and Scott misunderstand my basic strategy; nevertheless, what they say about the Argument from Linguistic Data may well shed doubt on (1) or (2). Let’s look into the matter.

Interestingly, they agree with premise (1): attributing faith that *p* to someone who is in doubt about whether *p*, as in Cases 1–3, is ‘linguistically unproblematic’ (2016, p. 7). But, they ask, ‘how should we interpret [those attributions]?’ (2016, p. 7). I interpret them with their standard lexical content, and so affirm premise (2). They interpret them as ‘loose talk’ (2016, p. 8), and so reject (2). Let me explain.

Consider the following cases, suggested by Malcolm and Scott (2016, pp. 8–9):

Case 4. You are describing to a friend what happened at a Rolling Stones concert: ‘Mick Jagger fell on the stage unconscious. The band stopped playing, and the managers ran to him. The audience fell silent as he was carried away on a stretcher.’

Case 5. You come home expecting provisions in the fridge to grill sockeye and asparagus with capers and a butter-dill sauce. You look, see nothing usable, and exclaim: ‘The fridge is empty!’

Case 6. You’re on the phone with a professional landscaper discussing plans to renovate your garden. She asks what shape your lawn is. You answer: ‘The lawn is square.’

Malcolm and Scott say that what you mean here by ‘silent’, ‘empty’, and ‘square’ ‘does not strictly accord with how these expressions might be defined’ (2016, p. 9). You do not claim that, strictly speaking, the audience is silent; after all, some people are whispering. Similarly, you do not claim that, strictly speaking, the fridge is empty or that, strictly speaking, the lawn is square. Rather, you use these ‘expressions *loosely* to communicate something different from their standard lexical content’ (2016, p. 9). They continue:

Similarly, we can talk loosely of faith, belief or disbelief. Suppose that belief that *p* is one of the truth conditions of faith that *p*. We can say that we have faith that *p*, even if we don’t believe that *p*, loosely to communicate, say, that we support *p* or are enthusiastic about *p* (2016, p. 9).

These words are not relevant to premise (2), however; (2) has to do with cases in which (i) we attribute to *S* faith that *p* while *S* is in doubt about whether *p*, e.g. Cases 1–3, and *not* cases in which (ii) we attribute to *S* faith that *p* while *S* lacks belief that *p*.

Fortunately, we can refocus these words on type (i) cases, and argue against (2) as follows. The normality of the utterances in Cases 1–3 do *not* give us reason to think that the lexical content of ‘faith that *p*’ and ‘being in doubt about whether *p*’ allows for the conceptual possibility of having faith that *p* while being in doubt about whether *p*. For even if the lexical content of ‘faith that *p*’ and ‘being in doubt about whether *p*’ *precludes* the conceptual possibility of having faith that *p* while being in doubt about

whether *p*, we can say that we have faith, even if we are in doubt, loosely to communicate that, e.g., we support *p* or are enthusiastic about *p*. Thus, to illustrate, in Case 3, when I say ‘To be honest with you, I have to admit that I’m in doubt about whether there is a God. But even so, I still have faith that there is,’ I can loosely communicate my being in favor of there being a God, just as when you say ‘The fridge is empty!’, you can loosely communicate slim pickings for a meal, even though there’s a Melvin double IPA and some Dijon mustard in it. The same goes for other such cases, e.g. Cases 1 and 2. So (2) is false.

By way of reply, I agree that we *can* talk loosely of faith together with being in doubt to communicate support, enthusiasm, and so on – but that fact sheds no doubt on premise (2). Analogy: you tell me that we can use the sentence ‘The fridge is empty’ loosely to communicate slim pickings for a meal. I agree; we *can*. But it does not follow that we *can’t* use it strictly to communicate that the fridge is empty. Nor does it follow that the lexical content of ‘*x* is a fridge’ and ‘*x* is empty’ *precludes* the conceptual possibility that some fridges are empty. Nor does it follow that when, speaking strictly, we say ‘The fridge is empty,’ we *can’t* express the truth that the fridge is empty. I submit that we should not judge any differently in Cases 1–3.

The fact that we *can* talk loosely of faith while being in doubt sheds no doubt on (2). That’s because the modality of that fact is too weak for the purpose. What if we say instead that when we talk of having faith while being in doubt we *must* be talking loosely? That would avoid the objection, but it comes at a steep price: falsehood. Many people, while speaking strictly, talk of having faith while being in doubt. Just ask them.

3. *The second argument for nondoxasticism*

My second argument is lengthy and convoluted (2013, pp. 361–362, ‘fourth reason’, sect. 4 and 5); but, clearly enough, I meant this:

THE SECOND ARGUMENT FOR NONDOXASTICISM

- 10 If doxasticism is true, then belief that *p* is the only positive cognitive attitude by virtue of which one can satisfy faith that *p*’s demand to take a stand on behalf of the truth of *p*.
- 11 Belief that *p* is not the only positive cognitive attitude by virtue of which one can satisfy faith that *p*’s demand to take a stand on behalf of the truth of *p*.
- 12 So, doxasticism is false. (10 and 11, logic).

Nodoxasticism follows.

The key notion here is that of a *positive cognitive attitude*. What’s that? Several comments will shed light on its theoretical usefulness.

First, two platitudes among others govern theorizing about propositional faith: (i) it is incompatible with disbelief and, relatedly, (ii) it requires some sort of belief-like attitude. Participants in the doxasticism-nondoxasticism debate need a neutral way to speak of the attitude in (ii) while abiding by (i). The term 'positive cognitive attitude' lends itself to the task. Second, a positive *cognitive* attitude falls on the cognitive side of the line between the cognitive, on the one hand, and the conative and/or volitional, on the other. Third, we can distinguish paradigm cases of *positive* and *negative* cognitive attitudes. Believing something and disbelieving it are both cognitive attitudes, but only believing it is positive; *disbelieving* it is negative. Fourth, some cognitive attitudes are neither positive nor negative, e.g. *entertaining* the proposition that all platypi are monotremes, or *wondering* whether the Diamond Creek Fire will burn until snowfall. Fifth, taking the paradigms of belief and disbelief as clues, we can say that, unlike entertaining or wondering, both positive and negative cognitive attitudes have a *mind-to-world direction of fit*, in this sense: a positive cognitive attitude toward *p* is how it ought to be only if *p* is true, and a negative cognitive attitude toward *p* is how it ought to be only if *p* is false.

Sixth, a cognitive attitude toward *p* is *positive* in that one who has it *takes a stand on behalf of p's truth*, whereas a cognitive attitude toward *p* is *negative* in that one who has it *takes a stand against p's truth*. How are we to understand this? I suggest that taking a stand on behalf of *p's* truth partly involves a complex dispositional state, one we would antecedently expect to be congruent with taking a stand on behalf of *p's* truth. Similarly, taking a stand against *p's* truth partly involves a complex dispositional state, one we would antecedently expect to be congruent with taking a stand against *p's* truth (2013, pp. 361, 366; cf. 2017b, sect. 5).

Seventh, positive and negative cognitive attitudes are *evidence-sensitive* in this sense: no one can have a positive or negative attitude toward *p* that does not reflect their estimation of the truth or falsehood of *p*. Their estimation need not be conscious or deliberative; it might only be implicit and automatic. Their estimation need not be right; indeed, it may well be wrong, wildly wrong. But unless the stand they take is at least partly due to their estimation of *p's* truth or falsehood, they have neither a positive nor a negative cognitive attitude toward *p*.

Now to premise (10) of the Second Argument. Most agree that *S* has faith that *p* only if *S* has some positive cognitive attitude or other toward *p*, i.e. some cognitive attitude toward *p* in virtue of which *S* takes a stand on behalf of the truth of *p*. They disagree over what attitudes play that role. According to doxasticism, the only attitude that can play that role is *belief that p*. (10) follows.

As for premise (11), many theorists think that belief is not the only positive cognitive attitude one might have toward a proposition. Some distinguish belief from acceptance, trust, reliance, credence, hope, imaginative assent

and so on. Some pistologists suggest these attitudes can play the role in faith that doxasticists assign only to belief that *p*. My take on this suggestion is pluralistic: if these just-mentioned nondoxastic attitudes can be positive cognitive attitudes, any of them can play the role doxasticists assign only to belief.

My contribution in this area involves what I call *beliefless assuming*. To get at the idea, consider two cases I adapt from William Alston (Alston, 1996, p. 10; Alston, 2007, p. 133).

The defensive captain. The captain of the defensive football team is trying to figure out what play the opposing quarterback will call next. From prior experience of the quarterback and his coach, and given the current situation, it seems most likely to him that, of the credible options, the quarterback will call a plunge into the middle of the line by the fullback. So he acts on the assumption that the quarterback will call a plunge and aligns the defense on that basis.

The army general. Consider an army general facing enemy forces. She needs to act. Her scouts give some information about the disposition of the enemy but not nearly enough to settle whether they are situated one way rather than several others. So she assumes that they are situated in the way that seems the least false of the credible options given the available information, say, that they are scattered throughout the boulder field on the peak. Then, acting on that assumption, she disposes her forces in the way that seems most likely to be an effective means to thwarting the enemy.

Several observations are in order.

First, we can easily imagine that each of our protagonists is in doubt about whether the target proposition is true. That's because we can easily imagine that, given their evidence, each of them regards the target proposition as only the most likely or 'the least false' among the credible options, as T.S. Eliot spoke of Christianity. In that case, we might easily imagine that their evidence for the truth of the target proposition is roughly on a par with their evidence for its falsity and, as a result, they neither believe nor disbelieve it.

Second, we can, therefore, easily imagine that our protagonists lack the dispositional profiles of belief and disbelief. For example, since the captain lacks belief that the quarterback will call a plunge, he'll have no tendency to affirm that proposition, and no tendency to mentally assent to it. Similarly, since the general lacks *disbelief* that the enemy is scattered throughout the boulder field, she'll have no tendency to deny that proposition, and no tendency to mentally dissent from it.

Third, despite their being in doubt and despite their lack of the dispositional profiles of belief and disbelief, each of them acts on a certain

assumption. The captain acts on the assumption that the quarterback will call a plunge; the general acts on the assumption that the enemy is scattered throughout the boulder field. Note well: there really is some cognitive attitude that each of them acts on. Each of them *assumes* the target proposition.

Fourth, when our protagonists act on their assumptions, they act in ways you would expect them to act given their aims. The captain assumes that the quarterback called a plunge and so he puts six men on the line instead of four, to stop the offense. The general assumes that the enemy is scattered throughout the boulder field and so she orders a pincer movement and calls in air and mortar support, to thwart the enemy.

Fifth, we use 'assume' and its cognates in different ways.

We sometimes use it to refer to our taking something for granted, as when we assume the world is more than five minutes old. I do not use 'assume' in this way when I speak of the captain and general because, so used, it refers to a cognitive attitude too much like belief – indeed, it just is belief – and they lack belief of the target proposition.

On other occasions, we use 'assume' to refer to simply considering a proposition to see what follows from it. We might call this state of mind *assuming it for the sake of argument* or, more generally, *assuming it just to see what follows*; but for clarity's sake, I will use *simply consider it to see what follows*.

Sometimes we simply consider a proposition to see what follows even though we disbelieve it, as when we assume for reductio that some times are earlier than themselves. Other times we simply consider a proposition to see what follows even though we are in doubt about it, as when we assume for conditional proof that Donald Trump will start a nuclear war. At yet other times we simply consider a proposition to see what follows even though we believe it, as when we simply consider that some nonhuman animals have moral rights to see what follows. I do not use 'assume' in this second way when I speak of the captain and the general. That's because the captain did not simply consider the quarterback's calling a plunge to see what follows; that state of mind would not have resulted in his putting six men on the line. Not until he *assumed* that the quarterback will call a plunge did he put six men on the line. The same goes for the general. They both act on the assumption that the target proposition is true; they do not simply consider it to see what follows.

So we have a third way in which we use 'assume', a way illustrated by our protagonists. To be clear: we can easily imagine that, although the captain neither believes that the quarterback will call a plunge nor simply considers it to see what follows, he nevertheless acts on *the assumption* that he will call a plunge. The same goes for the general. I call the attitude associated with this third way in which we use 'assume' *beliefless assuming*. (Note well: like beliefless assuming, simply considering to see

what follows is representational; but, unlike beliefless assuming, it is an occurrent state, not evidence-sensitive, and lacks a mind-to-world direction of fit. So, it is not a positive cognitive attitude, unlike beliefless assuming.)

Sixth, it is useful to compare and contrast the dispositional profiles of belief and beliefless assuming. As for differences, if you believe that *p*, then you will have a tendency to affirm *p* outwardly when asked whether *p*, and you will have a tendency to assent inwardly to *p* when you consider whether *p*; not so for beliefless assuming, although you might have a tendency to affirm outwardly or assent inwardly to *p is more likely than not*, or *p is more likely than its credible contraries*, among many other possibilities. As for similarities, if you belieflessly assume that *p*, then, if you engage in practical reasoning, you will tend to use *p* as a premise when appropriate. And, in general, if you belieflessly assume that *p*, then, given your goals, aversions, and other cognitive attitudes, you will tend to act in appropriate ways. So, it is with our two protagonists. Although their beliefless assumings lack some tendencies definitive of belief, they lead them, given their goals, to stack the line and to order a pincer movement. Note also that beliefless assuming is similar to belief in that each is a dispositional state, representational, evidence-sensitive, and possessed of a mind-to-world direction of fit.

Seventh, when one belieflessly assumes that *p*, one takes a stand on behalf of the truth of *p*. To be sure, the stand one takes is different from the stand one takes when one believes that *p*, as indicated by their different dispositional profiles. Even so, the dispositional profile of beliefless assuming includes tendencies that constitute taking a stand on behalf of the truth of what is belieflessly assumed. For just as when one believes that *p*, when one belieflessly assumes that *p*, one will tend to use *p* as a premise in practical reasoning when appropriate and one will, more generally, tend to act in ways befitting one's goals, aversions, and other cognitive attitudes. This is why we expect that, when the defensive captain belieflessly assumes that the quarterback will call a plunge, he will stack six men on the line rather than four; this is why we expect that, when the general belieflessly assumes that the enemy is scattered throughout the boulder field, she will order a pincer movement rather than a frontal assault. *By performing these actions rather than certain others*, they manifest tendencies that partly constitute taking a stand on behalf of the truth of what they belieflessly assume, even though tendencies to affirm outwardly and assent inwardly are absent.

The upshot of these reflections is that belief that *p* is not the only positive cognitive attitude by virtue of which one can satisfy faith that *p*'s demand to take a stand on behalf of the truth of *p*. Beliefless assuming is another, and perhaps there are others as well, as indicated earlier. That is, (11) is true.

How do Malcolm and Scott criticize the Second Argument?

They don't. Rather, they use the label *pragmatic faith* to designate 'purported cases of faith, where the agent accepts (or assumes, etc.) rather than believes a religious proposition' (2016, p. 11). Then they define pragmatic faith as 'adopting and acting on a religious viewpoint on the basis of considerations other than its truth,' considerations they lump under the rubric of 'pragmatic considerations,' which 'include the moral, social or prudential benefits of the viewpoint' (*idem*, 10). Next they impute the following argument to me and other nondoxasticists (2016, p. 11):

THE ARGUMENT FROM PRAGMATIC FAITH

- 13 Pragmatic faith is faith.
- 14 Pragmatic faith is not constituted by belief.
- 15 So, faith is not constituted by belief. (13 and 14, logic).

Malcolm and Scott's criticism is that (13) 'is question-begging' (2016, p. 11).

Two comments.

First, the Second Argument does not beg the question since you might affirm each of the premises without relying on the conclusion, as illustrated above.

Second, the Second Argument makes no use of pragmatic faith since, given Malcolm and Scott's definition, pragmatic faith lacks a positive cognitive attitude. On their definition, one has pragmatic faith that *p* only if one's cognitive attitude toward *p* is 'adopted ... on the basis of considerations other than its truth' *rather than* on the basis of considerations that have to do with its truth (2016, p. 10), whereas one has a positive cognitive attitude toward *p* only if one adopts it at least partly on the basis of considerations of its truth.

So, their criticism of the Argument from Pragmatic Faith fails as a criticism of the Second Argument; moreover, the former argument misrepresents the latter.

I now turn to a third argument for nondoxasticism that I briefly sketched (2013, p. 361), one absent from Malcolm and Scott's list of 'leading arguments', one that is, nevertheless, worth developing.

4. The third argument for nondoxasticism

Consider two features of doxasticism.

First feature: on doxasticism, necessarily, you have faith that *p* only if you believe that *p*. No other type of attitude toward *p* will do. Let's reflect on this feature briefly.

Suppose intellectual seemings are distinct from beliefs, as many of us think, and suppose that beliefs are not entailed by intellectual seemings, as many of us also think. Now consider the heuristic device of a mental box for each mental-state type. Imagine that, for some strange reason, Heather

lacks a belief box, or that Heather's belief box is empty of anything *p*-ish; but her intellectual seeming box isn't. It contains *p*, along with a boatload of other propositions. Do we really want to say that, in that case, Heather lacks faith that *p*? That's what doxasticism says. Although it *seems* to Heather that there is a God, and although she satisfies faith's other conditions, she lacks faith. Why? Because, says the doxasticist, its seeming to her that there is a God is not enough; she has to *believe* it. But doesn't that seem a little ... excessive, over-the-top? After all, what would belief do that seemings couldn't as the cognitive component of faith? Both can involve taking a stand on behalf of the truth of their objects.

Or suppose that credences are distinct from beliefs, as many of us think, and suppose that beliefs are not entailed by credences, as many of us also think. Now imagine that, for some strange reason, John lacks a belief box, or that John's belief box is empty of anything *p*-ish; but his credence box isn't. It contains *p*, along with many other propositions. Do we really want to say that, in that case, John lacks faith that *p*? That's what doxasticism would have us say. Although John has a *very high credence* that his daughters will flourish as adults, and although he satisfies faith's other conditions, he lacks faith. Why? Because, says the doxasticist, a very high credence is unsuitable; he has to *believe* it. But doesn't that strike you as ... preposterous, incredible? After all, what would belief do that credence couldn't as the cognitive component of faith? Both can involve taking a stand on behalf of the truth of their objects.

According to doxasticism, if you have faith that *p*, then the only eligible positive cognitive attitude you can have toward *p* is belief. The sheer implausibility of requiring that unique attitude-type counts against doxasticism, in my opinion. Upshot: propositional faith requires some sort of positive cognitive attitude or other toward its propositional object, but it need not be belief. Belief's role in faith can be played by seeming or credence, among other possibilities such as those mentioned previously.

Second feature: on doxasticism, if belief is the positive cognitive attitude-type that one has while one has faith that *p*, the content of that belief must be *p*. No other content will do: not *it's likely that p*, not *it's more likely than not that p*, not *p is much more likely than any credible contrary*, not *it's plausible that p*, not *it's more plausible than not that p*, not *p is much more plausible than any credible contrary*, and so on for a very long list of ineligible propositions. Only *p* can do the trick.

In this connection, notice that other complex propositional attitudes aren't like that, e.g. fear and hope. For example, the cognitive component of fear can be belief that *p*, but it can also be belief that *it's likely that p*, belief that *it's more likely than not that p*, and so on; and the same goes for hope. I expect that the range of possible contents of fear and hope exceeds that of faith. Nevertheless, if some instance of faith that *p* has a belief as its cognitive

component, doesn't it seem that, like fear and hope, that range might include more than *p* alone?

One might observe that, in the case of fear and hope, there is a story to tell about why a broad range of propositional contents will do. Fear keeps us out of harm's way, and it serves this role partly by responding to the mere likelihood of danger. Hope staves off despair in the face of overwhelming obstacles, and it serves this role by responding to the mere possibility that some desired outcome will be realized. Is there a comparable story to tell about faith that helps account for the fact that someone can have faith that *p* without believing that *p*?

By my lights, the answer is yes (2013, p. 368, and 2017a; cf. Buchak, 2017). Faith renders you resilient in the face of challenges to living in light of its propositional object, and it serves this role partly by responding to new counterevidence to it. While new counterevidence might induce doubt, faith tends to help keep you behaviorally on track, from being deterred or disheartened into inaction. By way of illustration, '[c]onsider a first-generation college student – a child of Mexican immigrants – who discovers, upon entering college, that many of her classmates and teachers hold rather dim views of Hispanic students' drive and intellectual ability' (Preston-Roedder, 2018, p. 175). Such a student's faith that her character and intellect are up to the challenge may help her overcome her doubt about whether she will succeed in college, by helping her to keep her nose in the books, to say 'no' to extracurricular temptations, etc. – all despite her doubt. Her faith could not play that role in that circumstance if it required her to believe that she *will* succeed.

According to doxasticism, when faith that *p* has belief as its positive cognitive attitude, the only eligible content for that belief is *p*. The sheer implausibility of requiring that unique content counts against the view, in my opinion; moreover, the role of faith in a well-lived life explains why that unique content is too restrictive. Upshot: when faith that *p* has belief as its cognitive component, that belief need not have *p* as its object; other contents can suffice.

To sum up, I offered three arguments for nondoxasticism. Malcolm and Scott ignored the third and judged the first two 'unpersuasive'. By my lights, their criticisms fail, not least because they misrepresented those first two arguments. Thus, all three remain on the table in our mutual effort to understand the cognitive aspect of faith.¹

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NOTE

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