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**Deficiency Arguments Against Empiricism  
and the Question of Empirical Indefeasibility**

**1. Introduction**

I know this is an “author-meets-critics” session, but I would like to take a moment to praise Al’s *Essays on A Priori Knowledge and A Priori Justification* (Casullo 2012). The fourteen essays in this volume span a thirty-five year period from 1977 to 2012, during which time there has been a resurgence of interest in the a priori. Collectively, these essays represent some of Al’s most important work on the topic, and they reflect his many philosophical achievements over the course of his career that further our understanding of the a priori. Those of us who are interested in a priori knowledge and a priori justification are indebted to Al for his careful and rigorous analysis of the concepts of a priori justification and knowledge, his consideration of our reasons for thinking that there might be apriori-justified beliefs and a priori knowledge, and his examination of the relation of the a priori to the associated notions of necessity and analyticity.

I would also like to make mention of some important features of the book in order to provide some background for today’s discussion and so that members of the audience will have a better understanding of what this book has to offer. The first six essays address some of the central themes of the book, and they provide a background context for subsequent discussion of specific topics. Of particular significance is Al’s “A Priori Knowledge,” which appears in *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology* (Moser 2002). This in-depth and thorough discussion of the concept of the a priori is both an excellent introduction to the topic for the uninitiated and an illuminating discussion for experts. Here, Al makes a number of important distinctions that

provide a framework for evaluating various claims that philosophers have made about a priori knowledge.

The next four essays were published subsequent to *A Priori Justification* (Casullo 2003), and they further develop some of the topics that were introduced there. The final four essays engage with contemporary discussions of the a priori, and they appear for the first time in this volume. In one of these, “Articulating the A Priori-A Posteriori Distinction,” Al identifies several factors that must be distinguished when giving an account of a priori knowledge or justification, and he identifies several common errors that result when these factors are obscured. Al goes on to deploy this diagnostic framework to assess some recent challenges to either the coherence or significance of the a priori/a posteriori distinction that have been raised by Philip Kitcher, John Hawthorne, Carrie Jenkins, and Timothy Williamson. This state-of-the-art discussion is essential reading for philosophers who are interested in this debate.

In what follows, I will be drawing from some of the material in the two essays “A Priori Knowledge” and “Articulating the A Priori-A Posteriori Distinction.” Some of the key distinctions that Al recognizes (2012: 290-91) and which will be relevant to the discussion are the following:

1. Reductive vs. non-reductive accounts of a priori knowledge. A *reductive* account of the concept of a priori knowledge analyzes it in term of the concept of a priori *justification*. A *nonreductive* account provides an analysis of a priori knowledge that does not include conditions involving the concept of the a priori. Theories that identify a priori knowledge with knowledge of necessary or analytic propositions are nonreductive. (Al prefers a reductive account of a priori knowledge.)

2. Theory-neutral vs. theory-dependent accounts of a priori knowledge (or justification). A *theory-neutral* account of the concept of a priori knowledge (or justification) does not presuppose any particular account of knowledge (or justification); it aims at neutrality amongst competing theories of knowledge (or justification). By contrast, a *theory-dependent* account

aims to provide a general analysis of the a priori within a particular background theory of knowledge (or justification).

3. Conditions for a priori knowledge (or justification) vs. general conditions for knowledge (or justification). The goal of an analysis of a priori knowledge (or justification) is to distinguish it from a posteriori knowledge (or justification). Constitutive conditions that are common to both a priori and a posteriori forms of justification are constitutive conditions of the background theory of knowledge (or justification.).

Failure to distinguish the factors mentioned above may result in the following errors with respect to articulating and locating the concept of a priori knowledge (p. 291):

Type I: Failing to distinguish between features that are constitutive of *a priori* knowledge (or justification) and features that are constitutive of a background theory of knowledge (or justification).

Type II: Offering an account of a priori knowledge (or justification) that fails to cohere with a non-traditional or preferred background theory of knowledge (or justification).

Type III: Mistaking a problem in the background theory for a problem with the a priori.

Armed with these crucial distinctions and forewarned of their related errors, I would like to talk, first, about AI's criticisms of a priori arguments for the existence of a priori knowledge and, second, about whether a priori-justified beliefs, where justification is sufficient for knowledge, should be understood to be empirically infeasible. I will suggest that some of the dilemma arguments that AI considers but rejects potentially *do* confer an advantage to apriorism or moderate rationalism. (I will use the terms 'apriorism' and 'moderate rationalism' more or less interchangeably.) I will then argue that AI could avail himself of an empirical infeasibility requirement that would be consistent with his minimal conception of a priori justification. I think doing so would capture a feature of a priori knowledge that is of particular interest and significance.

## 2. Deficiency Arguments Against Empiricism

A deficiency argument against empiricism draws attention to an alleged shortcoming of an empiricist theory, and the argument attempts to show that theories which embrace a priori justification avoid the particular shortcoming (2003: 100-04). A deficiency argument typically poses a dilemma for empiricism. For example, it has been argued that empiricism is either implicitly committed to nonexperiential (a priori) sources of evidence or a pernicious form of skepticism (Bealer 1992 and Bonjour 1998).<sup>1</sup> A deficiency argument of this kind against empiricism can be countered by establishing that a view which admits a priori forms of justification – such as moderate rationalism – is similarly vulnerable to the dilemma. If so, the advantage that is said to accrue to the apriorist view does not hold.

An example of a deficiency argument that will be familiar to many audience members is the following argument of Laurence Bonjour's, which appears in the opening pages of his *In Defense of Pure Reason*:

... [I]f the conclusions of inferences genuinely go beyond the content of direct experience, then it is impossible that those inferences could be entirely justified by appeal to that same experience. In this way, a priori justification may be seen to be essential if extremely severe forms of skepticism are to be avoided (1998: 4).

A parallel dilemma argument would attempt to show that moderate rationalism faces a similar dilemma for beliefs that are allegedly justified by nonexperiential sources such as rational intuition.

Al responds to this argument and Bonjour's other deficiency arguments in "The Coherence of Empiricism" (2000) and in Chapter Four of his *A Priori Justification* (2003). I will not discuss Bonjour's deficiency arguments and Al's responses to them because these have been discussed by others. (See, for example, Hasan 2013 and Watson 2014.) Instead, I will focus on a deficiency argument put forth by George Bealer that Al discusses in his essay entitled

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey Siegel (1984) offers a similar but distinct dilemma argument against methodological naturalism.

“Intuition, Thought Experiments, and the A Priori,”<sup>2</sup> which appears for the first time in Casullo 2012.

Al takes the position that *a priori* arguments in favor of the existence of a priori knowledge (or justification) – specifically dilemma arguments which purport to show that empiricism suffers from serious deficiencies – are inconclusive because such arguments fail to show that moderate rationalism enjoys an advantage over empiricism. Rather than offering a priori arguments for the existence of nonexperiential (a priori) sources of justification and knowledge, Al suggests that we would do well to martial *empirical* evidence for the existence of nonexperiential evidential sources. The empiricist, of course, must accept this methodology because it is his very own.

While I agree that attempting to establish the existence of a priori sources of evidence on empirical grounds is an effective strategy, I also think that revealing an internal tension or inconsistency in a view is a highly-effective means of arguing against it. So I see no grounds for excluding a priori arguments from the arsenal of the moderate rationalist. And I think the moderate rationalist can counter some of the parallel dilemma arguments that have been made by Al and others against deficiency arguments that pose dilemmas for empiricism.

## 2.1 Al’s Response to George Bealer’s Deficiency Argument

In “The Incoherence of Empiricism” (1992), George Bealer defends the existence of a priori intuitions as a source of prima facie evidence. A key component of Bealer’s defense is his “Argument from Epistemic Norms,” which poses a dilemma for empiricism (Section 3: 108-118). Bealer’s Argument from Epistemic Norms challenges the empiricist to justify the exclusion of sources of prima facie a priori evidence, specifically a priori intuitions. In general outline, the Argument from Epistemic Norms proceeds as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> My discussion expands on a summary of George Bealer’s argument and Al’s response to it that I present in my review of Casullo 2012 for *Philosophical Quarterly* (Warenski 2014).

We make use of intuitions to justify various conclusions when we engage in deductive reasoning, including reasoning about thought experiments. Our “standard justificatory procedure” thus counts not only experiences, observations, memory, testimony, but also intuitions as *prima facie* evidence. Empiricism would have us circumscribe our *prima facie* evidence by excluding intuition.

The justification for excluding intuition must be given either from within empiricism or from within the standard justificatory procedure. If the justification is made utilizing the procedures of empiricism, the justification will be circular. But if the justification is attempted from within the more ecumenical standard justificatory procedure, the mechanisms of self-criticism that might be employed within the standard justificatory procedure will fail to generate any grounds for excluding intuitions. So empiricism’s exclusion of intuition as a *prima facie* source of evidence is arbitrary and unjustified.

This dilemma argument endeavors to show that empiricism is deficient because it arbitrarily excludes a source of *prima facie* evidence, namely intuition, that our standard justificatory procedure provisionally admits. Moderate rationalism does not exclude intuition, *ergo* it enjoys an advantage over empiricism.

Turning to the details of the Argument from Epistemic Norms, Bealer begins by supposing that the empiricist tries to justify the exclusion of intuitions from within empiricism. The empiricist will try to show that empiricism sanctions itself, and only itself, as a comprehensive theory of justification. If empiricism sanctions itself, empiricism will be self-approving. But any number of implausible as well as plausible theories could be “justified” in this self-approving way. For example, a competing theory such as “visualism,” which admits only *visual* evidence, might similarly be self-approving. The result would be a stalemate between the two competing theories, empiricism and visualism. Bealer dismisses the idea that a

justification for excluding intuitions as a source of evidence could be made from within empiricism on the grounds that it would lead to a stalemate between empiricism and a competing theory.

Alternatively, the empiricist might try to justify the exclusion of a priori intuitions from within the standard justificatory procedure. The empiricist would then employ the methods of self-criticism that are available from within this more ecumenical practice in an endeavor to show that one of its components is defective. However, the argument continues, a priori intuitions would withstand critical evaluation from within the standard justificatory procedure. In particular, they would retain their standing as prima facie evidence when evaluated for what Bealer calls the 'three cs': consistency, corroboration, and confirmation.

The methods of self-criticism that are available from within the standard justificatory procedure will sometimes overthrow a purported prima facie source of evidence, even if it withstands the three cs. Imagine a hypothetical case where pronouncements by a particular political authority have acquired the status of prima facie evidence and would also withstand the three cs. Bealer argues that this putative source of prima facie evidence could be shown to be unreliable by a comprehensive theory of justification that admitted only sources of prima facie evidence *other than* the political authority, if these other sources were to deem the pronouncements of the political authority to be unreliable. By contrast, visual perception could not be overthrown by other prima facie sources of evidence. The explanation for the difference between the two cases is that we can eliminate a putative source of evidence when we negatively evaluate it by other sources that we deem to be more basic. The reason that the standard justificatory procedure would not eliminate intuition is that intuition is itself a basic source of evidence. According to Bealer, we are to consult our intuitions to determine which evidential sources are most basic (115-16).

Al responds by mounting the following parallel challenge against the standard justificatory procedure: the standard justificatory procedure cannot explain how it differs from views that arbitrarily *introduce* nonstandard sources of prima facie evidence. Suppose we were

to modify the original case by imagining that we also had the *intuition* that the pronouncements of the political authority constitute a basic source of evidence. The result would be a stalemate between the standard justificatory procedure and a system in which these pronouncements counted as a basic source of evidence. Hence, empiricism fares no worse than moderate rationalism vis-à-vis the Argument from Epistemic Norms (Casullo: 246-47).

The parallel challenge reveals a weakness in the original Argument from Epistemic Norms, namely the reliance on intuition as a test for whether a putative source of evidence is basic. With a different criterion for basicness, the original dilemma argument might be amended in such a way as to withstand Al's parallel challenge. For example, Bealer might argue that in addition to intuitive plausibility, a distinguishing feature of a basic evidential source is that it cannot be given a non-circular justification. That is, a justification for a basic source of evidence would have to presuppose its very target, either as a premise or as a rule, or it would have to presuppose related sources that collectively form a closed circle for which no non-circular source could be given. Political authority, however, can be evaluated by other sources that do not presuppose political authority or related notions. (Bealer makes this general point, but he does not rely on it when giving his criterion for basicness.)

Another, related indicator of basicness for a putative evidential source is the lack of reasonably-decent alternatives to it. If forming and revising beliefs in an important domain of inquiry – or across important domains – cannot so much as proceed without admitting a particular source as *prima facie* evidence, this is reason to think that the source in question has a claim to being basic.<sup>3</sup> Evidential sources such as deductive rules, inductive generalization, and sensory perception meet this condition. Political authority does not.

A different line of reply would be to bite the bullet and recognize the hypothesized political authority as a *prima facie* source of evidence if her pronouncements were to meet all of the proposed conditions, but then go on to argue that the inclusion of this evidential source

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<sup>3</sup> Whether a proposition or rule that exhibits this feature is thereby warranted is a further question. See Wright 2004 for discussion.



would not be unjustified or arbitrary. If reliance on the pronouncements of the political authority really did meet the conditions of consistency, corroboration, and confirmation, this would be evidence that our hypothesized “intuitions” regarding the pronouncements were, in fact, reliable. If so, it would appear that there would be no harm in taking such intuitions to be *prima facie* sources of evidence. Bealer’s conditions for the imagined case are that the pronouncements of the political authority are collectively consistent, corroborated by others, and not disconfirmed by other *prima facie* sources of evidence because they are carefully contrived not to do so. The case is fantastical, of course, and crucially under-described. Are the pronouncements such that they cannot be disconfirmed because they magically comport with our evidence? Or are they so vague that they could be understood to be consistent with any observations that we might make? If the latter, one wonders what content these pronouncements are imagined to have.

*Pace* Al, it may be premature to discount deficiency arguments that favor moderate rationalism. There is no *a priori* reason to exclude them when considering the relative merits of (moderate) rationalism and empiricism, and to make a satisfactory evaluation of a deficiency argument, one must consider possible replies. If the advocate of a deficiency argument that poses a dilemma for empiricism can mount a satisfactory reply to a parallel dilemma argument, then the original deficiency argument is one more quiver in the moderate rationalist’s bow.

### **3. Empirical Indefeasibility**

One controversial feature of Casullo’s preferred account of *a priori* justification is that it does not include an empirical indefeasibility requirement. Al’s preferred analysis of *a priori* justification is as follows:

(APJ) S’s belief that p is justified *a priori* if and only if S’s belief that p is justified by some nonexperiential source (2012: 117).

Referring back to Al's distinctions that I cited above, this is a *reductive* and *theory-neutral* account of a priori justification. It is also a "positive" account of a priori justification in that it identifies a priori justification with a particular source of belief, namely a nonexperiential one. Positive accounts of a priori justification can be contrasted with negative accounts that take a belief's a priori status to be a matter of *not* depending upon experience.

Some philosophers would argue that without an empirical indefeasibility requirement, a priori justification is of little interest. I disagree. If there are nonexperiential sources of justification, I think these would be of considerable interest in their own right. However, if an a priori source of justification is empirically defeasible, then apriori-justified beliefs ultimately have empirical justification conditions because these beliefs are understood to admit of empirical defeat. That is, we would take there to be possible empirical observations such that if we were to make them, they would defeat the a priori source of justification and (typically) constitute evidence against that which was justified a priori.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, without an empirical indefeasibility requirement, there would be no significant difference vis-à-vis the a priori/a posteriori distinction between an apriori entitlement and an a priori warrant, where the latter is understood to be sufficient for knowledge. Both in principle, would be subject to empirical defeat. An empiricist might happily acknowledge that we have some prima facie a priori entitlements, but she will be unperturbed by this feature of justification if she understands the full justification conditions for any given belief to be empirical.

In what follows, I will, for the most part, set aside issues concerning the transparency of belief to evidence. Strictly speaking, an evidential defeater undercuts or overrides the grounds

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<sup>4</sup> An a priori justification might come to be empirically defeated, yet the target proposition upheld on empirical grounds. Had Euclid's parallel postulate, understood as a claim about physical space been empirically corroborated, only the (purported) a priori status of the postulate, not the postulate itself, would have been empirically undermined.

for which a proposition is believed. A believer then revises his belief in light of the defeating evidence. For ease of exposition, I will just speak of beliefs coming to be defeated.

I think the reluctance of sensible apriorists to endorse an empirical indefeasibility requirement has been due to the perceived overly-stringent demands of empirical indefeasibility. Empirical indefeasibility requirements often make apriori claims implausibly infallible, and a naturalistically-minded apriorist will rightly reject them. As I will argue below, I think the problem has been a dearth of attractive accounts of empirical indefeasibility. I will suggest an alternative to an absolutist interpretation of empirical indefeasibility. This alternative account is consistent with Al's basic account of a priori justification, which I otherwise find attractive, and I think it aligns with his concern to resist additional strength requirements for a priori knowledge that set higher standards for a priori knowledge than for knowledge generally.

First, I would like to highlight a few important features of Al's account that bear on the problem of empirical indefeasibility. Al recognizes a particular form of epistemic overdetermination that is relevant to his account of a priori justification, namely the potential for a given belief to be justified by more than one source, each of which is sufficient to justify the belief in question in the absence of the others (2012: 165). For example, a given belief that P could be based on testimony, memory, or one or more direct sensory experiences. If there are sources of a priori justification, in some cases, a belief that P could be based on either experiential or nonexperiential sources. A sensible apriorist will want to allow that a particular person might have an empirical justification for a proposition that can be known a priori. Consider a child just learning to count. For the child, combining a set of five objects with a set of seven objects and counting them up would provide evidence that  $5 + 7 = 12$ . But once the concepts of number, counting, adding, and the identity operator have been acquired, the numerical equivalence of  $5 + 7$  and 12 can be deduced without the aid of objects.

Acknowledging that the child has an empirical justification for his belief does not commit the apriorist to taking the position that the proposition that  $5 + 7 = 12$  has empirical justification conditions. From the fact that someone has an empirical justification for believing that P, it does

not follow that the evidence for P itself is empirical. The evidence for P is “ideal” in the sense that it both ignores individual limitations and may incorporate the knowledge of experts in the community. The apriorist can acknowledge epistemic overdetermination as a doxastic phenomenon without thereby accepting it as an invariant feature of justification for propositions themselves.<sup>5</sup>

Al draws our attention to the fact that, in general, an undermining defeater for S’s justified belief that P – namely evidence that the basis for S’s belief is inadequate or defective – is *source-sensitive*. For example, S’s justified belief that he suffers from double vision would constitute a defeater for the justification conferred on his belief that  $2 + 2 = 4$ , if that belief were acquired by the process of counting objects (122). By contrast, overriding defeaters are typically *source-neutral*. Source neutrality says that if S has a justified belief that P, but subsequently acquires evidence against P that is strong enough to defeat her original grounds for believing P, the newly-acquired evidence defeats her grounds for believing P regardless of their source. Al gives the following example to illustrate this point: Suppose that S’s belief that the shopping list is on the coffee table is justified by memory, but she has a subsequent perceptual experience that justifies her belief that the list is *not* on the coffee table. (She looks at the coffee table and sees that the list is not there.) This perceptual experience defeats her original memory-based justification. Moreover, had S’s initial belief that the shopping list is on the coffee table been justified by testimony, S’s perceptual experience would likewise have defeated her original justification (p. 122).

Overriding defeaters are the kind of defeaters that are of primary interest to the question of the existence of a priori knowledge. If someone has a prima facie apriori-justified belief, but comes to realize that he has made a computational error or that he was under the influence of alcohol at the time he formed his belief, he would not have the warrant that he took himself to have. The recognition that he has made a computational error or that his cognitive faculties were

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<sup>5</sup> This paragraph was added by way of clarification in response to Al’s commentary.

in some way impaired at the time he formed the apparently apriori-justified belief would constitute an undermining defeater for his belief. But the interesting question vis-à-vis a priori knowledge is whether a genuinely-warranted a priori belief could come to be defeated by a source-neutral overriding defeater, and in particular, whether such a defeater could be empirical.

Overriding defeaters are relevant to the impersonal justification for propositions as well as doxastic justification. One key question concerning a priori knowledge is whether certain subject matters – paradigmatically mathematics and logic – have a priori justification conditions. For a subject matter to be understood as having a priori justification conditions, it must be understood, in some nontrivial way, to be empirically infeasible. But how?

One way of understanding the empirical infeasibility requirement is as follows:

(EI-1) S's apriori-justified belief that P *cannot* be defeated by experience.

(EI-1) should not be accepted simply on the grounds that apriori-justified beliefs, where the justification is sufficient for knowledge, are taken to be infallible. Why assume that forms of a priori justification which are sufficient for knowledge must be infallible while empirical justification that is sufficient for knowledge is fallible? What triggers the higher standard? In Chapter One of *A Priori Justification* and elsewhere, Al cautions us against confusing standards that are constitutive of a theory of knowledge (or justification) with standards that are constitutive of *a priori* knowledge (or justification). We need not require more stringent conditions for a priori knowledge than for empirical knowledge. Consideration of Russell's paradox and proposed revisions to logic suggests that we should allow for the revision of a priori propositions on purely conceptual grounds.

There is further reason to reject (EI-1). If a belief is a priori justified in a way that is sufficient for knowledge, and the justification cannot be defeated by experience, then the proposition believed must be immune to empirical defeat. But history tells us that this is not so. Recall the fate of the parallel postulate. Once held to be a priori true, as a claim about actual space, it was defeated by the Theory of General Relativity. So an a priori proposition *can* come

to be empirically defeated. One might say, “Poor silly Kant. He should have known that the parallel postulate, as claim about actual space, must have empirical justification conditions.” But I think to require such foreknowledge would be asking too much. So if past claims of a priori knowledge have been defeated on empirical grounds, we should at least be cautious about thinking that all current and future claims of a priori knowledge will not suffer the same fate.

If a priori knowledge does not require a degree of justification that is stronger than empirical knowledge, and justification sufficient for knowledge is understood to be fallible, then a priori knowledge, like empirical knowledge, should be understood in fallibilist terms. On the other hand, if a given proposition has a priori justification conditions, then it must be empirically indefeasible; otherwise it would admit of empirical defeaters, and so its justification conditions would be empirical. How should we reconcile these two apparently conflicting claims? In other words, how can we maintain that a priori justification sufficient for knowledge is simultaneously fallible and empirically indefeasible?

I think the empirical indefeasibility condition is best understood as a claim about our total available evidence. An apriorist who wants to say that a priori justification that is sufficient for knowledge is empirically indefeasible believes that there is no empirical evidence which should count against an a priori proposition. But she ought to be fallibilist about this empirical indefeasibility claim. She should allow for the purely epistemic possibility that an apriori-justified proposition will come to be empirically defeated after all. So this fallibilist apriorist thinks that an apriori-justified proposition is empirically indefeasible, but she allows that we are imperfect cognitive agents, and so it may be simply a failure of our imagination to see how empirical evidence should come to defeat it. In general, if one is fallibilist about justification that is understood to be sufficient for knowledge, one allows that (under specific and contextually-relevant conditions) justification is defeasible by the expansion of evidence or further conceptual developments. An apriori justification is just a particular instance of the more general case.

This notion of a purely epistemic sense in which an apriori-justified proposition is empirically defeasible is upheld by Hartry Field (1998). The idea that it is epistemically possible

for an apriori-justified proposition to come to be empirically defeated might seem puzzling. If one believes it *possible* that an apriori-justified proposition will turn out to be empirically revisable, then one must believe it is possible that the apriori-justified proposition will come to be empirically defeated; but that is to believe the proposition in question to be empirically revisable, and so not a priori (Field 1998: 4).<sup>6</sup> But, as Field goes on to explain, the argument turns on a conflation of two kinds of possibility. The purely epistemic possibility that is implicated in the fallibilist's concessive attribution of empirical indefeasibility does not entail logical possibility, and so fallibilist apriorism does not collapse into empiricism.

How should we understand this notion of a pure epistemic possibility? As I argue in "Naturalism, Fallibilism, and the A Priori" (Warenski 2009), we should understand it as a particular kind of knowledge claim that is sensitive to context. If we are fallibilist about alleged a priori subject matters, such as mathematics or logic, we allow that we do not know for certain that some components of these subject matters (or their a priori justifications) will never come to be defeated. A justification for a proposition (or rule) of mathematics or logic is impersonal as opposed to personal, and to say we have knowledge of these subject matters is to say that they are known by persons with the relevant expertise in an epistemic community. The purely epistemic possibility of defeat that the fallibilist wants to acknowledge is a defeat that would be the result of a conceptual advancement of some kind within her epistemic community. The fallibilist claims to know that P is empirically indefeasible, but she does not claim to know that P is empirically indefeasible in an expanded context of assessment that takes into account future conceptual advancements and observations that we might make in light of them.

When the fallibilist apriorist says that an apriori-justified proposition is empirically indefeasible, she claims that the justification conditions for the proposition are a priori, given our current body of knowledge. But she also allows for the purely epistemic possibility that the proposition should come to be empirically revised in light of future conceptual advancements and observations that we might make in light of those advancements.

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<sup>6</sup> Field gives this argument in the context of considering the empirical indefeasibility of logic. I

This undogmatic notion of empirical indefeasibility may be stated as follows:

(EI-2) S's apriori-justified belief that P should not be defeated by any (sensory) experiences that we can think of, given our current body of knowledge.

I use the locution 'should' rather than 'can' in (EI-2) above in order to distinguish authentic from inauthentic evidence.<sup>7</sup>

This undogmatic notion of empirical indefeasibility, (EI-2), is compatible with AI's notion of a priori justification (APJ), which I here restate:

(APJ) S's belief that p is justified a priori if and only if S's belief that p is justified by some nonexperiential source.

We could add the undogmatic empirical indefeasibility requirement (EI-2) to AI's account. The conjunction of (APJ) and (EI-2) would give a reductive, theory-neutral account of a priori justification sufficient for knowledge that incorporates an empirical indefeasibility condition.

With an empirical indefeasibility requirement in place, moderate rationalism does not collapse into empiricism, and the theory-neutral, positive account of a priori justification can be upheld while acknowledging the empirical indefeasibility of a priori justification that is understood to be sufficient for knowledge.

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have substituted 'apriori-justified proposition' for 'logic' in my restatement of his puzzle.

<sup>7</sup> AI suggests replacing (EI-2) with (EI-3): S's apriori-justified belief that P cannot be defeated by any genuine empirical evidence that we can think of, given our current body of knowledge. I used 'should' to emphasize the evaluative component of assessments of evidential support relations, but this evaluative component could just as well be understood to be incorporated in the notion of genuine evidence.



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