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Epistemic Deontology, Doxastic Voluntarism,
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Epistemic Deontology, Doxastic Voluntarism, and the Principle of Alternate Possibilities

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1. Introduction

Actions are often objects of what Peter Strawson, in a classic paper on freedom and responsibility (Strawson 1962), has dubbed “reactive attitudes:” we praise and blame people for what they do, feel respect or resentment for an action (and sometimes both). According to a venerable epistemological tradition, beliefs are also proper objects of such attitudes. A person is morally beyond reproach with respect to an action if she is morally justified in performing it. Similarly, the view goes, an epistemic subject can be epistemically blameless or blameworthy, faultless or culpable with respect to holding a belief, depending on whether this belief is epistemically justified. As Carl Ginet once put it, “one is justified in being confident that p if and only if it is not the case that one ought not to be confident that p .” And this, he adds, means that “one could not be justly reproached for being confident that p ” (Ginet 1975, 28). Typically, such views are part of a larger deontological story about epistemic rights, permissions, obligations, and the like. However, in what follows I shall not be concerned with “deontic epistemic judgments proper,” as we may say (such as “ S ought to believe p ,” “ S has flouted his epistemic duties in believing p ”); nor will I say much about the relation between reactive attitudes and such deontic judgments. My topic is what is commonly taken to be a crucial objection to the idea that beliefs can be proper objects of reproach or approval.

Epistemic deontology has a long and distinguished tradition. Descartes and Locke for instance are prominent proponents of deontological conceptions of epistemic justification, and contemporary advocates include Laurence Bonjour, Roderick Chisholm, Richard Feldman, Carl Ginet, John Pollock, Bruce Russell, Matthias Steup, Nicholas Wolterstorff, and others. However, in recent years such views have fallen on evil days. One influential criticism has been that a subject may form a true belief and, in adopting that belief, meet every reasonable epistemic norm that can be derived from deontological considerations, but fail to acquire knowledge thereby. Various thought experiments have been designed to illustrate this point.¹ In fact, however, we can already draw this moral from Gettier stories. One lesson they teach us is that we may be entirely within our epistemic rights when forming a true belief, yet this belief might not constitute knowledge.

Often, this objection is taken to be ruinous for whichever specific project of epistemic deontology is under consideration. Yet, to begin with such observations tell us nothing about whether being epistemically blameless (in the clear, beyond reproach, etc.) may not still be a *necessary* condition a belief must fulfill in order to constitute knowledge. Secondly, there are knowledge-independent questions of doxastic excellence. Knowledge—this much is largely uncontroversial—requires strong belief, i.e. a robust conviction to the effect that the proposition in question is true. But then we are left with a range of attitudes in which a subject merely

1. See for example Plantinga’s discussion in Plantinga 1993, 44–45.

takes a proposition to be more probable than its negation, but does not believe it with certainty. Clearly, such attitudes too can be justified or not. The same holds for belief suspension, which strictly speaking is not even a *doxastic* attitude. The knowledge objection therefore does not invalidate epistemic deontology in general. Having said this, I will henceforth pursue the discussion in terms of “belief.” I will use the notion in a sense that covers both strong and weak forms of belief, but my conclusions will also be applicable to the attitude of belief suspension. Furthermore, I shall stick to traditional terminology and talk about “epistemic justification,” “epistemic deontology,” etc., even though my argument is not confined to properties that are necessary or sufficient for knowledge.

Another highly influential argument against epistemic deontology is the *Argument from Doxastic Involuntarism*, or *Argument from Involuntarism*, for short. This argument goes as follows:

The Argument from Involuntarism (provisional formulation)

- (1) Epistemic deontology implies doxastic voluntarism.
- (2) Doxastic voluntarism is false.
- (3) Hence epistemic deontology is unacceptable.

Doxastic voluntarism is the view that people enjoy voluntary control over their beliefs. Strong versions of the argument maintain that it is impossible to exert voluntary control over any of one’s beliefs; weaker versions argue that we lack control at least over the vast majority of our beliefs. Both versions maintain that epistemic deontology is tenable only if doxastic voluntarism is true.²

This argument is much more fundamental than worries about the relation between epistemic blamelessness and knowledge. For if it were sound, it would undermine whatever specific project of epistemic deontology one may want to embark on. However, in what follows I wish to argue that the Argument from Involuntarism fails, or is at least highly problematic. The reason is that it implicitly relies on a problematic assumption about voluntary control over beliefs. This assumption is what I will call the *Epistemic Principle of Alternate Possibilities*. It claims that:

(EPAP) A subject has voluntary control over (or free will with respect to) what she believes, only if she could have believed otherwise.

2. For recent formulations of the argument along similar lines see Feldman 2001, and Steup 2000. Steup urges the critic to spell out what he means by “voluntary control.” Having voluntary control over *A* means being free to do, or to abstain from doing, *A*. However, on a compatibilist reading it seems easy to meet this condition, also with respect to beliefs. For in that case what is required for doxastic freedom is merely that, had the subject found herself in a different cognitive situation, she would have believed otherwise. On an incompatibilist construal this kind of counterfactual does not suffice to secure freedom. However, in that case, Steup argues, most actions are not under voluntary control either. And since the incompatibilist does not want to say that reactive attitudes toward such actions are generally inappropriate, he should also not say this with regard to beliefs. I think Steup makes a good point here. (A sketch of the argument can also be found in Steup’s introduction to Steup 2001). I shall take a different line of argument in this paper, but my starting point will be, as Steup recommends, a closer look at the notion of voluntary control.

Two crucial questions arise for the Argument from Involuntarism. First, is its assumption that we always lack any choice about what to believe correct? Is it true that, in light of our cognitive profile at a given time t , we cannot but form or sustain the beliefs we actually adopt at t ? If the Argument from Involuntarism has been criticized at all, the target has usually been this assumption. But there is also another question: is EPAP acceptable?

2. The Argument from Involuntarism Revisited

A highly influential presentation of the Argument from Involuntarism can be found in a series of papers by William Alston (see especially Alston 1985 and 1988).³ Alston's point of departure is his observation that it would indeed initially seem plausible to model the epistemic justification of belief on the justification of action (1988, 115–116). The result is a deontological conception of epistemic justification, which can be characterized “in terms of freedom from blame” (152; see also 115). However, the argument goes on, such a conception is viable “only if beliefs are sufficiently under voluntary control to render such concepts as *requirement*, *permission*, *obligation*, *reproach*, and *blame* applicable to them” (118). But having voluntary control over doing A means “having an effective choice as to whether to do A ” (ibid.), and unfortunately, Alston argues, we don't have a choice about what to believe. Hence he concludes that epistemic deontology relies on an erroneous assumption about belief control and should therefore be abandoned.⁴

Prima facie, this line of thought seems natural and convincing: we can only be reproachable for performing an *action* if we can voluntarily control whether to perform it or not. If one day you leave everything behind and, completely out of the blue, emigrate to Jalta, you may well come into conflict with certain moral obligations (toward your family, friends, and students, for instance). If however your sudden disappearance is due to the intervention of an evil demon—as happens for example to poor Stjopa Lichodejew in Michail Bulgakows *The Master and Margarita*—you can hardly be blamed. For in that case you are not responsible for what has happened to you; you didn't have a choice about whether to stay or to go. Similarly, beliefs would seem to be proper objects of reactive attitudes only if we enjoy voluntary control over them. And does not voluntary control over believing p require that the subject have a choice as to whether to believe p ?

It will be helpful for the following discussion to list explicitly all the relevant premises and conclusions of this reasoning. In light of what has been said so far, a refined version of our initial exposition of the Argument from Involuntarism can be formulated as follows:

3. Many authors have been convinced by Alston's argument. Thus, Richard Fumerton contends that “many of our beliefs seem to be forced on us in a way that makes inappropriate questions about whether we *should* have the beliefs in question” (Fumerton 2001, 118, my emphasis). Consider also Alvin Plantinga's rejection of epistemic deontology in Plantinga 1993, ch. 2, or considerations by Alvin Goldman (1999): Goldman also expresses his sympathy with Alston and stresses an intimate connection between epistemic deontology and what he calls the “guidance conception of justification.”
4. For helpful comparisons between moral and epistemic justification see for example Haack 1997, and Russell 2001. Like Alston, Russell construes the notion of living up to one's (subjective) epistemic duties in terms of freedom from epistemic blame.

The Argument from Involuntarism (refined formulation)

- (1) (Non-mental) actions are proper objects of reactive attitudes only if their agents enjoy voluntary control over them. (premise)
- (2) An agent has voluntary control over an action only if she could have done otherwise. (premise)
- (3) With respect to the conditions specified in (1) and (2), beliefs must be construed as analogous to actions. (premise)
- (4) Beliefs are proper objects of reactive attitudes only if their subjects enjoy voluntary control over them. (1, 3)
- (5) A subject has voluntary control over what she believes only if she could have believed otherwise. (2, 3) (This is the Epistemic Principle of Alternate Possibilities, EPAP.)
- (6) People cannot believe otherwise than they actually do. (premise)
- (7) People lack voluntary control over their beliefs. (5, 6)
- (8) Hence beliefs are not among the proper objects of reactive attitudes. (4, 7)

First, a few comments on (6). As it stands, this premise is a bit unclear. Exactly which modal claim is being made? Richard Feldman has recently stressed that certain formulations of the Argument from Involuntarism fall victim to the simple objection that our beliefs normally track states of affairs that we can causally determine (Feldman 2001, 81–82.). When I open the window, my doxastic system will normally incorporate the belief that I have opened the window. But then, insofar as it was in my power to abstain from opening the window, it was also in my power to abstain from adopting the corresponding belief. In general, there seem to be many ways of *indirect* belief control: by engaging in a psychological training, you can learn not to believe everything your favorite philosophy teacher (or your mother, best friend, and so forth) tells you; by checking your encyclopedia, you can acquire beliefs about the total population of Mexico City. But such kinds of indirect control are not what advocates of epistemic deontology typically have in mind. As Feldman concedes, such considerations do not contest that we are “at the mercy of our evidence” (83). The (alleged) problem is not that *under different epistemic conditions*, in different epistemic worlds, we could not believe otherwise than we actually do. The problem is that, in light of the grounds we actually have for and against a given belief, we cannot but adopt or reject it. Is premise (6), construed in this way, acceptable?

I don't want to dispute this. We certainly cannot form our beliefs willy-nilly. Obvious examples are perceptual beliefs or beliefs about our own current mental states. It may be objected that the situation is different for propositions that are not obviously true or false. Thus when it comes to scientific or philosophical theories, for instance, one's evidence for and against a certain proposition is often more or less evenly balanced. Or consider cases in which one accepts a proposition under practical pressure, such as when you are lost in the mountains and reach a fork in the trail, but have no idea which direction will lead you back into the valley. Don't we, in situations like this, eventually *decide* to believe: “This is the right track”? I don't think so. It may be true that it is practically rational for you to act *as if* you were confident that you are on the right track. Epistemically speaking, however, you are in a Buridan's ass situation when your evidence doesn't in any way favor this hypothesis over its denial. And it seems right to say that under such conditions (as Alston for example has argued) you cannot really maintain a *belief* to the effect that you are on the right track. The same would seem to hold for adopting a scientific or a philosophical theory without having better epistemic reasons for holding it true than false.

One may adopt a theory as a working hypothesis. But working with it *as a working hypothesis* does not amount to believing it. Now, contrary to such considerations some authors have argued that it *is* in our power, at least for a wide variety of beliefs, to decide which beliefs to hold.⁵ I will not go deeper into this debate here, however, for my point is that, even if (6) is *true*, the Argument from Involuntarism does not give us a good reason to reject epistemic deontology.

3. The Principle of Alternate Possibilities, and Two Notions of Control

Whether premise 1 of the Argument from Involuntarism—the claim that deontic judgments about actions require voluntary control—is acceptable depends on how we interpret the notion of “voluntary control.” Premise 2 tells us something about how we are to understand that notion. It tells us that an agent has voluntary control over an action only if she could have done otherwise. Now, apparently this claim is a version of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities (PAP) which is so hotly debated in contemporary discussions about freedom and moral responsibility. As a result of these discussions, many authors, both from compatibilist and incompatibilist camps, nowadays reject that principle.⁶ But then the first thing to be noted this: if the many critics of PAP are right, and if I am right that the Argument from Involuntarism employs PAP, this argument collapses.

I noted that premise 2 is a *version* of PAP. Another popular formulation of that principle, the formulation that figures for example in Harry Frankfurt’s famous rejection of PAP, is slightly different. Frankfurt (1969) talks about *responsibility* and tries to show that the following claim is false:

(PAP) An agent is morally responsible for what he does only if he could have done otherwise (cf. Frankfurt 1969, 1).

However, this version of PAP is equivalent to the one that figures in our reconstruction of the Argument from Involuntarism. For whether or not we want to adopt a Frankfurt-style theory of moral responsibility, it seems true to say that an agent is morally responsible for an act if and only if he has voluntary control over it, or performs it of his own free will. The question is how exactly we are to understand these notions, and especially whether doing something of one’s own free will, or having voluntary control over what one does, requires alternative possibilities. But if we don’t pre-import any judgments about whether such a constraint is integral to free will and voluntary control, a definition of responsibility in terms of voluntary control seems highly plausible and doesn’t beg the question.

But now recall the classic case against PAP. A Frankfurt-style counterexample that predates

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5. Carl Ginet, for instance, agrees that epistemic deontology implies the control thesis, but tries to defend this thesis by claiming that in effect “there is a sort of state that counts as a state of believing a proposition, which state is such that it is clear that one could come to be in such a state simply by deciding to do so” (Ginet 2001, 63–64). And “deciding to believe” implies for Ginet that “the person *could* in the circumstances have *not* come to have the belief in question” (63).
 6. Detailed attempts to integrate Frankfurt’s insights into an incompatibilist theory of freedom and moral responsibility can be found in the work of Eleonore Stump. See for example Stump 1999.

Frankfurt's birth by some 250 years can be found in a famous passage of Locke's *Essay*. Locke asks us to suppose that

“a Man be carried, whilst fast asleep, into a Room, where is a Person he longs to see and speak with; and be there locked fast in, beyond his Power to get out: he awakes, and is glad to find himself in so desirable Company, which he stays willingly in, i.e. prefers [sic!] his stay to going away. I ask, Is not this stay voluntary?” (Locke 1975, 238; *Essay*, book II, chapter XXI, § 10).

Locke concludes that “Voluntary is [...] not opposed to Necessary” (ibid., 239). What Locke wants to say here, I believe, is that doing something freely, or acting of one's own free will, does not require being able to do otherwise. Consider now a case in which Locke's doors, so to speak, are “locked” in the mind of an epistemic subject. (Those who are familiar with Frankfurt-style (F-style) counterexamples to PAP may skip the rest of this paragraph.) Suppose *S* voluntarily performs a certain action, but her behavior is overdetermined in the following way: a nefarious neurosurgeon, Black, has implanted a mechanism into *S*'s brain so that he can monitor and control *S*'s volitions, decisions, or choices with respect to doing *A*. If *S* decides to do *A*, Black will not intervene, but if *S* decides to abstain from doing *A*, Black will push his button and cause *S* to decide to do *A* nevertheless. Suppose now that Black doesn't have to show his hand because *S* decides to do *A* of her own accord. In that case, Frankfurt and friends argue, *S* would be responsible for her decision (and the respective course of action), even though she doesn't have alternative possibilities.

John Martin Fischer has tried to capture the intuition behind this reasoning by distinguishing two notions of voluntary control (Fischer 1994, 133 and 160–189). One is what may be termed “alternative-possibilities control.” This kind of control obtains only when the subject is able to do otherwise. The other kind of control however, which Fischer calls “guidance control,” does not require alternative possibilities. Suppose you drive a car and, by putting the relevant mechanisms to work, steer it to the right. But now suppose the vehicle is a special type of training car, and if you had not steered it to the right, your driving instructor would have pushed a button and the car would still have turned to the right. In that case, you enjoy “guidance control,” but not alternative-possibilities control, over steering the car to the right. Using this terminology, my question may be put like this: is it true that, as the Argument from Involuntarism assumes, doxastic responsibility does not, or not only, require doxastic guidance control, but direct control over alternative doxastic possibilities?

Even though a growing number of authors believes that F-style arguments against PAP are on target, the issue is controversial. There have been several sophisticated attempts to show that F-style counterexamples to PAP are in fact not successful. These attempts have been met by refined counterexamples, which have in turn been the target of meta-criticisms, and no doubt the beat will go on.⁷ Since entering this controversy lies outside the scope of this paper, the conclusion I want to draw so far is conditional. Up to this point we should only say that the Argument from Involuntarism relies on a premise that is at least just as controversial and problematic as the assumption that people have no choice about what to believe.

7. For this discussion and some instructive surveys over the state of the debate until a few years ago, consider the articles in the section on freedom and determinism in Tomberlin 2000.

Can we go further? So far we have seen that there is a problem with the *argument* leading up to step 5 of the Argument from Involuntarism, EPAP. But that doesn't show that this latter principle is false. In the remaining sections of this paper I therefore want to examine whether an intuition analogous to the one that underlies F-style objections to PAP also casts doubt upon the epistemic cousin of that principle, EPAP. To this end, let us once more engage in some neuro-fiction.

4. Freedom to Believe

Suppose you are a victim of a neurosurgeon who is fanatical about maximizing the true beliefs in his patients. While you spend your rehabilitation year in his clinic, he sends you off one day to count the trees in the park. He knows the number is 53, but he also knows that, since this is your first day outside for many months, it will be hard for you to concentrate on counting trees. If you return with the wrong figure, he will push his button and make the mechanism get things straight in your brain. As it happens, however, he doesn't need to intervene because you accumulate good reasons for believing there are precisely 53 trees in the park, and generate that belief of your own accord. In this case it would seem that you are fully responsible for your belief, and your adopting this belief is an appropriate object of epistemic approval. As the case is set up, however, you could not have believed otherwise. Put in terms of "control," we may say that you enjoyed guidance control, but not alternative-possibilities control. It is like steering the car in the right direction when there is no possibility to steer it in the wrong direction. If such stories can coherently be told, reactive attitudes toward beliefs don't require that the subject have some kind of voluntary doxastic control that requires alternative doxastic possibilities.⁸

This idea is not new. Descartes suggests a very similar account of doxastic freedom. A well known feature of his theory of judgment is his notoriously hybrid position with regard to doxastic voluntarism. According to the theory laid out in the Fourth Meditation, judgments are products of two faculties: (i) the faculty of knowledge, or of the intellect (*facultas cognoscendi, intellectus*), and (ii) the faculty of choice or freedom (*facultas eligendi, sive arbitrii libertas*). The latter Descartes also calls "will" (*voluntas*). Now insofar as judging, according to Descartes, always involves the will, we may in any case classify him as a voluntarist. What is interesting in the present context, however, is this: on the one hand, Descartes complains that we often form beliefs about a proposition, even though we don't "perceive" that proposition with sufficient clarity and distinctness. This, Descartes criticizes, leads to error. Yet on the other hand there are situations in which one does perceive a proposition clearly and distinctly, and in such cases, says Descartes, one cannot but judge that the proposition is true (or false). Consider the question whether anything in the world exists. From the very fact of his raising that question over the past few days, Descartes argues, it follows quite evidently that *he* exists. And he adds:

8. I had already written the penultimate draft of this paper, and presented it in Kirchberg, when I came across a paper by Linda Zagzebski in which she also discusses "epistemic Frankfurt cases" (Zagzebski 2001). Her topic is not the Argument from Involuntarism, but she argues as well that in an epistemic Frankfurt case the person "gets epistemic credit, and for the same reason that she is morally responsible in the standard Frankfurt case" (148). I must leave a fuller discussion of Zagzebski's account for another occasion.

“I could not but judge that something which I understood so clearly was true; but this was not because I was compelled so to judge by an external force, but because a great light in the intellect was followed by a great inclination in the will, and thus *the spontaneity and freedom of my belief was all the greater in proportion to my lack of indifference*” (Descartes 1984, 41 / AT 58–59; see also 40 / AT 58, my italics).

What Descartes wants to convince us of in this passage, I believe, is that the Epistemic Principle of Alternate Possibilities is false.

5. Two Objections

I have argued that a central premise (or in-between conclusion) of the Argument from Involuntarism—EPAP—should be rejected. I have sketched a Frankfurt-style attack on this principle which shows that a person may lack alternative-possibilities-control over her beliefs and yet be an appropriate object of reactive attitudes with respect to these beliefs. However, it may be objected, if this is right then all the *problems* that plague the original F-style criticisms of PAP will create analogous problems for our epistemological argument against EPAP. Let us see whether this suspicion can be substantiated.

One very popular criticism is this: F-style stories assume that the protagonist of the counterfactual situation is identical with the actual agent. Suppose that in the next California gubernatorial election Smith decides on his own *not* to vote for Schwarzenegger. Had he shown any inclination to vote *for* Schwarzenegger, however, a counterfactual intervener would have pushed a button and thereby secured that Smith would still have voted against Schwarzenegger. (Call this the “De-terminator situation.”) However, is it really *Smith* who, in the counterfactual situation, would have voted for another gubernator? A closer look, so the objection, reveals that this is not so. In the counterfactual situation it isn’t really Smith who makes the decision, for the mental state in question is caused in him by someone else. Is there an analogous problem for our F-style story about belief? Regarding our tree-counting example, the objection would have gone like this: it is assumed that in the counterfactual situation the patient arrives at his belief via direct brain stimulation. But then it would strictly speaking not be *his* belief, for it is someone else who causes him to believe as he does. Hence the story is incoherent and fails to provide a convincing counterexample to EPAP.

Whatever we may want to say about this kind of problem with respect to the original Frankfurt stories, applied to our case against EPAP, this challenge is unconvincing. For if, in our story, it is not the patient’s belief, who else’s belief is it? There is only one other candidate, namely the neurosurgeon. If that is the idea, however, it is easy to alter the example in order to show clearly that this objection fails. Suppose the neurosurgeon sends you off to count the trees in the park, but this time his aim is just to test his device. He has again programmed the neuroscope in a way that, if you arrive at the belief that the number of trees is 53, it is not put to work; otherwise it will operate. But now simply add to the story that the neurologist himself knows that the number of trees is *not* 53, or that he has no belief whatever about the right figure. Whose belief then, if not yours, would it be if in the counterfactual situation the mechanism does operate and you come up with the answer “53”?

Another objection that mirrors a popular worry about PAP might be that in the counterfac-

tual situation it is not the *same belief* as in the actual situation. Let's call this the "different-beliefs objection." Regarding Frankfurt's attack on PAP, objections of this type rely on a principle of event individuation to the effect that, whenever the causal history of an event *E* differs from that of *E'*, *E* and *E'* are different. If this is true, it can be argued that in F-style stories the action in the counterfactual situation, or its morally relevant consequences, are not identical with the action, or its morally relevant consequences, in the actual situation. For the causal histories in the two worlds are different. If this is true, Frankfurt cannot claim that in his scenarios the agent is responsible for what he does, even though he has no alternative to performing *the action he actually performs*.

Now, to begin with, the principle of event individuation relied upon in this argument is not uncontroversial. Although I don't have the space here to discuss this issue in great detail, I would like to point out that, with respect to mental attitudes such as beliefs, the prospects for an objection along such lines appear skimpy. An initial reply might be that beliefs are mental states rather than events. But this would not cut much ice. A famous argument against Frankfurt's rejection of PAP that employs the above principle of event individuation has been developed by van Inwagen (1983, 166–180). And van Inwagen has argued—convincingly, I believe—that an analogous argument can also be constructed for states of affairs.⁹ However, what would warrant the claim that in our epistemic Frankfurt-story the subject's actual belief differs from the one formed in the counterfactual situation? To be sure, the processes by which the beliefs are generated differ. But this does not imply that the *results* of these processes, i.e. the doxastic attitudes in question, are not the same. I cannot see any good reason to assume such a difference. If *S* were asked, she would give the same answer ("The number of trees in the park is 53"). All her verbal and her non-verbal behavior would be identical, and if she were to check her doxastic profile introspectively, the actual and the counterfactual situation would deliver exactly the same results: *S* would believe that she believes the right number is 53. In short, both from these first- and third-person perspectives the attitude induced in *S* in the counterfactual situation would be indistinguishable from *S*'s belief in the actual situation. But then it would seem highly implausible to argue that the beliefs in the two situations are not the same.

6. Conclusion

The Epistemic Principle of Alternate Possibilities maintains that voluntary control over beliefs requires that one have alternative doxastic possibilities. Since we are not free to either adopt or reject a belief, the critic of epistemic deontology argues, beliefs are not under voluntary control and hence cannot be regarded as proper objects of deontology. I have challenged this argument by making a case for the thesis that what is needed at least for the reactive-attitude part of epistemic deontology is not alternative-possibilities control. The argument as it could be developed in this paper is still sketchy, and many relevant questions haven't even been touched upon. In particular, I have not offered any further analysis of what it means to have "guidance control" over beliefs, or to believe something of one's own accord. Secondly, there was no time to delve more deeply into the objections outlined above, let alone take up other objections that may be

9. Van Inwagen's argument has been challenged, however. See especially Fischer 1994, 136–142.

imported from the debate about PAP.¹⁰ Nevertheless, I hope it has emerged that it is at least very plausible to assume that, as long as we hold beliefs on the basis of what we think are good reasons, and want to hold them on the basis of good reasons, there is a crucial sense in which we hold them freely, even if we cannot believe otherwise. This sense of “holding beliefs freely” suffices to render them proper objects of reactive attitudes.¹¹

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10. One objection that would deserve special attention in this context is David Widerker’s charge that either Frankfurt does not in fact give us situations in which the agent is responsible for an action while at the same not being causally determined to perform it, or that he does not give us situations in which the agent cannot do otherwise (cf. Widerker 1995 and 2000). Does a problem of this type also arise for epistemic Frankfurt cases? This depends on how we are to understand the determination of beliefs by their reasons, and whether refined versions of epistemic Frankfurt cases can be constructed which are immune to such objections.

11. This paper has been presented at the *26th International Wittgenstein Symposium* 2003 in Kirchberg, and at the *5th Conference of the Society for Analytical Philosophy* 2003 in Bielefeld. I am grateful to the audiences for their discussions. For valuable comments I would also like to thank Katherine Munn and Mark Siebel.

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