

teorema

Vol. XXXVII/2, 2018, pp. 139-151

ISSN 0210-1602

[BIBLID 0210-1602 (2018) 37:2; pp. 139-151

Differential Derivative Responsibility: A Reply to Peels

Benjamin Rossi

RESUMEN

En el núcleo del libro de Rik Peels, *Responsible Belief: A Theory in Ethics and Epistemology* está la idea de que la responsabilidad por las creencias debe entenderse de acuerdo con el modelo de la responsabilidad por los estados de cosas que están sujetos a nuestra influencia, pero no bajo nuestro control intencional, o lo que él llama *responsabilidad derivada*. Argumento en este artículo que la reflexión sobre la naturaleza y el alcance de la responsabilidad derivada revela importantes lagunas en la explicación de Peels de la creencia responsable y en su explicación de la responsabilidad por las creencias que uno tiene.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *responsabilidad derivada, suerte doxástica, responsabilidad epistémica, control intencional.*

ABSTRACT

At the heart of Rik Peels's *Responsible Belief: A Theory in Ethics and Epistemology* is the idea that responsibility for belief ought to be understood on the model of responsibility for states of affairs that are subject to our influence but not under our intentional control, or what he calls *derivative responsibility*. In this article, I argue that reflection on the nature and scope of derivative responsibility reveals important lacunae in Peels's account of responsible belief and his account of responsibility for belief.

KEYWORDS: *Derivative Responsibility, Doxastic Luck, Epistemic Responsibility, Intentional Control.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Rik Peels's *Responsible Belief: A Theory in Ethics and Epistemology* is a remarkably rich work that makes for fruitful reading not just for those interested in epistemic responsibility, but epistemology and responsibility generally. In these remarks, I take up just one of the many important issues that his book raises: the scope and nature of responsibility for states of affairs that are under our influence but not our intentional control. I

argue that reflection on this issue reveals important lacunae in Peels's account of responsible belief *and* his account of responsibility *for* belief.

II. DIFFERENTIAL DERIVATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Peels's accounts of responsible belief and responsibility for belief are both modeled after the responsibility that agents sometimes bear for the consequences of their actions over which they exercise some *influence*, though not intentional control. Peels cashes out an agent's *influence* over a state of affairs in terms of the idea that the agent could have done something which would have made a difference to whether or not that state of affairs obtained. More precisely, on this view, we have *influence* over a state of affairs Σ just in case there is some action we can perform at some point in time such that if we perform that action, Σ will obtain, and if we don't perform that action, Σ will not obtain [Peels (2017), p. 90]. Moreover, following William Alston, Peels characterizes influence-based responsibility as a distinct *kind* of responsibility: to wit, we are *originally* responsible for ϕ -ing only if ϕ -ing is under our intentional control, but we can be *derivatively* responsible ϕ -ing if ϕ -ing is under our *influence*.¹

Consider this example as an illustration of the distinction:

Imagine that I work in a hospital and that it is my task to fill the oxygen bottles that are used in the ambulance. I have an obligation to do so. Since I have control over whether or not I meet this obligation, I am originally responsible for whether or not I do so. However, out of laziness I fail to do so. One day, the ambulance attendants arrive upon a scene in which someone desperately needs oxygen. Unfortunately, the bottle is now empty, so that they cannot save him and he dies from a lack of oxygen. In this case, I have no control over whether or not the victim is saved, for I cannot intentionally set out to save him. I do not even know that he exists or that he is a victim...Nevertheless, it seems that I am blameworthy for his not being saved, because I had influence on that. For if I had filled the oxygen bottles, as I should have, he would not have died. Thus, I am not originally, but nevertheless derivatively, blameworthy for his death [Peels (2017), pp. 117-18].

Peels plausibly claims that whereas the hospital worker has *original* responsibility for not filling the oxygen tanks — an action that is under his intentional control — he has *derivative* responsibility for the patient's death in virtue of his *influence* over this state of affairs. That is to say, there is an action available to the hospital worker at some point in time — refilling

the oxygen bottles — such that if she performs that action, the patient will not die, and if she fails to perform that action, the patient will die.

Similarly, Peels argues that with respect to responsibility for belief, we are *originally* responsible for certain belief-influencing actions that are subject to certain intellectual obligations; and we are *derivatively* responsible for the beliefs are *influenced* by such actions. We believe *responsibly* or *blamelessly* when our beliefs are *not* influenced by our *failure* to meet some intellectual obligation by (not) performing some belief-influencing action.

Now, examples like that of the hospital worker raise a thorny issue about our responsibility for the consequences of action. Our actions have many consequences that are beyond our intentional control but under our influence. However, we seem only to be responsible for *some* of these consequences. The hospital worker is blameworthy for the patient's death, and this is surely connected to the fact that if she had not failed to refill the oxygen tanks, the patient would not have died. However, there will plausibly be *many* bad knock-on effects of the patient's death: for example, perhaps the patient's wife will remarry a man who abuses her children. If this happens, then we do not think the hospital worker is blameworthy for the abuse despite the fact that if she had not failed to refill the oxygen tanks, the children would not have suffered it. Any theory of responsibility worth its salt must be able to account for the distinction between consequences under our influence for which we *are* responsible, and consequences under our influence for which we *are not* responsible. Put another way, any plausible theory of responsibility must be able to define the scope of derivative responsibility in a way that is neither excessively inclusive nor excessively exclusive from the standpoint of our considered judgments. I will call this the *problem of differential derivative responsibility*. In what follows, I will show how this problem makes trouble both for Peels's account of responsibility for belief and his account of responsible belief.

III. RESPONSIBILITY FOR BELIEF AND RESPONSIBLE BELIEF

III.1 *Responsibility for Belief*

The problem of differential derivative responsibility arises in at least two places for Peels's theory of doxastic responsibility. First, it poses a difficulty for his account of responsibility for belief. Although Peels's explicit focus for most of the book is responsible or blameless belief, we can derive the following account of responsibility *for* belief from the former:

- (1) S is responsible for believing that p iff (i) S believes that p and (ii) there is some belief-influencing action or series of actions A that S could have performed such that if S had performed A , S would not have believed that p [Peels (2017), p. 143].²

Roughly, responsibility for belief is, in Peels's pithy turn of phrase, a matter of "being able to believe otherwise." I take it that S has the ability to believe otherwise with respect to her belief that p just in case S 's having the belief that p is under her influence, so that (1) is a way of articulating the claim that we are responsible for our beliefs just in case they are under our influence.³ Is this account of responsibility for belief true? The first thing to notice is that an exactly parallel general account of responsibility for states of affairs clearly fails precisely because it does not take into account differential derivative responsibility:

- (2) S is responsible for state of affairs Σ iff (i) Σ obtains and (ii) there is some action or series of actions A that S could have performed such that if S had performed A , Σ would not have occurred.

If (2) were true, then the hospital worker would be responsible for not only for the patient's death, but also for the abuse of the patient's children. Cases like these show that (2) does not provide sufficient conditions for responsibility, and so that *influence* over state of affairs Σ is not sufficient for responsibility for Σ . There seem to be parallel cases in the doxastic realm that show that (1) does not provide sufficient conditions for *doxastic* responsibility. Suppose that Julia comes to believe that p at t . Stipulate that she could have performed some belief-influencing action at t such that if she had performed that action at t , she would not have believed that p at t . Suppose that at some later point t^* , Julia is afflicted with severe Alzheimer's disease, but she continues to believe that p . I think that Julia is not responsible for her belief that p at t^* , despite satisfying the conditions laid out in (2).

Peels might object that he has officially argued only that responsibility for belief entails the ability to believe otherwise, not that it is a *sufficient* condition of responsibility for belief. However, the logical relations between his accounts of responsible belief and responsibility *for* belief compel me to assume that Peels's account of the latter *ought* to provide necessary and sufficient conditions of responsibility for belief; hence, his account as it stands is *either* incomplete or false. Blameless belief is a *kind*

of belief for which we are responsible. Hence, just as any informative account of S 's being a bachelor must either contain the condition that S is male or an account of being male because a bachelor is a kind of male, so any informative account of S 's responsible belief that p must contain either the condition that S is responsible for the belief that p or an *account* of responsibility for the belief that p . Peels's account of responsible belief does not contain the condition that S is responsible for the belief that p , so I have to assume that it contains an *account* of being responsible for the belief that p ; and since the only conditions he gives for such responsibility are (i) and (ii) of (1), I interpret this as an account of responsibility for the belief that p . In addition, Peels says that satisfying (i) and (ii) of (1) "guarantee" [Peels (2017), p. 143] that S is responsible for believing that p , which would not be the case if (i) and (ii) were merely necessary conditions on responsibility for the belief that p . In short, if Peels did not intend (i) and (ii) to be singly necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for responsibility for believing that p , then his account of responsible belief is incomplete; if he did intend for (i) and (ii) to be singly necessary and jointly sufficient for responsibility, then his account is false.

Next, it might be argued that (1) can be salvaged by the inclusion of temporal indices as follows:

- (3) S is responsible for believing that p at t iff (i) S believes that p at t and (ii) there is some belief-influencing action or series of actions A that S could have performed at t such that if S had performed A , S would not have believed that p at t .

The problem is that conditions (i) and (ii) are not necessary for being responsible for believing that p at t . Suppose that, on the basis of a complex mathematical proof, Julia comes to believe some mathematical proposition p at t in a way that satisfies conditions (i) and (ii) of (3). Later, Julia goes surfing. Suppose that while surfing there is no belief-influencing action that Julia could perform that would lead her to cease believing that p ; in fact, there is nothing she could do to alter her doxastic mechanisms, cognitive situatedness, or cognitive dispositions that would cause her even to *reconsider* whether p , much less cease believing that p . Still, I submit that she (dormantly) believes that p responsibly. If that's the case, then satisfying (i) and (ii) or (3) is not necessary for responsible belief.

It is a standard move in the literature on responsibility for states of affairs to propose some *epistemic* condition on derivative responsibility. For example, it might be thought that

- (4) S is responsible for state of affairs Σ iff (i) Σ obtains and (ii) there is some action or series of actions \mathcal{A} that S could have performed such that if S had performed \mathcal{A} , Σ would not have occurred and (iii) S knew or reasonably could have known that (i) is true.

Roughly, (4) claims that responsibility for a state of affairs Σ requires not merely that an agent has influence over Σ , but that the agent is aware or could reasonably be aware that she wields such influence. There are two problems with transposing (4) into the doxastic realm. First, it does not seem that adding an epistemic condition would help to square the account with our intuitions about Julia's responsibility for her belief at t^* . Second, it is well-recognized in the responsibility literature that given our epistemic limitations, the number of states of affairs that will satisfy (i)-(iii) will be small relative to the number that satisfy only (i) and (ii) but not (iii) [cf. Vargas (2005)]. This raises the worry that we are not responsible for as much as we might have intuitively thought. As Peels recognizes, the limitations on our knowledge are even greater with respect to the effects of our actions on specifically *doxastic* states of affairs. In many cases, we simply do not know and cannot reasonably know what beliefs (or even what *kind* of beliefs) will issue from our belief-influencing actions. Hence, a version of (4) that purports to be an account of responsibility for belief would entail that we are not responsible for many beliefs.

III.2 Responsible Belief

The second point at which the problem of differential derivative responsibility arises in Peels's theory is in his account of *responsible* belief. On Peels's view,

- (5) S responsibly believes that p iff (i) S believes that p and (ii) there is some belief-influencing action or series of actions \mathcal{A} that S could have performed such that if S had performed \mathcal{A} , S would not have believed that p , and (iii) S has *not* violated any all-things-considered intellectual obligation such that if S had met that obligation, certain belief-influencing facts would have changed in such a way that S would not have believed that p [Peels (2017), p. 143].⁴

Peels's view makes responsible belief crucially depend on the belief's *not* being influenced by the violation of some intellectual obligation. But

such violations have many doxastic consequences that are beyond one's intentional control. For example, an agent's failure to meet an intellectual obligation to cultivate some intellectual virtue can lead to the agent's having a plethora of beliefs that she would not have had had she met that obligation. Peels recognizes that we will be blameworthy for *some* of these beliefs, but we won't be blameworthy for all of them. To illustrate the point, Peels adduces the case of Julia:

...Julia has an intellectual obligation to attend a racial issues class and...she culpably fails to meet that obligation, say, because she is lazy. Unbeknownst to anyone else except her teacher, during the lessons her teacher not only addresses racial issues, but also shares stories about her many travels to Africa...If Julia were to attend class, she would abandon certain false beliefs about Africa that, I stipulate, she now *blamelessly* holds...It is clear that if Julia violates her intellectual obligation to attend class, she is blameless for having two false beliefs about Africa [Peels (2017), p. 202] [Ibid., p. 213].

Peels claims, plausibly, that although Julia is blameworthy for holding racist beliefs as a result of not attending the class, she is blameless for holding false beliefs about Africa. The point generalizes: we can sometimes believe responsibly even when our having the belief is influenced by our failure to meet an intellectual obligation. Now, since both Julia's racist beliefs and her false beliefs about Africa issue from her failure to meet her intellectual obligation, (5) entails that Julia is blameworthy for both kinds of belief. Peels must explain why the racist beliefs are blameworthy and the beliefs about Africa are blameless, which requires revising (5) and telling a story about how these beliefs are relevantly different. In short, Peels must account for a kind of differential derivative responsibility, where this time the difference is not between beliefs we are responsible for and beliefs we are not responsible for, but between beliefs we are *blameworthy* for and beliefs for which we are *blameless*.

Before examining Peels's solution I want to briefly examine his framing of the problem, which he understands in terms of the idea of *consequential luck*. On his view, a state of affairs is lucky or unlucky for some agent just in case (a) it is beyond the agent's intentional control; (b) it is significant to the agent; and (c) it could easily not have obtained [Peels (2017), p. 202]. Peels is, of course, particularly concerned with *doxastic states of affairs*, characteristically the state of affairs of having a belief. A doxastic state of affairs is subject to *consequential luck* just when it satisfies conditions (a)-(c) and is one consequence of a belief-influencing ac-

tion. Peels claims that with respect to almost any belief, our having it is subject to consequential luck:

In fact, it seems that virtually *any* belief is subject to consequential luck. After all, I argued that even if we have intentional control over whether or not we meet an intellectual obligation, we hardly ever have any control over the ensuing beliefs. And it seems that for most of our intellectual obligations, such as those of gathering evidence and working on our intellectual virtues and vices, whether or not we meet them does not guarantee that one has a particular belief. This is because precisely which beliefs issue from whether or not one meets one's intellectual obligations will often depend on factors that are beyond one's control and that could easily have been different [Peels (2017), p. 214].

In other words, Peels's claim is this: for almost any belief B, that I hold B is a matter of consequential luck since it is a state of affairs that is the consequence of a belief-influencing action; it is beyond my intentional control; it is significant to me; and it could have easily failed to obtain. The trouble is that as Julia's case shows, with respect to beliefs that issue from the *failure* to meet intellectual obligations, we are clearly blameworthy for some of these beliefs and blameless for others. Hence, Peels frames the problem as one of explaining how we are differentially responsible for our beliefs when they are all or almost all subject to consequential luck.

I fear that framing the issue in terms of consequential luck understates the seriousness of the problem. For there are many beliefs the having of which is, according to Peels's account, neither lucky nor unlucky simply because it is not *significant* for anyone. In the case of Julia, that she has certain false beliefs about Africa may be a matter of indifference to her, and unless we think that simply having a false belief is harmful to one, it is not harmful to her. Yet if she is blameless for them, then Peels's account of responsible belief must entail that this is the case *even though* her having these beliefs is not a matter of luck. In general, the problem for accounts of responsible belief that the Julia case highlights is not limited to cases of lucky or unlucky beliefs; rather, it extends to all beliefs (a) for which we are responsible; (b) that are not under our intentional control; and (c) that issue from the violation of our intellectual obligations. Hence, I will frame Peels's revision of (5) not in terms of luck, but in terms of doxastic consequences that issue from violations of intellectual obligations.

Returning to Peels's solution to the problem, Peels's explanation of why Julia is blameworthy for her racist beliefs but blameless for her false beliefs about Africa is that the racist beliefs, but not the beliefs about Af-

rica, partially ground the intellectual obligation that she violates by not attending the racial issues class. Here is his how he puts it:

Let us assume that Julia holds certain racist beliefs r_1 , r_2 , and r_3 , and certain beliefs about African fauna and geography a_1 , a_2 , and a_3 that are all false and that are such that if she were to meet [her obligation to attend the racial issues class], she would abandon them, because her teacher not only teaches racial issues but also shares, for the fun of it, her knowledge about the African countries that she visited. Now, what I would like to suggest is that r_1 , r_2 , and r_3 are *non-accidentally* related to [her obligation to perform a belief-influencing action that will rid her of her racist beliefs], in the sense that Julia has [this obligation] partly *in virtue of* or *because of* the fact that there is something subjectively and in this case objectively bad about r_1 , r_2 , and r_3 . Of course, there is something objectively bad about a_1 , a_2 , and a_3 , for these beliefs are false. But Julia has an intellectual obligation to try to remove her racist beliefs because she realizes that her racist beliefs are false and morally bad, *not* because a_1 , a_2 , and a_3 are false [Peels (2017), p. 216].

Peels's basic thought, I take it, is that what explains why Julia is blameworthy for her racist beliefs but blameless for her beliefs about Africa is that Julia's racist beliefs are in some important way connected to the obligation she violates by failing to attend the racial issues class, whereas her false beliefs about Africa are not, except in a sort of accidental way, connected to that obligation. In spelling out this case, Peels makes two important moves. First, Peels notes that there are actually two obligations at play in the Julia case: a general obligation to perform a belief-influencing action that will rid her of racist beliefs and, derived from this, a more particular obligation to attend the racial issues class. Now, it's true that beliefs r_1 , r_2 , and r_3 and a_1 , a_2 , and a_3 are all influenced by Julia's failure to meet her particular obligation to attend the racial issues class. But, Peels says, since beliefs r_1 , r_2 , and r_3 are partial *grounds* of Julia's more general obligation, her failure to meet this obligation *by* meeting her particular obligation means that Julia's holding r_1 , r_2 , and r_3 is blameworthy. By contrast, since beliefs a_1 , a_2 , and a_3 are not grounds of her general obligation, the fact that she would not believe a_1 , a_2 , and a_3 if she had met the particular obligation to attend the racial issues class does not make her holding these beliefs blameworthy. With this explanation in hand, Peels modifies (5) accordingly, yielding:

(6) S responsibly believes that p iff (i) S believes that p and (ii) there is some belief-influencing action or series of actions \mathcal{A} that S could have performed such that if S had performed \mathcal{A} , S would not have believed

that p , and (iii) S has *not* violated any original all-things-considered intellectual obligation to which S 's belief that p is non-accidentally related such that if S had met that obligation, certain belief-influencing facts would have changed in such a way that S would not have believed that p [Peels (2017), p. 143].

Although I think that the basic idea underlying Peels's response is on the right track, reflection on a number of other cases reveals that Peels's spelling out of this idea fails to pick out necessary or sufficient conditions for responsible belief. Let's consider two such cases. Suppose that Hank has an intellectual obligation to study for his biology exam but fails to do so. As a result, Hank continues to believe that p , some false biological proposition. Let's suppose that at this point, his belief is blameworthy. Later, Hank is told by Rhonda, a friend that he knows to be generally reliable, that p is true. If Hank had studied for his biology exam, he would not have believed that p even if Rhonda had told him that p is true, since he generally favors academic resources over his friends' testimony in forming and maintaining his beliefs. I submit that if, partly on the basis of Rhonda's testimony, Hank continues to believe that p , Hank believes that p responsibly. However, (6) would entail that Hank does not believe that p responsibly, since Hank *has* violated an intellectual obligation that is partly grounded in that very belief and such that if he had met that obligation, he would not have believed that p .

It might be objected that this putative counterexample fails for either of two reasons: first, because Hank's intellectual obligation is *not* partly grounded in his false biological belief that p , and second, that what we are taking for blamelessness with respect to Hank's belief that p is really some other epistemic property, such as *justification* or *rationality*. Evaluating these objections will require that we spell out the account of intellectual obligation that, following Peels, I am using:

(7) Some person S has an intellectual obligation to φ iff (i) S has control over φ -ing, (ii) whether or not S φ -s will make a difference to S 's beliefs, and (iii) $\sim\varphi$ -ing is objectively or subjectively bad in that it leads to or maintains beliefs that are objectively or subjectively bad.

Given this account, the objection that Hank's intellectual obligation is *not* partly grounded in his false biological belief that p seems fairly weak. What would explain Hank's obligation to study for his biology exam *if not* the fact that failure to study for biology will lead to or maintain his ignorance of biology, which is partially constituted by his false biological

beliefs? As for the objection that Hank's belief is justified or rational but not blameless, I'm not sure what the basis of this assertion would be. Moreover, if Peels is right about epistemic justification, then at least most justified beliefs will also be blameless.

The general point of Hank's case is this: Peels's account of responsible belief does not seem to be able to accommodate the fact that the blameworthiness of a belief (and, in general, the belief's status as a proper object of praise, blame, or neutral normative attitudes) can change over time. Peels's account implies that if a belief is once blame-worthy, it is always blameworthy: the belief's "original sin," that it issued from the violation of all-things-considered obligation, is irrevocable and immutable. But this is clearly false.

Hank's case shows that condition (iii) of (6) is not necessary for responsible belief. A second case shows that it is not sufficient. Jenny wants to become a computer-controlled machine tool operator, but she is *deeply ignorant* of all the true propositions q, r, \dots concerning how to operate this machine. Following Peels, I define *deep ignorance* as follows:

- (8) S is deeply ignorant that p iff (i) it is true that p , and (ii) S neither believes that p , nor disbelieves that p , nor suspends belief on p .

So, Jenny's *deep ignorance* of true propositions q, r, \dots concerning the operation of the machine tool consists in her *not believing* that $[q]$ and *not believing* that $[r], \dots$; *not believing* that $[\sim q]$ and *not believing* that $[\sim r], \dots$; and *not suspending belief* on $[q]$ and *not suspending belief* on $[r], \dots$. Suppose that q is a quite counterintuitive proposition, such that if Jenny didn't properly study how to operate the machine tool and instead tried to "wing it" on her first day, she would come to believe that $\sim q$. Now I think it's clear that, if she seriously intends to become a machine tool operator, she has an intellectual obligation to study machine tool operating, since it would be objectively and subjectively bad if, because she failed to study, she came to believe that $\sim q$. At the same time, since she is deeply ignorant of q , we can't claim that her obligation to study is grounded in her belief that $\sim q$. Suppose, then, that she fails to study and comes to believe that $\sim q$. Then, although she has violated an original all-things-considered obligation such that if she had met that obligation she would not have believed that $\sim q$, her belief that $\sim q$ is *not* non-accidentally related to this obligation because her obligation is not partly grounded in her belief that $\sim q$. Thus, her believing that $\sim q$ satisfies condition (iii) of (6). It also satisfies the other conditions; hence, according

to (6), Jenny responsibly believes that $\sim q$. But this is surely wrong: since q is a proposition that it is crucial to believe in order to operate the machine safely, Jenny could have believed that q quite easily, and she had an obligation to perform actions that would lead her to believe that q , she is blameworthy for believing that $\sim q$.

The general point of Jenny's case is this: since (7), the account of intellectual obligation, does not require that intellectual obligation be grounded in actual beliefs, we can sometimes be blameworthy for beliefs that are *not* non-accidentally related to the intellectual obligations we violate just because these obligations are not grounded in *those*, or indeed *any*, actual beliefs. Hence, satisfying the conditions articulated in (6) is not sufficient for responsible belief.

IV. CONCLUSION

The problems raised by our differential responsibility for consequences are complex, and I have not tried to suggest solutions here. To be clear, I do not believe that these issues are fatal to Peels's account, to which I am generally sympathetic. What I hope to have shown is that his account is incomplete in a variety of important ways.

*Department of Philosophy
University of Texas at El Paso
500 West University Avenue
El Paso, Texas 79968, USA
E-mail: brossichi@gmail.com*

NOTES

¹ Cf. Alston (1989), Rosen (2004). These two kinds of responsibility are on Peels's view mutually exclusive, since influence *precludes* control [Peels (2017), p. 90]. I'm not certain what this distinction amounts to; it does not, for example, correspond to a distinction in degrees of blameworthiness or praiseworthiness or in the kinds of attitude we may properly take toward the agent. Why not think that the conditions of responsibility for ϕ -ing are disjunctive, rather than talking about two kinds of responsibility? Fortunately, we do not have to resolve this question here.

² I address the objection that Peels intends (i) and (ii) merely as necessary conditions on responsibility for belief below.

³ *S* has the ability to believe otherwise with respect to her belief that *p* at *t* just in case there is some action she can perform at *t* such that if she performs that action, she will not believe that *p*. But this action is always also such that, if *S* does not perform that action, *S* will believe that *p* at *t*. Hence, if *S* is able to believe otherwise at *t*, then her believing that *p* at *t* is under her influence. A similar argument supports the converse claim.

⁴ This statement of Peels's theory is incomplete because it does not include the clauses about excusing conditions, but for our purposes these clauses can be set aside.

REFERENCES

- ALSTON, W. (1989), "The Deontological Conception of Epistemic Justification", in *Epistemic Justification: Essays in the Theory of Knowledge*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, pp. 115-52.
- PEELS, R. (2017), *Responsible Belief: A Theory in Ethics and Epistemology*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- ROSEN, G. (2004), "Skepticism of Moral Responsibility", in John Hawthorne (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives 18: Ethics*, Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 295-313.
- VARGAS, M. (2005). "The Trouble with Tracing", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* XXIX, pp. 269-91.