Depression, Judgment, and Belief

by

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Abstract

This paper proposes a puzzle about an agent's beliefs that arises in certain cases where a person suffering from depression makes sincere assertions of negative self-evaluations because of her depression whilst also judging that her overall evidence supports the negation of her negative self-evaluations. I argue that the assertions of negative self-evaluations and the agent's judgments about overall evidence each exhibit attributes that are characteristic of belief. I argue that the puzzle arises in cases where the agent in question is aware of each of her beliefs and is rational enough to prefer, not only avoiding conflicting beliefs, but also to prefer that her beliefs be based on relevant overall evidence, as opposed to depressive thought patterns. I consider a variety of theories that may map on to my case, and I discuss challenges or objections to each theory as it applies to the case. I think there are reasons to favor a theory that rejects the claim that the agent straightforwardly believes that her negative self-evaluations are true, so, after ruling out some unsatisfying accounts, I spend the first major portion of the paper discussing views that take this approach. The latter portion of the paper is spent discussing theories that put pressure on other premises or assumptions of the puzzle. My intention is to discuss the relationship between depression, belief, judgment, and rationality in a somewhat narrow context. I do not intend to speak to the relationship between belief, judgment, and rationality as it applies to depression in general. I leave it up to further inquiry to discuss depression more generally as it relates to the issues raised in this paper, and I leave it up to further inquiry to determine whether my proposed puzzle or its potential solutions have novel or interesting therapeutic implications.

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Contents

Introduction

Suppose Marjorie is depressed and is aware that she is depressed. As is common in sufferers of depression, Marjorie's depression drives her to sincerely assert negative self-evaluations (henceforth abbreviated as "NSEs"), such as "I am an incompetent philosopher" (Lou et. al, 2019). Suppose Marjorie asserts such NSEs to herself and others with little to no hesitation, and she makes these assertions in good faith. Marjorie is not lying or intentionally being disingenuous in any way, and at least some of her other actions (actions that are not assertions) appear to align with her assertions of NSEs. She behaves in at least some ways that we would expect her to behave if she sincerely held the belief that she is an incompetent philosopher. For instance, she might refrain from submitting to well-respected journals. Furthermore, let's suppose that Marjorie is aware that depression makes her more likely than she otherwise would be to assert or accept NSEs.

However, at the same time, Marjorie is aware of reasons that *she judges* to be good overall reasons to think that her NSEs are not true. For instance, she sees that she gets good grades in philosophy courses, she hears her friends and professors praise her work, and she is aware that she has publications in well-respected journals. Each of these pieces of evidence are the sorts of considerations that Marjorie accepts as strong and relevant evidence for the claim that a person who achieves these things is not an incompetent philosopher. I refer to Marjorie's awareness of the evidence against her NSEs and her judgment that forming beliefs on the basis of evidence is better than forming beliefs on the basis of depressive thinking patterns as "insightful thinking patterns" or "insightful thoughts". Perhaps Marjorie is in conversation with a friend or colleague, and she says to her interlocutor, "I think I am an incompetent philosopher." She says so in a sincere manner; she is not lying or attempting to be disingenuous in any way.

However, when prompted to think of her evidence, it seems that, since she judges that said evidence is strong and relevant evidence against her NSEs, Marjorie would be inclined to make sincere assertions of the negation of her negative self-evaluations.

Suppose also that Marjorie's general tendency when evaluating claims leans towards rational thought and behavior patterns, and towards a desire to adjust any inconsistent beliefs whenever she is aware of holding them. Marjorie is not a person who regularly goes around asserting incoherent claims, she behaves in other rational ways on a regular basis, and she is someone who cares about avoiding holding conflicting beliefs. For instance, she drives on the correct side of the road, she dresses for the weather before leaving the house, and she is typically willing to adjust her belief that P in response to what she takes as the relevant overall evidence with respect to P. Marjorie is someone who cares about holding well-founded beliefs; she wants to do what she can to ensure that her beliefs about her own abilities (and plausibly about other things) are based on what she takes to be strong and relevant overall evidence. An approximate account of relevant overall evidence is offered in the "Scope of the Project" subsection of this introduction.

Because of her judgments and general epistemic tendencies, and because of her awareness of her depression and its effects on her thinking patterns, Marjorie may even judge that depressive thinking patterns are a poor source of evidence upon which to base beliefs about herself and her abilities as a philosopher. Thus, if she takes her overall evidence (with respect to her NSEs) to support the view that she's not incompetent, and she judges that depressive thought patterns are not a good basis for arriving at beliefs, Marjorie might be prepared to sincerely assert that she is not an incompetent philosopher. Perhaps her colleague tells her, "When you say that you are incompetent, you know that's the depression talking! Look at your overall evidence

about this claim! What do you think about your abilities based on what your evidence says?" In this case, Marjorie would be likely to sincerely assert that her NSEs are false.

Despite her preparedness to sincerely assert the negation of her negative self-evaluations, because of her depression, Marjorie might find it difficult or, at times, impossible to engage in what she judges to be sound reasoning when it comes to arriving at conclusions about herself and her abilities as a philosopher that jive with what she takes to be the overall evidence that is relevant to whether her NSEs are true. She may find herself acknowledging that, given her overall evidence, she would, under usual circumstances, conclude that it is not the case that she is an incompetent philosopher, but she might find herself unable or less able to apply this reasoning to her self-evaluations she makes while depressed (Beck et. al. 1979). While it may seem irrational from the perspective of Marjorie's general epistemic tendencies (which include her appreciation for overall evidence) for Marjorie to conclude that her NSEs are true, perhaps there is a narrow, limited sense in which Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns exhibit some characteristics of rationality, and thus are not strictly irrational even though they take place within the framework of depressive thinking patterns. For instance, Marjorie may use valid inferences to reach the conclusion that she is an incompetent philosopher, and in this way, Marjorie's NSEs might engage in some limited kind of rational updating process when she acquires evidence that is filtered through her depressive thinking patterns. However, when viewed from the perspective of her general epistemic tendencies (which lean towards appreciating and weighing relevant *overall* evidence), the inferences made on the basis of depressive thinking patterns may be irrational in the sense that they do not fit well with Marjorie's overall evidence. The specific-to-NSE inferences and epistemic tendencies might

make it difficult for Marjorie to see things from the perspective of her general epistemic tendencies.

The above considerations taken together seem to lead to a puzzle about Marjorie's beliefs, rationality, and belief-updating tendencies.

The Marjorie Puzzle

1. Marjorie believes that she is an incompetent philosopher, and Marjorie is aware that she holds this belief.
2. Marjorie believes that she is not an incompetent philosopher, and Marjorie is aware that she holds this belief.
3. ~ ((1) & (2))

Defense Of Premise 1: Marjorie Believes that She is Incompetent, and is Aware that She Holds this Belief

The following characteristics are thought to be marks of belief, although what follows is by no means an exhaustive list of belief's properties. For the purposes of this paper, I remain neutral on whether these attributes count as necessary or sufficient conditions for belief. The thought is that, if a mental state exhibits one or more of these characteristics, we have a prima facie reason for thinking that the mental state in question is a belief.

A. Beliefs are apt to change in response to changes in evidence. When an agent is confronted with evidence that conflicts with her belief, that belief will usually disappear or be adjusted to fit with the new evidence (Gendler, 2008a; 2008b; Noggle, 2016; Schwitzgebel, 2006).

B. Beliefs involve the use of the proposition in question as a premise in one's conscious theoretical and practical reasoning. That is, thinking that P is true will

influence the practical decisions a person makes when deciding between actions for which the truth of P is a relevant consideration, and thinking that P is true will influence the conclusions one draws from other claims to which the truth of P is relevant (Noggle, 2016).

C. If S believes that P, S will be inclined to sincerely assert that P (Salmon, 1995; Noggle, 2016; Schwitzgebel, 2006).

D. Beliefs are the kinds of things that can interact with other mental events including emotions, desires, and other states, and thereby produce additional behaviors aside from assertion. This process may occur without the agent's full awareness, thus distinguishing this criterion from B, which requires awareness (Noggle, 2016).[1]

In terms of belief criteria met by the first premise of the Marjorie case, it seems that Criterion C straightforwardly is met, and Criterion B is sometimes met by the Marjorie case. Marjorie, because of her depression, makes sincere assertions that she is incompetent. This is Criterion C. Some have argued that sincere assertion of a claim is enough to show that the person making the assertion believes that claim (Salmon, 1995). While this paper does not offer an account of which criteria for belief are necessary or sufficient, it will suffice, for now, to say that sincere assertions are a mark of belief. That is, when someone makes a sincere assertion, that assertion provides good reason for thinking that the speaker believes the content of their assertion. This is because making a sincere assertion amounts to making a report about what one takes to be true about the world, and reporting what one takes to be true about the world can be taken to amount to reporting what one believes about the world. (Schwitzgebel, 2006). In

[1] This criterion will become relevant later in the paper.

Marjorie's case, the speaker is not trying to be deceptive, she is not being disingenuous in any way, she is not engaged in make-believe or any kind of imaginative play, she is simply saying what is on her mind. If Marjorie is not being deceptive, she is not engaged in imaginative play, or anything of the sort, it seems that the best option left is to say that Marjorie is reporting what she believes to be true about the world. If sincere assertion is an indicator of belief, then we have a prima facie reason to think that Marjorie believes that she is an incompetent philosopher. Furthermore, in the psychological literature on cognitive therapy and depression, negative self-evaluations and similar negative thoughts are often described as beliefs (Beck et. al, 1979; Beck, 1976).

Criterion B may be met, at least some of the time, by Marjorie's NSEs. Because of her NSEs (and other depressive thinking patterns), Marjorie might make certain decisions she otherwise would not. For instance, she may avoid doing things that she thinks are meant for competent philosophers, such as continuing to submit papers to high-ranking journals or applying to prestigious PhD programs. She may also use her NSEs in her theoretical reasoning. In other words, she might make inferences that go something like this: *I am an incompetent philosopher. Incompetent philosophers should not submit papers to well-respected journals. So, I should not submit papers to well-respected journals.*

Finally, as for Marjorie's awareness that she holds the belief that she is incompetent, it seems clear that Marjorie is aware of the fact that she sincerely asserts that she is an incompetent philosopher. Sincerely asserting something seems to involve one's awareness that they are doing so. It would be difficult to defend a view according to which one can make a sincere assertion without being aware of it, because sincere assertions seem to require at least some conscious

reasoning leading up to them. We would not, for example, want to classify an assertion made during one's sleep as a sincere assertion.

Defense Of Premise 2: Marjorie Believes That She Is Not Incompetent, And Marjorie Is Aware That She Holds This Belief

A case can be made for thinking that Criteria A and C are met by the Marjorie case. Firstly, Marjorie judges that her overall evidence supports the view that she is not an incompetent philosopher. Additionally, on account of her insightful thinking patterns, Marjorie is likely to judge that she ought not form beliefs on the basis of depressive thought patterns, especially if she already judges that her overall evidence speaks against her NSEs, and if she is aware of depression's effects on her thinking. Marjorie's insightful thought patterns and judgments about what her overall evidence supports are indicative of belief for a few reasons.

Because Marjorie's judgments about what her evidence supports are reflective judgments, as opposed to snap judgments, and because these judgments are characteristic of Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns, such judgments are likely to be the kinds of judgments that are responsive to evidence. Responsiveness to evidence is one of the marks of belief (Criterion A). If Marjorie were to encounter evidence that she reflectively judges to be strong and relevant overall evidence for the view that she is in fact an incompetent philosopher (i.e., pieces of evidence such as failing multiple philosophy classes, never getting accepted to publish in well-respected journals, and receiving frequent criticism of the quality of her work as a philosopher), she would be likely to end up with the belief that she is an incompetent philosopher. If the points in this paragraph are all on the right track, then we have reason to think that Marjorie believes that she is not an incompetent philosopher.

Marjorie's judgment that her evidence supports the view that she is not an incompetent philosopher may also lead to fulfillment of Criterion C. If Marjorie is aware that she has what she takes to be strong and relevant evidence for the negation of her NSEs, and if Marjorie is someone who cares about forming beliefs on the basis of evidence, Marjorie may, on these bases, be prepared to sincerely assert the negation of her NSEs. Perhaps, if someone asks her, "What do you judge to be true about your abilities as a philosopher based on what your evidence indicates?", Marjorie will be likely to sincerely assert the negation of her NSEs.

It seems clear that Marjorie is aware of the fact that she judges that she has strong and relevant evidence against her NSEs because it takes conscious effort to come up with these reflective judgments. This awareness, plus her awareness of the sincere assertions she would be prepared to make on account of what she takes to be strong and relevant evidence, indicates that Marjorie is aware that she believes the negation of her NSEs.

Defense Of Premise (3): It Is Not the Case That Marjorie Believes That She Is Incompetent and Is Aware of This Belief AND Marjorie Believes That She Is Not Incompetent and Is Aware Of This Belief

Marjorie is Rational, and Rational Agents Will Update Their Beliefs to Avoid Conflict. Premise (3) is true, not as a matter of logical or psychological impossibility of holding (1) and (2) at the same time, but rather, as a matter of features of Marjorie's tendencies as a generally rational agent. Rational agents, when aware of a conflict between their beliefs, will typically take steps to resolve the conflict when rational epistemic updates are available to them.

Even whilst in the grips of depression, Marjorie is not strictly irrational. She exhibits many rational behaviors and thinking patterns in her everyday life. For instance, when it is raining outside, Marjorie wears her raincoat before leaving the house. She drives on the correct

side of the road when travelling to work, and she does not go through her daily life making incoherent assertions in good faith. If, for example, Marjorie were to encounter good reasons to drive on the opposite side of the road, she would do so (perhaps she is visiting a different country where driving on the opposite side of the road is required).

Because true contradictions are either rare or nonexistent, it is unlikely that the claim "I [Marjorie] am an incompetent philosopher and I [Marjorie] am not an incompetent philosopher" is true. For this reason, it would be rational for Marjorie to reject either the belief that she is incompetent or the belief that she is not (Priest, 2006). Rejecting either one of these beliefs does not obviously fall outside of Marjorie's ability, even though she is depressed. Marjorie may even exhibit behaviors and thinking patterns having to do with her NSEs that seem rational when considered within the narrower context of her depressive thinking patterns. Perhaps some of her behaviors and thinking patterns engage effectively and coherently with the way depression makes things seem to Marjorie, even though the same behaviors and thinking patterns may not be rational in a wider context where Marjorie's *overall* network of relevant evidence is concerned. For instance, while depressed, Marjorie may engage in the following reasoning about her abilities as a philosopher: *I know I got an A on this paper, but the professor gave me an A because they feel sorry for me. Competent philosophers do not receive good grades because their professors feel sorry for them. So, I must be an incompetent philosopher.* [2] This inference, on the surface, may seem irrational from an overall perspective because it does not jive with Marjorie's overall relevant evidence about her NSEs because Marjorie's relevant overall evidence would balance out in favor of rejecting her NSEs. But this kind of thinking may exhibit some semblance of rational thinking in a narrower context. Because of the way depression can

[2] The claims expressed here were helpfully influenced by personal communications with Ivy Madden and Daniel Rabinoff (December 21, 2023).

influence Marjorie's reasoning and perception of evidence, it may not be irrational full-stop for Marjorie to form the belief that her professors feel sorry for her. Perhaps Marjorie has reasons to think that her professors recognize that Marjorie is suffering from a mental health problem. Given this belief and the influence of depression on Marjorie's perception of certain evidence, it seems appropriate (or at the very least, not a significant stretch in reasoning) for Marjorie to believe that her professor gave her an A because they feel sorry for her, especially if her depression is making that particular piece of evidence obvious to her (Kampa, 2020).[3] If Marjorie has good reasons to think that competent philosophers do not receive good grades because their professors pity them, then the conclusion that Marjorie reaches does not seem strictly irrational. If Marjorie has what seem to her to be good reasons for thinking all the premises of her inference are true, then the rational step to take seems to be to conclude that she is an incompetent philosopher, even if the seemings are a result of depression's influence. The kinds of inferences and pieces of reasoning mentioned here seem readily available to Marjorie because of the way her depression makes the world seem to her.[4]

If Marjorie is mostly rational in the wider context of her general epistemic tendencies and if in the narrower context of inferences made on the basis of depressive thought patterns, Marjorie's use of inferences is a characteristic of rational processes, then there are reasons to think that Marjorie is the type of person who would make rational (at least in some sense of 'rational') epistemic adjustments when they are available to her. Because Marjorie, as a generally rational agent, would prefer not to hold contradictory beliefs in full awareness of doing so, she will be driven to give up one of her conflicting beliefs.

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[3] Kampa (2020) expresses a view that makes use of an idea like this. Kampa's view will be discussed later in this paper.

[4] I thank Daniel Rabinoff for drawing my attention to this line of reasoning.

Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns provide further support for thinking that she is a generally rational agent. If Marjorie herself prefers that she not form beliefs on the basis of things that she judges to be poorly supported by her relevant overall evidence (i.e., depressive thinking patterns), this shows an appreciation for careful consideration and weighing of evidence, which is a characteristic that involves a rational thinking process.

While a precise account of what it is to be rational (in both the limited sense that I have in mind here and with respect to Marjorie's general epistemic tendencies) would be beneficial, offering such an account is not the primary focus of this project. As such, I will leave it up to further thought and research to offer a more precise account. For now, I will assume that what it takes to be rational involves the ability and willingness to make coherent or valid inferences on the basis of what seems to be one's evidence (either overall or limited evidence), and the tendency to avoid holding contradictory beliefs in full awareness of doing so.

The Only Available Rational Updates for Marjorie to Make Would Be to Either Reject That She Is Incompetent or Reject That She Is Not Incompetent, So Marjorie Would Make One of These Updates. Firstly, we might think, given Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns and general rationality, we might reasonably take her to believe that "I am an incompetent philosopher" and "I am not an incompetent philosopher" are not likely to both be true of Marjorie at the same time. This understanding plus Marjorie's awareness of each of these beliefs, would drive Marjorie towards abandoning one of these beliefs.

When Marjorie's awareness of [certain kinds of] evidence is more limited to depressive thinking patterns, she can still make valid inferences within that narrower context, even about claims having to do with her NSEs. In the narrower context, it may be rational within that limited context for Marjorie to go with the depressive evidence, perhaps because *overall* evidence does

not factor into this narrower picture, or if it does so, it does so to a significantly lesser degree than her depressive thinking patterns do. Because of the influence of Marjorie's depression, this narrow-picture "depressive evidence" is available to Marjorie. As such, we might think that one of two available updates for Marjorie to make would be to reject the belief that her NSEs are false.

Because of her insightful thinking patterns, Marjorie can plausibly bring her attention to her overall evidence, even whilst in the grips of depression (Kampa, 2020).[5] After all, what makes the Marjorie case a puzzling one is that Marjorie herself is aware that she appears to be holding contradictory beliefs, and Marjorie herself would prefer that this tension be resolved. Marjorie's overall evidence gives her good reasons to reject the claim that she is an incompetent philosopher. Marjorie understands that, even though she is depressed, and depression is making the world seem a certain way to her, her good grades and her publications in well-respected journals provide good overall reasons for the belief that she is not an incompetent philosopher. Because Marjorie cares about forming beliefs on the basis of good evidence, and because she thinks that she should not be forming beliefs on the basis of depressive thought patterns, we might think that rejecting the belief that she is incompetent is the only other readily available adjustment for Marjorie to make. If these thoughts are on the right track, then the second of two options open to Marjorie is to reject the belief that her NSEs are true (the belief that she is an incompetent philosopher).

To summarize, the main thought here is that Marjorie is generally rational, and in order to avoid conflict between the belief that she is incompetent and the belief that she is not incompetent, the only options open to Marjorie are to reject one belief or the other. Thus,

[5] Again, Kampa (2020) makes use of some similar reasoning.

Marjorie will not hold both beliefs at the same time. She will either give up the belief that she is incompetent, or she will give up the belief that she is not incompetent.

Requirements and Desirable Features of a Solution to the Marjorie Puzzle

Rejects a Premise in the Marjorie Puzzle. In order to resolve the Marjorie puzzle, an account needs to offer reasons to reject one or more of the puzzle's premises. If an account fails to reject a premise, the puzzle will still stand.

Respects Marjorie's General Epistemic Tendencies (the "Authentic" Marjorie). A desirable feature of an account would be for the account to be such that Marjorie's general epistemic tendencies are given priority over the epistemic tendencies resulting from her depressive thought patterns. For an account to respect Marjorie's general epistemic tendencies, that account should avoid leaning too heavily on the claim that Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns are the strongest indicator of belief in the Marjorie case, and that account should avoid placing Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns on equal par (in terms of their status as belief-indicators) with her judgments about overall evidence.

One reason to be hesitant to too much weight to Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns and NSE assertions as belief-indicators might include the idea that who Marjorie is as an epistemic agent in general, is likely to be better represented by her insightful thinking patterns, which include her acknowledgement and appreciation for what she takes to be her overall evidence regarding the veracity of her NSEs, and her desire to avoid forming inconsistent beliefs. I refer to this criterion as the "respect for the authentic Marjorie" criterion. The reason to avoid placing insightful thinking patterns and depressive thinking patterns on equal par in terms of their status as belief-indicators is similar: such an account will not fully respect the authentic Marjorie, since the authentic Marjorie would lean towards rejecting her NSEs.

A reason to think that who Marjorie is as an epistemic agent (the authentic Marjorie) is better captured by insight is that the features of Marjorie's insight – her desire to hold consistent beliefs, her general tendency to acknowledge and appreciate her overall evidence when it comes to certain claims (like claims about her abilities as a philosopher) are likely to be more stable over time than her depressive thinking patterns are. Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns are more likely to occupy a smaller chunk of Marjorie's tendencies as an epistemic agent because her depression is likely to be temporary, rather than something that Marjorie has always (and will always) have to deal with.

A second reason to think that who Marjorie is as an epistemic agent (in general) is better captured by insightful thinking patterns is that Marjorie herself explicitly judges that her beliefs about her abilities should be based on the overall relevant evidence with respect to her NSEs and not on things that her depression is pulling her toward. She judges that, when her relevant overall evidence is considered (even if that evidence includes evidence that is "presented" to her by her depressive thinking patterns), the balancing of her relevant overall evidence indicates that her NSEs are false, and their negation is true. Marjorie also desires that her beliefs be formed in alignment with what she takes to be the relevant overall evidence about her NSEs rather than on the basis of depressive thinking patterns. If these are things that Marjorie herself judges and wants out of her belief-forming process, those judgments and desires should be respected by an account of the Marjorie case. A way to respect these judgments and desires it to prioritize them as stronger indicators of belief when compared with her depressive thinking patterns.

If the above is right, then any account that takes Marjorie's NSEs and depressive thinking patterns as the strongest indicator of belief will not be effective at respecting who Marjorie is (overall) as an epistemic agent. Similarly, any account that places Marjorie's insightful thinking

patterns and general epistemic tendencies as a lesser belief-indicator, or as an equal belief-indicator when compared against Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns, will be an account that does not adequately capture who Marjorie is as an overall epistemic agent. Thus, we have some reasons to prefer responses that challenge premise (1) and accept premise (2). Accounts that respect the authentic Marjorie will either reject the claim that Marjorie *believes* that her NSEs are true or will downgrade the relevant mental state to something other than belief, or to some kind of atypical belief.

Offers a Causal Explanation. A desirable feature of solution to the Marjorie case will offer an informative account of why we should think the mental states involved in the proposed solution are causally efficacious in terms of their ability to describe what it is about the nature of that account that can cause depressive thought patterns and NSEs, and what it is about that mental state that allows for Marjorie puzzles to occur. On a similar note, an effective solution to the Marjorie case will offer a way of acknowledging the internal conflict that Marjorie plausibly feels about her beliefs regarding her abilities as a philosopher. An effective solution will have a way of explaining how depression is acting on Marjorie's thought process in a way that can bring about Marjorie's internal experience as of holding conflicting beliefs. While this expectation may need to be more precise in terms of a full explanation of the major phenomenological features of depression, for the purposes of this paper, it will suffice to say that an adequate account of the Marjorie case will provide tools to describe why Marjorie feels a tension between her beliefs. Although there are good reasons to prioritize Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns as the stronger indicator of what Marjorie believes, an account that explains the entire Marjorie case will still need to explain the occurrence and persistence of Marjorie's experience and assertion of

NSEs. Doing this will likely involve appealing to belief-like mental states that can offer something in terms of causal explanation for why Marjorie appears to believe her NSEs.

Maps Onto Other Features of the Marjorie Case. A final requirement of an account of the Marjorie case will be such that all the features of the proposed theory will match what the Marjorie case is like. For instance, an account that is committed to saying that Marjorie's NSEs are the result of a careful reasoning process that takes into account all relevant overall evidence will not fare well at mapping onto the Marjorie case.

Scope of the Project

It will be helpful to clarify the scope of the project, as well as some important terminology that will be used throughout the paper. Firstly, I assume that Marjorie's depression and the thought patterns encompassed by it are relatively brief when compared with the overall thinking patterns that Marjorie tends towards for most of her life. The case I have in mind is not one in which Marjorie is depressed more often than not, it is not one in which Marjorie is depressed for the majority of her lifetime. On a related note, I assume that Marjorie's depression is not severe enough to render her completely incapable of appreciating and evaluating evidence against her NSEs, as may be true in some cases of depression.

Secondly, I am interested in trying to understand cases in which Marjorie generally tends towards rational thought and behavior patterns. I have in mind cases where Marjorie is someone who judges that her beliefs should be formed on the basis of what she takes her relevant overall evidence to support. I take relevant overall evidence to be, approximately, all the pieces of evidence Marjorie, when considering them with respect to her NSEs, would think ought to be taken as reasons in favor of or against her NSEs. In terms of Marjorie's "overall epistemic tendencies", what I have in mind is the idea that Marjorie, being someone who judges that her

beliefs should be formed on the basis of overall evidence, will be such that, when she weighs all the evidence that she finds relevant to the veracity of her NSEs, the balance of that evidence will land in favor of rejecting her NSEs. While Marjorie may have certain pieces of evidence relevant to her NSEs which stem from depressive thinking patterns, and while Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns may allow for some use of rational processes (such as the use of valid inferences), these pieces of evidence will not count as Marjorie's relevant *overall* evidence because they are not the only pieces of evidence that are relevant to the truth of Marjorie's NSEs.

Finally, my intention is to discuss the relationship between depressive thinking patterns, belief, and rationality in a fairly limited context. I acknowledge that not everyone who is depressed will exhibit the features of Marjorie cases. After all, it is possible for people with depression to fail to exhibit the same level of rationality or awareness of conflicting beliefs that Marjorie exhibits. There are instances of depression in which the sufferer may be entirely unaware, or unlikely to become aware, of any apparent contradictions in belief that are brought about by depressive thinking patterns. There may be instances of depression in which the sufferer does not have the same overall rational tendencies exhibited by Marjorie. These cases are not the targets of my discussion. It is not my intention to propose or discuss puzzles about depression in general.

Procedure

The central intention of the paper is not to defend a particular solution as the best or most effective one, but rather to offer a variety of ways of thinking about the puzzle. I wish to leave it to further inquiry to decide which, if any, of the explanations discussed in this paper are an adequate solution to the Marjorie case. While I discuss each potential solution as its own stand-alone solution to the case, it is possible that an effective solution to the Marjorie case

involves a combination of one or more of the solutions discussed in this paper. I will leave it to further inquiry to determine which (if any) particular combinations of solutions are effective for addressing the Marjorie case, although I make some brief remarks about a potential combination of views towards the end of the paper. There are, I think, important challenges for each of the proposals I consider. Some of these challenges are offered in terms of objections to the application of the view to the Marjorie case, while others offer challenges in terms of potentially undesirable claims or commitments that certain views may need to take on when attempting to address the Marjorie case.

The purpose of Chapter 1 is to rule out some potential explanations of the Marjorie case which, at first glance, may appear to fit, but which I think are importantly disanalogous with the Marjorie case. Illusion and self-deception are the two views ruled out in this chapter.

Chapter 2 discusses Tamar Gendler's (2008a; 2008b) theory of alief – a belief-like but non-belief mental state that may account for at least some aspects of the Marjorie case by denying premise (1) – the claim that Marjorie believes that her NSEs are true and accepting premise (2) of the Marjorie puzzle – the claim that Marjorie believes her NSEs are false. I provide some ways of mapping the details of the Marjorie case onto Gendler's (2008a; 2008b) alief account. While the alief account has many strengths in terms of touching on the desirable features of an account of the Marjorie case, alief (Gendler, 2008a; 2008b) fails to map onto the Marjorie case in other important respects. Some of the characteristics of alief do not match the characteristics of the Marjorie case.

Chapter 3 attempts to map the Marjorie case onto another view that denies premise (1) and accepts (2). When applied to the Marjorie case, this view, due to Robert Noggle (2016), holds that a mental state termed "quasi-belief" purports to account for Marjorie's assertions of

NSEs insofar as quasi-belief is missing certain properties possessed by ordinary belief. Again, I discuss some strengths and potential objections to this view near the end of the chapter.

Because the above two accounts attempt to deny (1) (which I think is a desirable feature of an account of the Marjorie case) but do so at the cost of failing to account for other features of the Marjorie case, I spend the remainder of the paper considering proposals that take different approaches.

In Chapter 4, I discuss an account due to Eric Schwitzgebel (2010). This account, when applied to the Marjorie case, holds that it is indeterminate as to whether Marjorie believes her NSEs or whether she believes their negation. Schwitzgebel (2010) calls such a mental state "in-between belief". In doing so, this account rejects premises (1) and (2) of the Marjorie puzzle. The indeterminacy, according to Schwitzgebel's (2010) account, comes from the fact that Marjorie displays dispositional patterns characteristic of belief when it comes to both her insightful thinking patterns and her assertion of NSEs. I offer some reasons for thinking that Schwitzgebel's (2010) account fits with the Marjorie case, and I put forth a challenge for the account. The challenge focuses on the idea that a desirable feature of an account of the Marjorie case is for the account to avoid putting Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns on par with her insightful thinking patterns in terms of their status as belief-indicators.

In Chapter 5, I discuss a proposal inspired by Samuel Kampa's (2020) paper on epistemic akrasia and Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). While I leave aside most of the discussion of akrasia itself when it comes to the Marjorie case, I argue that Kampa's (2020) appeal to attention and evidential salience as a solution to cases that bear important similarities to the Marjorie case can provide a way to explain the Marjorie case as one in which Marjorie oscillates between the belief that her NSEs are true and the belief that they are false depending on which pieces of

information and evidence are most salient to her at a given moment. I offer a challenge for this approach which appeals to the notion of respecting the authentic voice of Marjorie.

Chapter 6 briefly considers a contradictory belief analysis of the Marjorie case, according to which Marjorie simultaneously and straightforwardly *believes* that she is incompetent and that she is not incompetent. I explain the intuition behind this account, provide some motivation inspired by David Hunter (2011), and raise problems for it, one of which is that it may fail to respect the authentic voice of Marjorie because it takes Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns to be on par with her insightful ones in terms of their status as belief-indicators.

Chapter 7 discusses parallels between the Marjorie case and puzzles about reference. In particular, I compare the Marjorie case to a puzzle proposed by Saul Kripke (1979) wherein an agent seems to hold contradictory beliefs because of the fact that the agent fails to realize that two different terms refer to the same object. I suggest that viewing the Marjorie case as one involving two different belief-forming networks – an insightful one and a depressive one – may help us draw an interesting parallel between Kripke's (1979) puzzle and the Marjorie case. Once again, I offer some challenges for this approach. One challenge is that the Marjorie case may not involve the same kind of ignorance about reference that the Kripke (1979) puzzle does.

The conclusion offers some general closing remarks about the Marjorie case and the theories discussed in this paper. I briefly suggest a way in which several accounts discussed in the paper might be helpfully combined together in order to more effectively capture various features of the Marjorie case.

Chapter 1

What the Marjorie Case is Not

Illusion

We might think of the Marjorie case as explainable by appeal to illusion. It might be argued that, in the Marjorie case premise (1) – the claim that Marjorie believes her NSEs and is aware of this belief – is challenged by the illusion account because Marjorie's assertion of NSEs is the result of an illusion, and illusions are unlike beliefs in certain ways, although they might lead to beliefs. In general, illusions occur when an agent has a seeming that something is the case, but the agent's seeming is mistaken in some way. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), illusions are the "misinterpretation of sensory stimuli" (APA, 2018). Perceptual illusions occur when the facts about the object being perceived are different from how they seem to the perceiver. An example of such an illusion is the "Muller-Lyer illusion" wherein a person is presented with images of two straight horizontal lines; one of these lines features arrows pointing outwards, while the other features inward-facing arrows. The line with inward-facing arrows appears longer than the line with outward-facing arrows, even though both lines are the same length (Wikipedia, Muller-Lyer illusion, accessed November 16, 2023).

When a rational agent becomes aware that they are experiencing an illusion, they will typically abandon any belief that the illusory content or conclusion is real or true, even though perceptions and other cognitive processes may continue to present the world in an illusory way. In the line case, once the viewer is made aware that the two lines are in fact the same length, the viewer, if they are rational, will typically abandon any belief that the lines are the same length.

In a 2014 study conducted by Chen and colleagues, it was found that depressed persons were more likely than non-depressed persons to interpret the neutral facial expressions of others as expressing negative emotions (Chen et. al., 2014). This finding provides a helpful example for

how we might think of the Marjorie case as being parallel to cases of perceptual illusion like the one described and exemplified above. Because depression can impact the way the world seems to an agent, we might think that depression can generate certain illusions that may be able to account for Marjorie's assertion of NSEs. Suppose Marjorie is about to give her thesis defense, and she enters the room to find her audience gazing at her with straight faces. When filtered through the lens of her depression, Marjorie might see the faces of her audience members as expressing negative emotions such as contempt or disappointment. Because she is depressed, she might be inclined to take these "negative" facial expressions as evidence of her incompetence, and assert on that basis, "I must be an incompetent philosopher." In terms of respecting the authentic Marjorie, the illusion account might allow for this by arguing that, given Marjorie's overall epistemic tendencies, she will be likely to abandon the illusory belief that she is incompetent once she becomes aware of the fact that her depression is generating this illusion via its impact on her perception. This seems compatible with the possibility that Marjorie's depression can continue to represent neutral facial expressions as negative even after Marjorie abandons the belief that they are.

A second example may help draw a closer parallel between illusion and the specific content of Marjorie's NSEs. It does not seem particularly far-fetched to suppose that Marjorie's depression can impact the way she interprets feedback about her work as a philosopher. Perhaps Marjorie's colleague reads some of Marjorie's work and says to Marjorie, "You are a very competent philosopher!". We might think that Marjorie's depression will find a way to interpret this compliment as sarcastic or disingenuous. If this is possible, then perhaps Marjorie, as a result of hearing such a compliment as filtered through her depressive thought patterns, will assert something like, "I must be an incompetent philosopher!". Here again, the illusion theorist could

say that Marjorie will be likely to abandon the illusory belief that she is incompetent once she becomes aware of the fact that her depression is generating this illusion via its impact on her perception.

If the above is right, then we might think that Marjorie's assertions of NSEs are not due to a run-of-the-mill belief and are due to illusion instead. This gives us a way of challenging premise (1), which is a prima facie strength of an account of the Marjorie case.

The literature on cognitive penetration may provide helpful frameworks for understanding phenomena whereby Marjorie's depression impacts the way her perception works. While I do not delve into the notion of cognitive penetration in this paper, an overview of this notion can be found in Lyons (2016), and an application of this notion to questions about epistemic justification can be found in Siegel (2012).

Objections to Illusion – Mismatches with the Marjorie Case

While I think it is generally desirable for an account of the Marjorie case to challenge premise (1) – the claim that Marjorie *believes* that she is incompetent and is aware of that belief, there seem to be important disanalogies between standard illusion cases and the Marjorie case. Firstly, the end result of an illusion is a mistaken perception. In the line case, the end result is that the lines look like they are the same length. There seem to be extra steps in the M case: there is the mistaken perception of faces with negative expressions, *plus* Marjorie is driven to assert NSEs. The assertion of NSEs seems like an extra step that is not the direct result of an illusory perception.

Even if we include assertion of the content of one's illusions into this comparison, there are other disanalogies. It seems that, in the line case, the person will be inclined to sincerely assert "the lines are the same length." This seems to exactly match the person's perception of the

lines' being the same length. If the Marjorie case is analogous to the line case, we should just expect Marjorie to sincerely assert the content of her mistaken perception: "Everyone in this room is looking at me with negative facial expressions" and stop there. But Marjorie makes an additional leap to "…therefore, I must be incompetent", which is not directly parallel to her perceptions. Something additional is happening in order to lead Marjorie to assert her NSEs. standard illusion cases seem to exhibit more of a direct link from the perceptual input to a distorted picture of the world. The perceptual input in the Marjorie case is being filtered through a particular set of cognitive tendencies brought about by depression before it ultimately leads to Marjorie's assertion of NSEs. In the standard illusion case, the agent's perception, presumably, is functioning as it usually does, without filtering the perception through any additional cognitive layers. The standard illusion case does not clearly involve the extra element of "abnormal" cognitive functioning that the Marjorie case seems to. If this is true, then it seems that perceptual illusion, at least on its own, will not fully capture the Marjorie case.

The facial expressions case is just one example of how depression might lead Marjorie to have mistaken perceptual experiences. We can speculate on how depression might impact Marjorie's other perceptual experiences in such a way that the end result is more closely parallel to the end result of standard cases of perceptual illusion. Perhaps Marjorie's persistent low mood and negative self-talk can cause her to misperceive tone of voice in a similar way. Suppose someone is offering her a compliment like "Marjorie, you are a very competent philosopher!", but Marjorie's depression causes her to interpret the compliment as sarcastic. Because Marjorie's depression causes her to interpret the compliment as sarcastic, Marjorie might end up with the illusory perception that she is incompetent. We might think of this case as a case where Marjorie's perceptual experience is leading more directly to the illusion that Marjorie is

incompetent and where the NSE assertion that Marjorie makes is parallel to the perceptual content of the illusion. However, even though the illusion in compliment case exhibits a closer match to what Marjorie ends up asserting, it still seems as though the assertion of NSEs is something that is brought about by an additional cognitive feature of depression that is not a feature of general perception or even illusion. Thus, it still seems that illusion, at least on its own, is not enough to give us an adequately complete story of what is happening in the Marjorie case.

Self-Deception

A self-deception account of the Marjorie case might attempt to reject either (1) or (2). Recall that one claims; Marjorie believes that she is incompetent, and Marjorie is aware that she holds this belief. Premise (2) claims; Marjorie believes that she is not incompetent, and Marjorie is aware that she holds this belief.

In standard cases of self-deception, an agent holds a belief for emotional or otherwise motivated reasons, even though the agent has evidence that conflicts with said belief (Deweese-Boyd, 2006). In typical cases of self-deception, a person adopts a belief because, on some level, the agent wants that belief to be true. A possible motivator for self-deception might be the desire to avoid cognitive dissonance. If a particular belief, P, that you have good evidence for, is in conflict with some deeply held belief of yours, you may deceive yourself into believing ~P in order to avoid giving up your deeply held belief. There may be other emotional reasons for self-deception. Perhaps a person holds the belief that P because believing P helps them feel better about something than they otherwise would (Deweese-Boyd, 2006). I might, for instance, believe that my partner is upholding the terms of our monogamous relationship, even if I know that their text messages indicate a sexual relationship with another person. I may hold the belief that my partner is faithful because that belief keeps me from having to face the fact that my relationship

with my partner is not what I need it to be. Because self-deception explicitly relates to what an agent *believes,* the target premises for the self-deception account will be (1) and (2). The options open to the self-deception theorist are the following:

i. Argue that (1) is true and Marjorie believes her NSEs are true because of self-deception whilst rejecting the claim that Marjorie believes her NSEs are false.

ii. Argue that (2) is true and Marjorie believes that her NSEs are false because of preself-deception whilst rejecting the claim that Marjorie believes her NSEs are true.

iii. Argue that (1) and (2) are both true and Marjorie holds contradictory beliefs, one or both of which are due to self-deception.

Objections to Self-Deception – Mismatches with the Marjorie Case

Self-deception involves believing something against your evidence. The claim that Marjorie is incompetent goes against what she takes her relevant overall evidence to support. So, to best match the definition of self-deception, it would make sense to say that Marjorie believes that she is incompetent (this is to accept premise (1)). As discussed in the introduction section, I think there are good reasons for an account of the Marjorie case to reject premise (1). Among those reasons is the thought that concluding that Marjorie believes what she judges to be unsupported by her overall evidence will do a poorer job at respecting the authentic Marjorie, since Marjorie's general epistemic tendency is to be a person who cares about forming beliefs on the basis of what she takes to be good overall evidence.

A further reason to reject the view that Marjorie is self-deceived into believing that she is incompetent is that self-deception involves some kind of motivation (such as some kind of desire

for that belief to be true) to hold a certain belief that goes against one's evidence. It seems implausible that Marjorie's believing that she is incompetent fits this aspect of self-deception. It is not likely that Marjorie has a desire to believe that she is incompetent. After all, Marjorie cares about forming beliefs on the basis of what she takes her relevant overall evidence to support. Perhaps the desire motivating Marjorie to deceive herself into believing that she is incompetent is a desire to hold consistent beliefs. However, even the desire to hold consistent beliefs would be more likely to lead Marjorie to reject the claim that she is incompetent, since she takes her relevant overall evidence to support the claim that she is not incompetent. Marjorie would probably end up with fewer inconsistencies in her beliefs *overall* if she were to reject the claim that she is incompetent.

The second option open to the self-deception theorist is to deny premise (1) and accept premise (2). On this picture, Marjorie believes that she is not incompetent, but she does so because of self-deception. This looks implausible too, since self-deception involves holding a belief that is in conflict with your evidence. While this belief might be in conflict with the evidence that Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns present to her, it is not in conflict with Marjorie's judgments about what her relevant overall evidence supports. If we want to respect the authentic Marjorie, we should lean towards an account that takes Marjorie's judgments about what her relevant overall evidence supports as the stronger indicator of what Marjorie believes.

A third option is to adopt a contradictory belief account, upon which either Marjorie's judgments about what is supported by her relevant overall evidence is due to self-deception, or her NSE assertions are due to self-deception, and the converse belief is held for other reasons, or both beliefs are due to self-deception. There are problems with a contradictory belief account of the Marjorie case, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4. Additionally, a self-deception

view that makes use of contradictory beliefs will end up accepting (1) and (2). Since self-deception is about what Marjorie *believes,* it is not likely that the self-deception account would engage with any other premises in the Marjorie puzzle.

Chapter 2

Alief and the Marjorie Case

A potential solution to the Marjorie case, due to Tamar Gendler (2008a; 2008b), would reject premise (1) of the puzzle – it would reject the claim that Marjorie believes that she is incompetent. Instead, Gendler's (2008a; 2008b) account, when applied to the Marjorie case, would hold that Marjorie's assertion of NSEs is due to a different mental state which Gendler calls "alief", whilst Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns and the assertions she makes on their basis are due to belief. To begin, I give an overview of the central characteristics of alief. I then attempt to apply those characteristics to the Marjorie case using a depression-related example that seems to exhibit many of the features of alief.

What is Alief?

Gendler (2008a) asks the reader to imagine walking on the Grand Canyon Skywalk, a transparent platform that overlooks the Grand Canyon. Suppose you are perfectly aware that the skywalk is structurally sound and able to hold many hundreds of pounds of weight without threat of damage or collapse. You are willing to make sincere assertions to this effect if someone were to ask you about it. On the basis of your evidence of the skywalk's safeness, you come to form the explicit belief that the skywalk is perfectly safe to enter. However, as you enter the skywalk, your palms begin to sweat, your heart races, your anxiety rises, and you tightly grip the railings on the sides of the skywalk, and you hesitate to enter the skywalk. Despite your explicit belief that the skywalk is safe, your behaviors are consistent with those of someone who believes that the skywalk is dangerous. Sweaty palms, a racing heart, hesitancy to enter the skywalk, and a tendency to grip the railings are all behaviors we would reasonably expect of someone who believes that the skywalk poses a threat to their safety (Gendler, 2008a). Gendler holds that the

fearful skywalker *believes* that the skywalk is safe; they are inclined to sincerely assert as much, and their reasoning about the safety of the skywalk is based on, and sensitive to, the evidence available (2008a). In terms of the skywalker's tendency towards certain behaviors that seem to conflict with their explicit beliefs, Gendler (2008a) argues that a non-belief mental state, which she terms, "alief" is responsible. Alief, according to Gendler (2008a) has several key features. It is automatic, arational (neither rational nor irrational) insensitive to evidence, representational, affective, and behavioral (Gendler, 2008a). Before applying the alief solution to the Marjorie case, it will help to see how each of these key characteristics of alief in relation to Gendler's (2008a) skywalk case.

Alief is Automatic

Alief is not the sort of thing that an agent can reason their way into (or out of). Rather, it "operates without the intervention of conscious thought" (Gendler, 2008b, p. 557). While alief can occur in the presence of conscious awareness, conscious thought does not play any role in its formation or persistence (Gendler, 2008a; 2008b). In the skywalk case, the fact that the skywalk appears a certain way to you triggers a certain response (shaking hands, sweating, gripping the railings, etc.) regardless of whether you think that response is reasonable or not (Gendler, 2008a; 2008b). Rational reflection does not play any role in producing or maintaining an alief, even though it might play a role in the agent's evaluation of it when they become aware of its presence. Rather, alief is a mental state that is, "...activated - consciously or non-consciously – by the subject's internal or ambient environment." (Gendler, 2008a, p. 644). The activation of an alief by the subject's environment is a key piece of information to keep in mind here. An alief is a kind of mental state that moves immediately or instantaneously from representation, to affect (emotional response), then to a behavior or the preparation of some behavioral response

(Gendler, 2008a; 2008b). In this way, it is somewhat more akin to a reflex than to a belief, like quickly moving your hand away after accidentally touching the hot stove. In the skywalk case, the agent does not deliberate about how to act or why; she does not and cannot reason her way to (nor can she reason her way out of) having sweaty palms, shaking as she enters the skywalk, or tightly gripping the side railing (Gendler, 2008a). These things happen because they are triggered by the combination of the way in which the world is represented to them (in this case, it is represented as *super high up*) and the agent's emotional response to that representation (i.e., *scary, dangerous, etc.)* (Gendler, 2008a).

Alief is Arational

Gendler (2008a; 2008b) characterizes alief as arational*,* as opposed to either rational or irrational. In other words, because alief happens so automatically without conscious effort on the part of the agent to bring it about, aliefs are not open to the same normative standards to which we hold beliefs. For a mental state or attitude to be the kind of thing to which norms of rationality can apply, that mental state or attitude must be such that an agent can consciously bring it about and reason their way into (or out of) it (Gendler, 2008a; 2008b). Reasoning one's way into or out of a mental state, such as belief, involves processes like weighing evidence. We can evaluate a person's belief as rational or irrational based on whether the person has weighed their evidence in a sufficiently thoughtful or informed way. These sorts of processes do not have room to occur when it comes to the formation of an alief because there is no time for these processes to occur. As such, we cannot evaluate an alief as rational or irrational (Gendler, 2008a; 2008b).

Alief is Insensitive to Evidence

According to Gendler (2008a; 2008b), alief does not respond to evidence in the way that belief typically does. When a person holds a belief that P, that person will typically adjust their belief in light of evidence against it. Alief does not operate in this way. As we have seen in the skywalk case, your automatic behavioral responses to entering the skywalk do not change in response to your evidence. Even though you are aware that your evidence points to the skywalk being perfectly safe, your bodily responses persist, and there is no way to force your body to respond differently just by considering your evidence (Gendler, 2008a).

Alief is Representational, Affective (Emotional), and Behavioral

An alief, to borrow Gendler's words, is, "[…] a mental state...with associatively linked content...that is representational, affective, and behavioral" (Gendler, 2008a, p. 642). To break this down, Gendler (2008a) describes the skywalk case (and other paradigmatic cases of alief) as a case in which something in the world is represented to the agent in a particular way – in the skywalk case, the visual system represents the skywalk as being extremely high off the ground and being transparent. This visual representation triggers an *affective* (emotional) response. When we see that the skywalk is extremely high off the ground and transparent, our immediate emotional reaction is one of fear and anxiety. According to Gendler, the aliefs of the fearful skywalker have approximately the following content: "*Really high up! Not safe! Get off!"* (Gendler, 2008a, p. 635). This chain reaction occurs instantaneously and automatically, regardless of whether the agent is conscious of its occurrence. Gendler (2008a) refers to this chain reaction as the R-A-B relation – a relation that holds between an agent, a representation of the agent's environment being a certain way, the agent's resultant affective state, as well as the resultant behavioral inclinations.

Automaticity and the Marjorie Case

The Marjorie case may resemble the sort of automaticity that Gendler attributes to alief, at least in some cases; perhaps most obviously in connection with the way in which the world seems to Marjorie when she is in the grips of depression. While depressed, it is likely that Marjorie's depressed brain will represent things differently to her than it would if Marjorie were not depressed. Some of these depressive representations might include a general "doom and gloom" way of perceiving her surroundings (U.S. news & world report, 2010), or perhaps it might include something more specific such as a stronger tendency to perceive negative facial expressions than positive ones when observing the neutral facial expressions of other people (Chen et. al., 2014). We might think that increased tendencies amongst depressed people to read neutral facial expressions as negative (Chen et. al., 2014), or their increased tendency to see the world as unfavorable or undesirable more generally (U.S. news & world report, 2010), could potentially evoke a nearly instantaneous emotional response from a depressed person. This in turn, it might be argued, could lead to certain behavioral responses. Since it is depression's effect on perception, not the agent's reasoning, that leads the agent from a representation of an unfavorable world to whatever emotional response that representation evokes, we might think that the Marjorie case involves a sort of automaticity that is at least relevantly similar to the sort Gendler (2008a) applies to aliefs.

Arationality and the Marjorie Case

The arationality component of alief is more difficult to apply neatly to the Marjorie case because Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns may exhibit some characteristics of rational thinking in certain cases. However, the facial expressions case may be one in which the arationality component comes through. If the depressive representation of a room full of negative-looking faces is automatic, then we might think that the behavioral responses it triggers

are arrived at too quickly for conscious deliberation to factor into the picture. In this way, Marjorie's perception of negative facial expressions may be arational, but it is not clear that her NSE assertions are arational in the same way. If one wanted to try and make the Gendler (2008a; 2008b) account fit well with Marjorie's NSE assertions, it might be argued that they are arational in a different sense. Perhaps NSE assertions are arational insofar as they are due to depression, a state of being that Marjorie did not reason her way into. In this way, we might think that, since Marjorie is not epistemically responsible for the state that causes her NSEs, it would not make sense to hold her epistemically blameworthy for anything that results from her depression. This, however, may be too hasty a conclusion to draw.

Insensitivity to Evidence and the Marjorie Case

The 'insensitivity to evidence' criterion for alief seems to be not only to be met by the Marjorie case but is also an important component of the Marjorie case itself. Even though Marjorie judges that her negative self-evaluations are not well-supported by her evidence, Marjorie, while depressed, is likely to continue to experience increased NSEs as a result of her depression, regardless of her judgments about what is supported by evidence and what is not. One of the symptoms of clinical depression is to experience frequent and/or intense negative assessments of oneself that often fail to fall in line with reality, or that fall outside of what the agent herself would judge as reasonable were she not depressed. (American Psychological Association, 2013) Just as it is possible for a person to become aware that their aliefs conflict with their beliefs, it is possible for depressed persons with insight into their own conditions to be aware of the discrepancy between their depressive thinking patterns and claims they judge to be reasonable and in line with their evidence. This kind of awareness, in Gendler's (2008a) standard alief cases as well as the Marjorie case, does not guarantee that the agent will no longer

experience the relevant alief at that moment, or when she finds herself in a similar situation at a later point in time. In fact, it is unlikely that the agent's awareness of the belief-behavior disconnect in Gendler's (2008a) cases will be enough to render that agent immune to the relevant alief. The same seems true of the Marjorie case; so long as Marjorie's depression abounds, it is likely that she will continue to experience NSEs even when she judges them to be implausible or out of line with her relevant overall evidence.

R-A-B and the Marjorie Case

Starting with the *representation* component, it seems likely that Marjorie, when depressed, will more easily find herself in situations where her depression represents things to her in a way that things may not otherwise be represented. Examples of this phenomenon include the facial expressions case, as well as depression's general tendency to make the world seem undesirable or gloomy (Chen et. al, 2014; U.S. news & world report, 2010). Perhaps, because of these facial expressions combined with her depressive tendencies, the world is represented to Marjorie as though she is an incompetent philosopher. It seems plausible, at least in cases like the facial expressions case, that the relevant representation would trigger certain emotional responses with little to no time between the representation and the feeling of a certain emotion. When it seems to Marjorie that she is observing a room full of upset people, it might be that her emotions will react accordingly without involving Marjorie's capacity to reason about the situation. As a whole, assuming that the Marjorie puzzle (at least in the facial expressions case) is an alief, we might think its content is something like, *Everyone is staring at me, I feel incompetent, I am an incompetent philosopher.*

If what has been said up until this point is one the right track, then the puzzle might be resolved insofar as Marjorie alieves that she is an incompetent philosopher whilst believing that

it is not the case that she is an incompetent philosopher. An alief with the above content could explain Marjorie's assertions of, or tendency towards the assertion of NSEs, while belief explains her judgment that her evidence supports the negation of her NSEs. The reason Marjorie's assertion of NSEs is not best explained by belief is because it lacks certain important characteristics of a belief. Firstly, Marjorie would, if asked about her judgments about what is supported by her overall evidence, probably sincerely assert that her NSEs are not true. When someone sincerely believes a claim, we typically expect that person to be willing to sincerely assert that the claim in question is true when they are asked about whether, given their evidence, the person holds the claim to be true (or likely to be true). In other words, Marjorie's assertions of her NSEs do not seem to meet this expectation. Rather, even though her assertions of NSEs seem sincere (i.e., Marjorie is not lying or being disingenuous when she makes these assertions), if Marjorie were asked to report what she actually takes to be the case, she is more likely to deny her NSEs, so long as her insightful thought patterns and judgments are present.

Strengths of Alief

The alief account has some merits when applied to the Marjorie case. Firstly, alief allows us to respect who Marjorie is (overall) as an epistemic agent because it offers a way to respect her explicit judgments about what her evidence supports. Alief allows us to say of Marjorie that her explicit judgments should bear on the mental states that Marjorie has. On an account like Gendler's (2008a; 2008b), where the agent's explicit judgments are taken as the stronger or weightier indicator of belief, it seems that Marjorie holds the belief that she is not an incompetent philosopher. The alief account explains why Marjorie might continue to assert NSEs against her better judgment, since alief and Marjorie's NSEs are similarly insensitive to evidence (Gendler 2008a). One of the risks behind an approach that takes Marjorie's depressive thinking

patterns as the stronger indicator of belief is precisely the fact that such an account is committed to dismissing the agent's explicit judgments as serious indicators of belief (Schwitzgebel, 2010). The intuition driving this idea is the view that judging that something is true or likely to be true is closely tied to what the agent takes to be the case given her relevant overall evidence.

Another strength of Gendler's (2008a; 2008b) account is that it offers several positive characteristics of alief, such as arationality and automaticity, which may be able to offer some causal explanation in terms of how an alief might bring about Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns, including her assertion of NSEs. For instance, if depressive symptoms can be triggered by automatic and arational processes, as opposed to processes that are reasoned and subject to epistemic norms, this could explain why Marjorie makes assertions of things that she does not endorse, and in doing so, might allow us to respect the seriousness of the impact of Marjorie's depression.

Objection to the Alief Solution – Arationality Fails to Match the Marjorie Case

Alief appears to have some difficulty accounting for the complexity of thought that the Marjorie case involves. The Marjorie case seems to involve some use of reason that might contribute to Marjorie 's sincerely asserting NSEs. For instance, Marjorie might find herself employing the following reasoning while simultaneously super depressed and "insightful": *"Nobody who publishes papers in respected philosophy journals is an incompetent philosopher. I have published papers in respected philosophy journals. But I am still an incompetent philosopher."* The standard alief cases are automatic, mechanical, and arational. The sort of thought process occurring in the Marjorie case seems less automatic. Assigning praise and blame to persons for holding certain beliefs seems to rest on the notion that a person can adjust their beliefs in response to a particular piece of evidence. If I reason poorly and end up believing

something that is not well-supported by my overall evidence, perhaps I am blameworthy because I've been irrational. However, in alief cases, no such sensitivity to evidence is possible given the automaticity of aliefs; that is, their near-instantaneous transition from representation to affect, to behavioral response (Gendler, 2008a). If the normative standards to which we hold beliefs are in any way based on the fact that beliefs are sensitive to evidence, then praiseworthiness and blameworthiness cannot be assigned according to what an agent *alieves* (Gendler, 2008b). Because the essential features of the Marjorie case are compatible with Marjorie's having time between the *representation* stage and the *behavioral response* stage to go through some kind of reasoning process that leads her to assert NSEs, it seems that the Marjorie case is compatible with the claim that Marjorie is being either rational or irrational*,* as opposed to *arational.* While depression plausibly affects an agent's ability to reason and assess evidence, it does not, at least in the Marjorie case, eliminate this ability entirely. Even Marjorie's depressive reasoning might exhibit some characteristics of rationality (such as the use of valid inferences) even though such inferences might be viewed as irrational from the perspective of Marjorie's general epistemic tendencies (which include assessing relevant *overall* evidence). Thus, some of the key features of alief seem difficult to apply to the Marjorie case as a whole, even if these features are applicable to some variations of the Marjorie case, such as the facial expressions case (Chen et. al., 2014).

Objection to the Alief Solution – Alief is Not Explanatorily Necessary

We might think that the essential features of the Marjorie case can be at play even in cases where the agent is not currently in a situation in which a particular representation evokes a particular emotional response. It is likely that Marjorie, while suffering from depression, can still experience NSEs when lying in bed doing nothing. If this is true, then perhaps it is not clear that something like the R-A-B relation (Gendler, 2008a) is essential to explaining the Marjorie case.

If there's no R-A-B relation that is essential to the Marjorie case, then alief is not likely to explain all Marjorie cases, even if it does an adequate job explaining certain variations of it, such as in the facial expression case (Chen et. al., 2014).

Objection to the Alief Solution – Alief is Too Strictly Mechanical

The sorts of behaviors and behavioral responses that are present in Gendler's (2008a; 2008b) description of alief seem importantly different from the sort of "behavioral category" that the assertion of NSEs seems to fall under. Assertion of some claim seems unlike behavioral responses such as gripping railings or having sweaty palms. The Marjorie case seems to more narrowly involve internal mental events, as opposed to easily observable outward behaviors (although there may be variations of the Marjorie case that do involve easily observable outward behaviors). Gendler's (2008a) alief cases, on the other hand, seem to almost exclusively involve mechanical, motor routines that are not strictly internal mental events. When someone makes an assertion, there seems to be more going on than purely a motor response. If this is true, then Gendler's (2008a; 2008b) account fails to offer the whole story when applied to Marjorie's assertion of NSEs.[6]

General Objection to Alief – Beliefs Can Be Automatic Too

Beliefs can be just as automatic as aliefs, at least in some cases. For instance, suppose you walk into a well-lit room. It would not take much (if any) reasoning or deliberation in order for you to end up with the belief that the lights are on. This sort of belief simply happens to a person, whether they want it to or not. Even though beliefs can be automatic in this way, we typically still think that beliefs are subject to rational evaluation. Gendler (2008a; 2008b) seems to treat the automaticity aspect of alief as though it is unique to alief, as though this property is

[6] Noggle (2016) offers a similar criticism of Gendler's view.

part of what sets alief apart from belief. For this reason, even if it is true that Marjorie's thought processes and reactions are automatic, it is not clear that they are due to alief, as opposed to belief.

Chapter 3

Quasi-Belief and the Marjorie Case

What is Quasi-Belief?

Robert Noggle (2016) attempts to address a puzzle similar to the Marjorie case by rejecting the first premise of the Marjorie puzzle. Noggle's view would hold that a non-belief, but belief-like mental state can explain why Marjorie appears to believe that she is incompetent. Noggle asks us to consider Jane, a sufferer of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), who knows that she has OCD and judges that her obsessions are unfounded or false, but who still finds herself engaging in compulsive behaviors as a way of ridding herself of her obsessive thoughts (Noggle, 2016). For instance, Jane experiences obsessive thoughts that say things like, *If I fail to flip the light switch all the way, my house will burn down.* Jane, like Marjorie, has insight into her condition. She knows that she is suffering from OCD, she knows that OCD is likely to make her think obsessively about things she otherwise would not, and she knows that OCD is likely to drive her towards compulsive behaviors she otherwise would not engage in. On the other hand, Jane judges that her obsessions are implausible or even false, and the accompanying compulsions irrational. It seems, at first glance, that Jane's obsessive thoughts and accompanying compulsive actions meet certain criteria for belief, and it seems like her judgments about the plausibility of those obsessive thoughts also meet certain criteria for belief. Noggle thinks that two characteristics must be present in order for a mental state to be belief-like (let alone, an actual belief). These criteria are representation of the way the world is, and interaction with emotions to produce behaviors (Noggle, 2016). According to Noggle, beliefs allow for representational "…information to be put to use, as when my belief that there is beer in the refrigerator interacts

with my desire to drink some beer to cause my refrigerator-approaching behavior" (Noggle, 2016, p. 657).

Jane's obsessive thoughts guide her behaviors by interacting with her emotions. In this case, they seem to do so automatically, without Jane's conscious decision making involved (Noggle, 2016). This (Criterion D on my list) is an indicator of belief, according to Noggle (2016). In Jane's case, her feelings of extreme anxiety bring about her compulsive need to repeatedly check the light switches to ensure that they are each flipped all the way in one direction or the other, not halfway in between (Noggle, 2016). If Noggle (2016) is correct in thinking that a characteristic of belief is its ability to produce emotions which then produce behavior, then there is a prima facie reason to think that Jane's obsessions are due to a belief that her obsessions are true. After all, these obsessions can lead Jane to engage in certain behaviors (such as compulsively checking light switches). On the other hand, Jane explicitly judges that her obsessive thoughts are not likely to be true or are even false. According to Noggle, Jane is likely to assent to these judgments and make sincere assertions of the falsity or implausibility of her obsessions (Noggle, 2016). This means that criterion C is met by Jane's insightful thinking patterns. Criterion C says that, *if S believes that P, S will be prepared to sincerely assert that P* (Salmon, 1995; Noggle, 2016; Schwitzgebel, 2006). Therefore, there is a prima facie reason to think that Jane believes that her obsessions are false. The Jane case looks a lot like the Marjorie case. It appears, at first glance, that Jane believes that her obsessions are true and that they are false at the same time. Noggle (2016) and I agree that there are reasons to think that an account of cases like Jane's should deny the claim that the agent in question believes the content of their obsessions (or NSEs), although some of our reasons for agreeing on this point might differ in

some ways. So, Noggle (2016) needs a way to account for Jane's obsessions and compulsive behaviors that does not commit him to saying that Jane has contradictory beliefs.

In addition to the minimum criteria for belief-like mental states, Noggle proposes that a "functionally normal" belief must meet certain criteria in addition to this bare minimum (Noggle, 2016, 657). Noggle (2016) thinks that to be a functionally normal belief, a belief must meet two additional criteria.

Firstly, a functionally normal belief must meet the affirmation criterion. According to this criterion, a belief is a functionally normal belief that P is such that the agent holding the belief "will be disposed to assert [P], at least to herself, at least insofar as she is attending to the question of whether *p* is true." (Noggle, 2016, 657). Also, part of this criterion is the requirement that the belief in question be such that the agent will be disposed to use P as a premise in her practical and theoretical reasoning (Noggle, 2016).

Secondly, a functionally normal belief needs to meet the evidential responsiveness criterion. According to Noggle, a functionally normal belief that P will disappear if the agent is confronted with strong and direct evidence for the falsity of P, so long as the agent is not emotionally attached to the belief that P (Noggle, 2016). Noggle acknowledges that certain beliefs are not responsive to evidence in this way; certain religious or political beliefs may be held in the presence of evidence to the contrary. Even though such states can still be beliefs, on this view, Noggle's treatment of such cases suggests that he thinks they fall outside the category of functionally normal belief (Noggle, 2016).

To address the Jane puzzle, Noggle invokes a mental state he dubs "quasi-belief", which, in his view, is a mental state that meets the minimum criteria for belief (representation of the way the world is, and interaction with other mental events like emotions and desires) but fails to meet

at least one of the criteria for functionally normal belief (2016). Noggle argues that Jane's case is one in which her obsessions are due to quasi-belief, while her insightful thinking patterns and judgments about the veracity of her obsessive thoughts are due to functionally normal belief (2016).

The Affirmation Criterion

Because of her insight into her condition, Jane does not assent to what her obsessive thoughts are telling her – she would not *sincerely* assert to herself or anyone else that she would be at risk of burning her house down if she failed to flip the light switches properly. So, Jane's obsessive thoughts lack at least a part of the affirmation criterion for functionally normal beliefs (Noggle, 2016). Furthermore, since it is not likely that Jane be willing to go around her neighbourhood warning everyone to ensure that their light switches are flipped properly so as to avoid housefires, Noggle thinks that the other part of the affirmation criterion – the use of the relevant proposition in one's conscious practical or theoretical reasoning – fails to be met by Jane's case.[94] While it may be argued that Jane uses the premise, "If I do not flip my light switches properly, my house will burn down" as a premise in her practical reasoning, insofar as she indeed goes around her house checking for improperly flipped light switches whilst experiencing the thought that doing so will prevent her house from burning down, the application of this premise in other relevant areas of her practical reasoning does not apply so neatly, as is demonstrated by the behaviors Jane is inclined towards when it comes to interacting with others whom she thinks are unlikely to share her fears about improperly flipped light switches (Noggle, 2016). This same result indicates that Criterion B – the claim that beliefs involve the use of the proposition in question as a premise in one's conscious theoretical and practical reasoning – would not be met by Marjorie's judgments about her obsessions (Noggle, 2016).

The Evidential Responsiveness Criterion

Jane's OCD thoughts persist in the face of what the agent judges to be good evidence to the contrary. Jane still proceeds to compulsively search her house for improperly flipped light switches, despite her awareness that it is very unlikely that failing to do so will result in a house fire. So, according to Noggle (2016), the sensitivity to evidence criterion for functionally normal belief also fails to be met by Jane's case. In fact, Noggle suggests that Jane's awareness that a house fire does not occur as a result of improperly flipped light switches and her frequent checks to ensure that the switches are properly flipped should provide Jane with enough evidence to show that her obsessions are not offering her true information, and that her compulsions are unfounded. Yet, Jane's obsessions and compulsions continue despite Jane's awareness of this evidence (Noggle, 2016). Given that Jane's OCD symptoms seem to be lacking, or at least quite deficient in the properties of functionally normal belief, Noggle concludes that Jane's OCD symptoms are best described as *quasi-belief.* After all, a quasi-belief can still influence certain actions in a way that's similar to how belief influences actions (by causing emotional responses, for instance), even though quasi-belief lacks other properties of belief (Noggle, 2016).

Noggle (2016) argues that quasi-belief captures the OCD case more fully than it can be captured by Gendler's (2008a; 2008b) alief account. Noggle holds that the OCD case is too complex to be fully captured by alief, which is, as discussed earlier, an automatic, largely mechanistic mental state (Gendler, 2008a, as cited in Noggle, 2016, pp. 660-1). According to Noggle, since the OCD case involves some level of complex reasoning, alief has difficulty explaining such a case. The OCD case is such that the agent is afraid *that* her failure to check for improperly flipped light switches will result in a house fire. This involves the consideration of complex propositions, as opposed to the quick, instantaneous, reflex-like characteristics of alief

(Noggle, 2016). While Gendler (2008a; 2008b) makes space for aliefs with propositional content, the way she treats the paradigmatic cases of alief suggest that she leans towards a non-propositional picture of alief.

Applying Quasi-Belief to the Marjorie Case

Because quasi-belief, according to Noggle, is a mental state that is "lacking or severely deficient in the properties of affirmation and evidential responsiveness" (Noggle, 2016, p. 658), we can compare the features of the Marjorie case to Noggle's criteria for functionally normal belief to see if anything about the Marjorie case is lacking or deficient in one or more of those criteria. When comparing the Marjorie case to Noggle's (2016) Jane case, it seems that Marjorie's NSEs and Jane's obsessions are parallel, and Marjorie's judgments about what her evidence supports are parallel to Jane's judgments about the plausibility of her obsessions.

The Affirmation Criterion and the Marjorie Case

Noggle's first portion of the affirmation criterion for functionally normal belief holds that an agent with a functionally normal belief that *p*, "will be disposed to assert p, at least to herself, at least insofar as she is attending to the question of whether p is true." (Noggle, 2016, p. 657). Marjorie's NSE seems to meet the first portion of this criterion; she is attending to whether it is true that she is an incompetent philosopher. We can see this insofar as Marjorie judges that her evidence does not support the claim that she is an incompetent philosopher. However, despite Marjorie's judgments about what her evidence supports, she still is inclined to make seemingly sincere assertions to the effect that she is an incompetent philosopher. Marjorie is not lying when she makes assertions like, "I am an incompetent philosopher", she's not being disingenuous, she has no intention to deceive herself or anyone else. So far, it looks like Marjorie is on track for a

functionally normal belief that she is an incompetent philosopher. However, it is not so clear that Marjorie's NSE meets the second portion of Noggle's (2016) affirmation criterion.

According to the second portion of Noggle's (2016) affirmation criterion, if Marjorie had a functionally normal belief that she is in incompetent philosopher, Marjorie "will be disposed to use ["I am an incompetent philosopher"] as a premise in her conscious theoretical and practical reasoning, at least insofar as she consciously attends to this belief." (Noggle, 2016, p. 657). We have already established that Marjorie consciously attends to whether or not her assertion is true. We might think it equally likely that Marjorie applies her NSE to her practical or theoretical reasoning in certain cases, but not in others. For instance, when deciding whether to submit a paper to a philosophy journal, Marjorie, while in the grips of depression may reason in the following way: *I am an incompetent philosopher. Incompetent philosophers should not submit papers to philosophy journals. So, I should not submit papers to philosophy journals.* However, because of her insight into her condition and her judgments about what her relevant overall evidence supports (the relevant evidence in this case being the fact that she has published papers in well-respected philosophy journals in the past), Marjorie might be inclined to reason in this way instead: *Incompetent philosophers are not likely to be accepted to publish in well-respected journals. I have been accepted to publish in well-respected journals. So, it is not likely that I am an incompetent philosopher. If it is not likely that I am an incompetent philosopher, then I should submit a paper to a journal. So, I should submit a paper to a journal.* Because Marjorie's NSEs in combination with her insight can lead her practical and theoretical reasoning in either direction, while using the same premise ("I am an incompetent philosopher") as a premise in her reasoning while she's attending to whether this premise is true, it seems unclear as to whether Marjorie cases generally meet or fail to meet the second portion of Noggle's (2016) affirmation

criterion. Perhaps some Marjorie cases meet this part of the affirmation criterion, and others do not.

The Evidential Responsiveness Criterion and the Marjorie Case

Noggle's (2016) evidential responsiveness criterion for functionally normal belief seems more clearly lost on the Marjorie case than does his previous criterion. While Marjorie's judgment about what her relevant overall evidence supports seems to fall in line with this criterion insofar as it displays Marjorie's concern for believing in accordance with what her relevant overall evidence supports, Marjorie's NSE, like Jane's OCD symptoms, seem to persist even though her judgments are going in the other direction. The kind of evidence that Marjorie thinks ought to bear on whether she forms a belief that her NSEs are true do not, at least on the surface, seem to have much bearing on whether Marjorie continues to experience and assert NSEs. This conflict is important to the Marjorie case, and as such, it seems clearer that the evidential responsiveness criterion is under threat when it comes to Marjorie's assertion of NSEs, and thus, points to a quasi-belief. If Noggle (2016) thinks that only one of the functionally normal belief criteria need to be violated in order for a mental state to count as a quasi-belief, then it seems that Marjorie's NSEs may be due to quasi-belief (Noggle, 2016).

Finally, because Marjorie's judgments about what her relevant overall evidence supports would drive her to sincerely assert the negation of her NSEs, and because her judgments about her evidence are exactly the sorts of things that are responsive to evidence, Noggle (2016) might say that Marjorie's judgments, like Jane's, are due to functionally normal belief. Thus, Noggle (2016) would address the Marjorie case by denying the first conjunct of premise (1) of the Marjorie puzzle, while accepting the remaining premises.

Strengths of Quasi-Belief

We might think that a point in favor of the quasi-belief explanation for the Marjorie case is that the quasi-belief (Noggle, 2016) analysis respects the authentic Marjorie by favoring her judgments about what her evidence supports as the stronger indicator of belief. Favoring Marjorie's judgments over her depressive thought patterns seems intuitive, at least in part, because Marjorie herself judges that forming beliefs on the basis of depressive thought patterns is less reasonable than forming beliefs on the basis of what is supported by her evidence. Insofar as the quasi-belief approach is an approach that favors Marjorie's judgments about overall evidence, it seems to lend due respect to Marjorie's overall epistemic tendency towards appreciating and using her overall relevant evidence when it comes to claims about her abilities as a philosopher.

Objection to Quasi-Belief: Lack of Causal Efficacy

Quasi-belief (Noggle, 2016) might provide a solution to the puzzle insofar as it allows for the denial of a premise in the initial puzzle, but simply calling a mental state that is lacking in certain properties by a certain name does not give us a very informative picture of the nature of the kinds of thought processes that lead to negative self-evaluations in depression. One of the things we want from a solution to the Marjorie puzzle, in addition to a rejection of one or more of its premises, is a story about how a mental state can *cause* Marjorie to experience negative self-evaluations whilst simultaneously judging that her evidence supports their negation. What is going on in her head that makes it possible for this to occur? It is not clear that an account of what the relevant mental state is *not* will be effective at telling this story. This is one thing that Gendler's (2008a; 2008b) account does well. By explicating the positive qualities of alief (i.e., that alief is automatic, arational, etc.), it is easier to draw parallels between certain properties of

depression in a way that tells a story about how depression might cause aliefs or how aliefs might cause certain behaviors associated with depression. We need to know more about the nature of quasi-beliefs – their positive qualities – in order to gain a better understanding of how depression brings about quasi-beliefs or how quasi-beliefs bring about depressive behaviors and assertion of NSEs. Rather than just saying that quasi-beliefs lack certain belief properties, telling us what it is about depression and quasi-beliefs that bring them together in a causally explanatory way would give us more information about what is going on inside Marjorie's head that allows for Marjorie puzzles to occur. It is not clear how quasi-belief can have this kind of causal power because it is not clear what other properties quasi-belief has aside from the negative properties Noggle (2016) assigns (i.e., lack of evidential responsiveness). We might wonder why we should think that something lacking in the properties of functionally normal belief can bring it about that Marjorie continues to assert NSEs despite her judgments about what her relevant overall evidence indicates.

One way for Noggle's (2016) account to improve would be to lean more on the *function* part of functionally normal belief. He, like Gendler (2008a; 2008b), says that the function of belief is to track truth. Perhaps there is something to be said about what the functions of, say, "functionally *abnormal"* beliefs, or quasi-beliefs, might be. Perhaps the function of these types of mental states is different from that of functionally normal belief. It may be thought that, in cases like the OCD case or the Marjorie case, the function of the quasi-belief is not to track truth, but to do other things like relieve anxiety or keep the person from trying things she fears failing. Something like this might tell us at least part of the story about why Marjorie continues to experience and assert NSEs even when she judges that her evidence supports their negation. Perhaps Marjorie's NSEs serve some function aside from tracking truth. While this is

speculative, we might wonder whether the function of Marjorie's NSE assertion is to maintain consistency with the other "beliefs" that Marjorie holds as a result of her depression.

Chapter 4

In-Between Belief and the Marjorie Case

What is In-Between Belief?

According to Eric Schwitzgebel (2010), there are cases resembling the Marjorie case which are such that the agent in question is best described as being in a state of what Schwitzgebel calls "in-between belief". If this response is applied to the Marjorie case, it would reject both (1) and (2). These premises state, respectively: Marjorie believes that she is incompetent, and Marjorie is aware that she holds this belief, *and* Marjorie believes that she is not incompetent, and Marjorie is aware that she holds this belief. Schwitzgebel's (2010) account would hold that it is indeterminate as to whether Marjorie believes or disbelieves her NSEs. There are belief criteria met by Marjorie's assertion of NSEs and there are belief criteria met by Marjorie's judgments about what her relevant overall evidence supports. As such, Schwitzgebel's (2010) account would hold that, in order to adequately capture Majorie's mental state, *as a whole*, with respect to the veracity of her NSEs (as opposed to what Marjorie believes about her NSEs at a single moment when she makes a particular assertion), it should be concluded that Marjorie is in an in-between state with respect to her beliefs about her NSEs.

To flesh out Schwitzgebel's view, consider one of his examples; suppose you are teaching a class of students who come from various ethnic backgrounds. Having read and been convinced by the literature supporting the fact that intelligence levels are equal across all races, you come to judge that it is true that each of your students, regardless of their race, are equally capable of producing quality work in your class (Schwitzgebel, 2010). However, despite your explicit judgments, you find yourself treating your Black students differently than your other students; you are more surprised when your Black students submit A+ papers than you are when your

other students submit A+ papers (Schwitzgebel, 2010). In such a case, it seems that there are competing indicators of belief. Your explicit judgments about what you claim to hold as true indicate a belief that there is no difference in intelligence levels across different races, while your behaviors indicate a belief that Black students are less intelligent than others (Schwitzgebel, 2010).

Schwitzgebel (2010) holds a dispositionalist account of belief, according to which, roughly, to believe that P is to exhibit a certain set of dispositions towards certain behaviors or tendencies. He conceives of belief as a "multi-dimensional spectrum" for which a range of types of behaviors and tendencies must be exhibited in order for a person to have a belief that P (Schwitzgebel, 2010, p. 534). That is, in order to have a belief (a full-stop belief, not, say, a partial belief) that P, an agent must exhibit some set of dispositions, which may include things like a disposition to assert P to oneself and others, or a disposition to perform other actions that we might expect to see from someone who believes that P (Schwitzgebel, 2010). Schwitzgebel borrows an example from Ryle, in which a skater who believes that the ice is too thin will be disposed to willingly tell others about the thin ice, as well as avoid it themselves (Ryle, 1949, as cited in Schwitzgebel, 2010, pp. 533-4). While there are cases where a person may fail to exhibit certain characteristics associated with belief for non-belief-related reasons (i.e., failing to warn others of thin ice because one wishes for others to fall through), Schwitzgebel (2010) argues that, even barring these sorts of cases, there are other cases in which an agent meets some of the relevant dispositions required for a belief that P whilst failing to meet others. The example involving the teacher and the Black students is one such case. On this view, to have a belief that students of all ethnic backgrounds are equally likely to produce high-quality work, the teacher would need to explicitly judge and profess this to be the case, and they would need to react to the

achievements of Black students and other students in the same way (i.e., by not being more surprised by the achievements of Black students than by the achievements of other students) (Schwitzgebel, 2010). According to Schwitzgebel (2010), cases like these do not meet enough of the dispositional criteria to be counted as (fully) beliefs that P, nor do they fail to meet enough of the dispositional criteria to be counted as (fully) beliefs that not-P. Ascribing solely a belief that P or solely a belief that not-P to someone like the teacher would not fully capture the nuances of the case at hand. For this, and other similar reasons, Schwitzgebel thinks that belief is a vague predicate (Schwitzgebel, 2010).

To help us see this more clearly, Schwitzgebel (2010) offers some analogous cases for which we would be hesitant to describe as being fully A or fully not-A. One such case is that of a computer which is fully functional for all tasks, except print jobs. When prompted to print a document, the computer malfunctions. To describe this computer as solely functional or solely non-functional would fail to describe the computer's state more generally. It is not functional full-stop, nor is it non-functional, full-stop. The computer is somewhere in between functionality and non-functionality (Schwitzgebel, 2010). Other examples offered by Schwitzgebel include that of a person who is honest under certain circumstances and dishonest in others. According to Schwitzgebel, describing that person as honest, full-stop would not fully capture the way the person is overall, nor would describing them as dishonest, full-stop (Schwitzgebel, 2010). Rather, a more natural way to think about someone who is sometimes honest and sometimes dishonest requires us to look at the person's dispositions. Schwitzgebel thinks that belief works in a similar way; when a person does not meet all relevant criteria for belief, that person's mental states can be classified along a "...continuum between full possession of all the

relevant dispositions and possession of none of them...” (Schwitzgebel 2010, p. 534). This is another reason Schwitzgebel thinks that belief is a vague predicate (Schwitzgebel, 2010).

Important aspects of what it is to have a belief, according to Schwitzgebel (2010) is for the agent to explicitly judge that something is the case, to be disposed to take a certain side in an argument about the relevant proposition, and to be, “…disposed to reason about the case in reflective moments, [according to] her best conscious assessment of the evidence.” (Schwitzgebel, 2010, p. 542). Given that Marjorie matches this description when it comes to her insightful thoughts, Schwitzgebel (2010) would tell us that her judgments about what her evidence support (particularly insofar as these judgments would hypothetically lead Marjorie to take the side of her insightful thoughts when consciously considering whether her negative self-evaluations are true) indicate that Marjorie believes that she is not an incompetent philosopher.

Disposition and The Marjorie Case

In Marjorie cases where Marjorie is inclined to assert negative self-evaluations on the basis of her depressive thought patterns, we might take this inclination towards assertion as a behavioral disposition in the same sense that Schwitzgebel (2010) has in mind. We might think of Marjorie’s tendency to assert negative self-evaluations as dispositional in the relevant sense insofar as Marjorie might be disposed to assert her negative self-evaluations *if she were to find herself in a situation where she is subject to depressive thinking patterns*. Perhaps if she is not actively experiencing negative thoughts about herself at this very moment, it will still be true that, *if* she were, she would assert her negative self-evaluations. In a parallel fashion, we could think of Marjorie’s preparedness to assert the negation of her negative self-evaluations whilst she is considering her evidential support for whether her negative self-evaluations are true, as a

dispositional tendency. On an in-between belief analysis of the Marjorie case, Marjorie is sometimes disposed to act as though P is true, and at other times, is disposed to act as though P is false. When attempting to describe Marjorie's overall mental state (i.e., not her moment-to-moment mental states), Schwitzgebel (2010) would tell us that, since her dispositions pull her in both directions (towards P and towards ~P), ascribing to Marjorie a full-stop belief that P would not fully capture all the facts about Marjorie's dispositional tendencies, nor would ascribing to Marjorie a full-stop belief that ~P. After all, even while she is in the grips of depression and asserting negative self-evaluations as a result, there is a potential version of Marjorie that asserts the negation of her negative self-evaluations on the basis of judgments about what her relevant overall evidence supports. The reverse also applies. When Marjorie asserts the negations of her negative self-evaluations on the basis of her judgments about what her overall evidence supports, there is a potential version of Marjorie that asserts negative self-evaluations on the basis of depressive thinking. If we think that Marjorie, as a whole, is made up of each of these Marjorie versions, then, on Schwitzgebel's (2010) account, the best way to describe Marjorie's mental state is as being in-between believing that she (Marjorie) is an incompetent philosopher and believing that she is not an incompetent philosopher. This account, to my mind, seems to treat all versions of Marjorie (occurrent or potential) as equally real, and thus, equally in need of relevant mental state attribution.

Since Schwitzgebel's (2010) account is interested in describing an agent's overall mental state, as opposed to the agent's moment-to-moment mental states, Schwitzgebel (2010) would argue that the Marjorie case is not better captured by a switching beliefs account – an account according to which Marjorie holds a belief that P at one point in time, then switches to a belief that ~P at a different point in time. The best way to capture Marjorie's *overall* mental state is as

that of an in-between belief. In other words, Marjorie, *as a whole* (including both her insightful thinking patterns and her depressive thinking patterns as they pertain to the veracity of Marjorie's NSEs) meets some of the dispositional criteria for a belief that P, but not all of them. Similarly, she meets some of the dispositional criteria for a belief that ~P, but not all of them (Schwitzgebel, 2010).

Strengths of In-Between Belief

The in-between belief account of the Marjorie case would make an attempt to capture Marjorie's overall attitudes (her insightful thinking patterns and her depressive thinking patterns alike). Respecting the authentic Marjorie involves taking Marjorie's general epistemic tendencies – her tendency to appreciate and weigh out what her relevant overall evidence indicates about the veracity of her NSEs – as a weightier indicator of what Marjorie authentically believes. By taking all of Marjorie's belief-forming tendencies (depressive ones and insightful ones alike), the in-between belief solution captures Marjorie's general epistemic tendencies (the ones that are separate from her depressive belief-forming tendencies). For this reason, the in-between belief view might be thought to be successful at "taking the first step" towards respecting the authentic Marjorie.

Challenge for In-Between Belief – May Fail to Respect Authentic Marjorie

The in-between belief account of the Marjorie case suffers from one of the same challenges raised against the contradictory belief account. The in-between belief account takes Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns and depressive thinking patterns as equally weighty belief-indicators. Again, Marjorie's general epistemic tendencies lean towards weighing evidence in a way that prioritizes evidence considered in light of Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns and against prioritizing evidence considered in light of her depressive thinking patterns.

In order to respect the authentic Marjorie, which is best captured by her insightful thinking patterns, the account should lend more weight to Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns as belief-indicators than it lends to Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns. In-between belief (Schwitzgebel, 2010) does not do this. An account that does a better job at respecting the authentic Marjorie will favor a determinate belief on Marjorie's part that her NSEs are false.

Chapter 5

Evidential Salience and Switching Beliefs, and the Marjorie Case

Another potential solution to the Marjorie puzzle, inspired by Samuel Kampa (2020), is a view according to which Marjorie switches from a belief that P to a belief that ~P, perhaps because of changes in context, including changes in what the agent is occurently paying attention to. A switching belief account may have the tools to challenge all three premises of the Marjorie puzzle. At one moment, premise (1) – the claim that Marjorie believes her NSEs – might be true whilst premise (2) – the claim that Marjorie believes the negation of her NSEs – is false, and at a different moment, (2) might be true whilst (1) is false. This solution might also put pressure on premise (3), which is the claim that it is not the case that Marjorie believes her NSEs are true *and* that she believes her NSEs are false whilst being aware of both beliefs. A switching belief theorist might point out that (3) seems only to rule out the possibility that (1) and (2) occur at the same time, but it does not rule out the possibility that they can each be true in different moments.

If, say, Marjorie's depression is limiting the pieces of evidence (about Marjorie's NSEs) that are salient to Marjorie, then Marjorie, even whilst judging that she ought not base her beliefs about herself on depressive thinking patterns, may find that her desired epistemic adjustment may not be readily available to her. As such, Marjorie may find herself unable to give up the belief that her NSEs are false, even if she thinks this is the most rational move to make. If Marjorie's relevant overall evidence is what is most salient to her at a given moment (as opposed to the evidence made salient by her depressive thinking patterns), then Marjorie may find that she cannot help but reject her NSEs and accept their negation.

My focus in this section is largely on the evidential salience and attention pieces of Kampa's (2020) view and how it can be thought of as a switching belief account of the Marjorie case. Kampa (2020) makes use of the notion of "level-splitting" in OCD cases, and he applies his evidential salience argument, in part, as a way to address level-splitting, but also as a way to argue for the possibility of epistemic akrasia. Level-splitting is roughly the same notion as Hunter's (2011) notion of alienated belief. To level-split is to hold a doxastic attitude that you think you should not hold, or to fail to hold a doxastic attitude that you think you ought to hold (Kampa, 2020). Kampa (2020) argues that certain cases involving OCD and awareness of one's OCD involve level-splitting. I do not focus much on the level-splitting or epistemic akrasia pieces of Kampa's (2020) view. The main reason for leaving out more thorough discussion of these portions of Kampa's (2020) argument is that my application of pieces of Kampa's view to a switching beliefs account of the Marjorie case can be done with or without the notions of level-splitting and akrasia that Kampa (2020) has in mind.

Evidential Salience and Switching Beliefs

Kampa's (2020) solution to level-splitting in OCD cases is to direct the agent's attention in such a way that makes the more relevant/better evidence more salient to the agent. Evidential salience, according to Kampa, is roughly "…the degree of attention that a piece of evidence attracts" (Kampa, 2020, p. 482). The problem for people in certain OCD cases is that the OCD is making certain facts and pieces of evidence more salient than others, and the facts and pieces of evidence that OCD is making more salient are not the sorts of facts that the agent herself thinks ought to be salient to her (Kampa, 2020).

To bring an OCD sufferer out of her state of level-splitting and into a place where she can have some degree of control over the doxastic states she ends up with, Kampa argues that certain

methods used in cognitive therapies can help draw the client's attention to pieces of evidence that the client herself thinks should be salient and relevant to her consideration of whether P is true (Kampa, 2020). Similarly, Kampa holds that these same therapies can also draw the client's attention away from information or pieces of evidence that are less relevant to whether P is true (Kampa, 2020).

When an agent's attention is drawn from evidence that is less relevant to the truth or falsity of P and towards evidence that is more relevant to the truth or falsity of P, a shift in beliefs becomes possible. Kampa suggests that giving someone the ability to regulate their attention will give them the ability to regulate (at least to some extent) the information that is most salient to them at a given moment. The ability to regulate these things, says Kampa, can result in the ability to control one's doxastic states.[7] If this is true, then it seems that it is possible for changes in attention and evidential salience to result in changes in belief, to the extent that an agent could begin with a belief that P (which is formed because of certain salience facts) and end with a belief that ~P (which is formed because of different salience facts). If these things are true in the Marjorie case, then we have a reason to think that the Marjorie case is one that involves switching beliefs.

Evidential Salience as Switching Beliefs and the Marjorie Case

A defender of the Kampa-inspired switching belief account might say that the reason it is difficult (or perhaps even impossible) for Marjorie to believe in accordance with what she judges her evidence to support is because Marjorie's depression makes certain facts more salient than the pieces of evidence upon which Marjorie thinks she ought to form her beliefs. Even though Marjorie knows that she has evidence that she judges to be supportive of the negation of her

[7] Kampa (2020, p. 485) thinks that this control over one's own doxastic states is a necessary component of epistemic akrasia.

NSEs, her depression might be strong enough to make those pieces of evidence less salient than even Marjorie herself thinks they should be. It might be argued that it is only when Marjorie's attention is drawn away from her depressive thinking patterns and focused more heavily on her evidence that Marjorie will be able to believe according to her evidence. Perhaps this shift in attention can occur, as Kampa (2020) suggests, through therapeutic interventions, or perhaps it can occur when Marjorie's colleagues take her aside and show Marjorie her own well-respected publications and grades in philosophy courses. Directing one's attention in this way will lead to Marjorie's forming doxastic states (in this case, beliefs) about particular propositions that are in line with what she judges her evidence to support, thus resolving the level-splitting (Kampa, 2020). The reason Marjorie does not end up believing in accordance with what she judges her evidence to support in the first place is because, at the time of sincerely asserting NSEs, Marjorie's attention is not occurently focused on that evidence, even though she thinks she should base her beliefs on that evidence. What is happening is that, because of depression, Marjorie is driven to pay attention to things that lead her into believing propositions that she otherwise would not (Kampa, 2020). With changes in the pieces of evidence that are most salient to Marjorie at a given moment might come changes in what Marjorie ends up believing with respect to her NSEs. If her attention can be directed away from the things that depression is making more salient to her, she will be able to better engage with and react to the pieces of evidence that she judges to be the most relevant when it comes to forming beliefs about her abilities as a philosopher. If we take binary belief to be the relevant doxastic state, then by redirecting Marjorie's attention (or if her attention can be redirected by some other thing, like her depression) from one type of evidence or piece of information to another, Marjorie's beliefs may change accordingly.

On this account, we would have to deny the idea that Marjorie believes her NSEs and disbelieves them at the same time. This is to reject the assumption that (1) and (2) hold at the same time. Rather, as in Kampa's OCD cases, we have an agent who, because of depression's ability to make bad information and evidence more salient to Marjorie than good information, holds the belief that she is an incompetent philosopher whilst believing that she ought not to hold this belief. Once there is a shift in attention, and thus, in evidential salience, Marjorie can move from believing that she is incompetent (whilst believing that she ought not hold this belief) to actually believing that she is not incompetent (and that this is the belief she ought to hold). If her attention and salience switch back in the direction of her depressive thought patterns, the accompanying beliefs will also switch back.

Finally, in terms of rejecting premise (3) of the Marjorie puzzle, we might think that the capacity of Marjorie's depression to make a very limited set of evidence more salient to Marjorie than the set of evidence that Marjorie herself thinks ought to be salient to her can bring it about that Marjorie will be unable to make epistemic adjustments in order to resolve the tension between (1) and (2). This could be the case even if Marjorie is aware that such adjustments are rational and readily available to her, at least in the sense that Marjorie would not need to work through overly long or complex chains of reasoning in order to arrive at the conclusion that her NSEs are false.

Strengths of Evidential Salience as Switching Belief

A strength of the Kampa (2020)-inspired switching beliefs account is that it offers an explanation as to how NSEs are caused. It tells a story about what brings about Marjorie's NSEs – the fact that certain pieces of evidence are more salient than others. This account tells a story about what the depression is doing in terms of its actions upon Marjorie's mental states in order

to cause Marjorie's NSE assertions. Changes in evidential salience can have the kind of causal power necessary to bring about changes in belief from one moment to another. It is relatively easy to see how changes in attention and salience can interact with Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns, as well as her insightful thinking patterns, in a way that brings about apparently conflicting beliefs.

Challenges for Switching Beliefs – May Fail to Adequately Respect Authentic Marjorie

It is possible that the pieces of evidence that Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns draw her attention to are drawing Marjorie's attention at the same time as Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns are drawing her attention to pieces of evidence that Marjorie herself thinks should be more salient to her. Kampa thinks this sort of thing should lead to suspension of judgment. In Kampa's words, "…if [evidence]1 confirms p and [evidence]2 disconfirms p, you will be inclined to suspend judgment on p" (Kampa, 2020, p. 483). One potential problem may arise from this. It seems that Marjorie's judgments about what evidence should be salient to her are stronger on the side of her insightful thinking patterns than they are on the side of her depressive thinking patterns. That is, when we consider Marjorie's general epistemic tendency to appreciate and weigh her relevant overall evidence with respect to the veracity of her NSEs, we should conclude that the authentic Marjorie would more strongly judge that she should think her NSEs are false. For this reason, it seems that the conclusion that Marjorie would suspend judgment would commit us to saying that the voice authentic Marjorie (the Marjorie captured by her general epistemic tendencies) is to be taken as equally authoritative as Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns in terms of their status as belief-indicators. In this way, the 'suspension of judgment result' would fail to adequately prioritize the voice of the authentic Marjorie.

Chapter 6

Contradictory Belief and the Marjorie Case

A contradictory belief analysis of the Marjorie case would have us reject premise (3) – the claim that Marjorie does not believe that she is incompetent and that she is not incompetent whilst being aware of each of these beliefs. The contradictory view would hold that (1) and (2) are in fact both true, even in the same moment.

Firstly, it might be the case that each of the belief criteria at play in the Marjorie case are sufficient for belief. If this is true, then we have a prima facie reason for thinking that the Marjorie case is one involving contradictory beliefs. Marjorie's judgments that her NSEs are not supported by her relevant overall evidence meet some criteria for the belief that her NSEs are not true, and Marjorie's sincere assertions (and other aspects of her depressive thinking patterns) meet some criteria for Marjorie's belief that her NSEs are true. Insofar as it is possible for Marjorie to meet criteria for both beliefs at the same moment, a tempting conclusion to draw is that Marjorie holds contradictory beliefs at the same time.

In terms of a more explicit denial of (3), the contradictory belief theorist might push back on the idea that the only available updates for Marjorie to make would be to either reject that she is incompetent or reject that she is not incompetent. It might be thought that neither of these updates are available to Marjorie, and as such, Marjorie will retain both beliefs. The fact that Marjorie is suffering from depression might lend support to this view, since depression can impact Marjorie's thinking patterns in such a way that she ends up believing her NSEs whilst still meeting criteria for the belief that her NSEs are false. Perhaps, Marjorie herself prefers to be in a position where she is able to give up one of her conflicting beliefs and perhaps it is true that Marjorie is generally rational. However, depression might make it impossible for Marjorie to

make use of her insightful belief-forming patterns in a way that actually results in Marjorie's rejection of the claim that she is incompetent, even if this is what Marjorie herself would prefer. Marjorie, because of her insight, can still end up with the belief that her NSEs are false but may find it impossible to give up the belief that they are true because of depression's ability to interfere with Marjorie's usual belief-forming processes.

David Hunter (2011) provides a framework that may be helpful in providing further motivation for the claim that the option to reject her NSEs is unavailable to Marjorie. Hunter (2011) argues that some beliefs are *alienated.* Cases of alienated belief are, broadly speaking, those in which an agent holds a belief that she wishes she did not hold for either epistemic reasons or other reasons, such as emotional reasons (Hunter, 2011). According to Hunter (2011), alienated beliefs are such that the agent would not hold them if she had more power over the beliefs she ends up with. In this way, alienated belief is similar to conflicting first-order and second-order desires (Hunter, 2011). Hunter offers several examples of alienated beliefs. In fact, one of his examples "involves that voice one sometimes hears in his head telling him things about his own history, competencies, or abilities that he feels are not true, or not wholly true…" (Hunter, 2011, p. 224). In these cases of alienated belief, Hunter (2011) argues that the agent holding such beliefs may wish that he did not hold them because she understands that those beliefs are not supported by good epistemic reasons. The primary reason why Hunter would want to deny premise (3) of the Marjorie case is because of the stubborn nature of alienated beliefs. Part of what it is to have an alienated belief, according to Hunter (2011) is to have a disordered belief – a belief that is not working properly because it fails to align with the agents "take" on the world, even when the agent herself is aware that she is holding such a belief (Hunter, 2011, p. 233). Part of what it is to have an alienated belief is to have a belief that is stubborn enough to

stick around despite the agent's own judgment (epistemic or otherwise) that the belief in question should be abandoned (Hunter, 2011). Thus, even if Marjorie is aware of rational, epistemic judgments, and even if these judgments are such that Marjorie ought to abandon beliefs that fail to align with her overall evidence, Hunter (2011), as well as my hypothetical contradictory belief theorist, would likely argue that Marjorie's depression is powerful enough to make this adjustment impossible. Perhaps, the depression is blocking Marjorie's ability to engage with her acknowledgement and appreciation for what she takes to be her overall evidence regarding the veracity of her NSEs in a way that *actually results* in adjusting her beliefs according to her overall evidence.

Finally, Marjorie might be unable, or at least unwilling, to give up her belief that her NSEs are false on account of her general epistemic tendency to form beliefs on the basis of what she takes to be relevant overall evidence, as well as her desire for holding beliefs that are formed in this way. Even if unwillingness (as opposed to strict inability) to give up the belief that she is not incompetent is what is at play, Marjorie may thereby regard this option as unavailable to her given her overall epistemic tendencies and her desire to avoid forming beliefs on the basis of depressive thinking. 'Unavailability' in this sense would stem from Marjorie's own insight-based standards rather than from the same kind of inability that her depression might cause.

Challenge for Contradictory Belief – It Fails to Respect Authentic Marjorie

A potential problem for the contradictory belief account is that it takes Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns as equally weighty in terms of their indication of what Marjorie believes. As I argued in the introduction, I think it is preferable for an account to reject premise (1) – the claim that Marjorie believes that she is incompetent because doing so shows more respect for Marjorie's own epistemic tendency to weigh overall evidence (as opposed to

depressive evidence only), and it shows more respect for Marjorie's own desire to avoid forming beliefs on the basis of things that are poorly supported by her relevant overall evidence. Marjorie's general epistemic tendencies are more indicative of who Marjorie authentically is as an epistemic agent. Marjorie's general epistemic tendencies lean towards weighing evidence in a way that prioritizes evidence considered in light of Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns and against prioritizing evidence considered in light of her depressive thinking patterns.

If an account of the Marjorie case is to be effective at respecting the authentic Marjorie, the account should give more weight to Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns and less weight to her depressive thinking patterns when it comes to determining what Marjorie authentically believes. The contradictory belief account is not successful at meeting this demand so long as it gives equal weight to Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns and depressive thinking patterns.

Finally, it may be important to note that the claim that Marjorie's option to give up the belief that her NSEs are false is unavailable to her because she deems it to be an undesirable epistemic move to make is not equivalent to that option being unavailable to her full stop. The option might still be available, even if Marjorie does not take that option. So, some of the reasoning used to support the contradictory belief account may be unfounded.

Chapter 7

The Marjorie Case and Puzzles About Reference

People like Gottlob Frege (1948) and Saul Kripke (1979) might deny (3) for reasons very similar to the reasons given by my proposed contradictory belief solution. The motivation for the contradictory belief account's denial of (3) appeals to certain ways in which the option to reject her NSEs may be unavailable to Marjorie because of certain ways in which depression might interfere with Marjorie's epistemic abilities. Frege (1948) and Kripke (1979) might also be taken to deny (3) because there are reasons to think that the options to reject the belief that she is incompetent or the belief that she is not incompetent may both be unavailable to Marjorie. However, instead of appealing to depression's interference with epistemic abilities, this solution when applied to the Marjorie case, appeals to puzzles about the reference of terms, stemming from the idea that there can be two non-overlapping belief-forming networks, one of which outputs the belief that P and the other of which outputs the belief that ~P. If the parallels between Kripke's (1979) puzzle and the Marjorie case are sound, then we will have a reason to think that Marjorie can believe P and ~P whilst being rational and aware of each of these beliefs.

Kripke (1979) presents a puzzle about belief, similar to Frege's (1948) puzzle, that has to do with an agent's lack of awareness of the fact that different names are being used to refer to the same object. Kripke (1979) proposes a puzzle in which a native French speaker, Pierre, comes to know French and English, both by direct assimilation, as opposed to by translating between languages. Suppose that Pierre has never been to London before, but he has heard his friends talk about how beautiful London is. On the basis of what he hears about London from his friends, Pierre is inclined to sincerely assert in French, "Londres est jolie". This French utterance expresses the same proposition as "London is pretty". Based on this French assertion, it seems

reasonable to think that Pierre believes that London is pretty (Kripke, 1979). However, suppose Pierre later moves to London, learns English by direct assimilation, and finds himself in an aesthetically displeasing neighbourhood. Because of what he sees around him, Pierre makes the sincere English assertion, “London is not pretty”. On the basis of this sincere assertion, it seems reasonable to think that Pierre believes that London is not pretty (Kripke, 1979). However, because Pierre understands each language independently of the other, he does not realize that ‘Londres’ and ‘London’ both refer to the same city. Thus, it seems like Pierre simultaneously believes that London is pretty, and that London is not pretty (Kripke, 1979). Pierre is not irrational in holding these two conflicting beliefs, he simply does not know that the pathways through which he arrives at each belief are not overlapping with each other (Kripke, 1979).

Parallels Between Kripke Cases and the Marjorie Case

To draw a parallel between Kripke’s Pierre case and the Marjorie case, it might be helpful to think of the Marjorie case as involving two separate belief-forming networks. The first is the depressive belief-forming network, which consists of Marjorie’s depressive thinking patterns and the beliefs that Marjorie forms on their basis. The second belief-forming network consists of Marjorie’s insightful thinking patterns and the beliefs that are formed on their basis. These two belief-forming networks can be thought to output beliefs that, when taken together, are in conflict with one another. If these two belief-forming networks operate sufficiently separately from one another, then it might not be the case that a readily available epistemic adjustment for Marjorie to make is to either reject that she is incompetent or reject that she is not incompetent. Perhaps, if Marjorie is fully operating within the depressive belief-forming network (perhaps her depression is particularly severe), then the option to reject her NSE may not be available to her.

Conversely, if Marjorie is operating fully within the insightful belief-forming network, the option to reject the view that she is not incompetent may not be available to her.[8]

With respect to Kripke's (1979) Pierre case, we can think of the parallel in approximately the following way. The French way of taking propositions about London's aesthetic properties outputs the belief that London is pretty in roughly the same way that Marjorie's depressive belief-forming network outputs the belief that her NSEs are true. The English way of taking propositions about London's aesthetic properties outputs the belief that London is not pretty in roughly the same way that Marjorie's insightful belief-forming network outputs the belief that Marjorie's NSEs are false. In Kripke's (1979) Pierre case, Pierre's two ways of taking propositions about London's aesthetic properties are sectioned off from one another because of the fact that Pierre has learned each language by direct assimilation, rather than by learning to translate things from one language to the other. If Marjorie's two belief-forming networks fail to interact with one another to a sufficient degree, we might think of them as sectioned off from one another in roughly the same way that Pierre's French understanding of propositions about London is sectioned off from his English understanding the very same propositions about London. Kripke suggests something along these lines when he stipulates that Pierre enthusiastically agrees with all the French assertions he has made about London and "…has neither changed his mind nor given up any belief he had in France" (Kripke, 1979, p. 444), even though his English assertions about London express a proposition that contradicts the one he makes in French. According to Kripke, based on Pierre's French assertions, "…we would be *forced* to conclude that he *still* believes that London is pretty" (Kripke, 1979, p. 444). The beliefs

[8] I thank Ivy Madden and Justin Plumridge for bringing this line of thought to my attention.

that Pierre forms on the basis of his English assertion do not interact with the beliefs he forms on the basis of his French assertion (Kripke, 1979).

Strengths of the Parallel Between Reference Puzzles and the Marjorie Case

The parallel between Kripke's (1979) Pierre case and the Marjorie case might contribute to our understanding of why Marjorie has difficulty giving up her NSEs even though she is aware of what she takes to be good evidence for their negation. The proposed parallel between the Marjorie case and Kripke's (1979) Pierre case might offer an interesting way of thinking about why beliefs formed on the basis of depressive thinking patterns are so difficult for Marjorie to "force" into line with what her insightful thinking patterns are leading her towards believing. If m's belief-forming networks are sectioned off from each other in a similar way to how things are in the Pierre case, this inability to overlap might explain why it seems like Marjorie fails to give up her belief that her NSEs are true and might explain why it seems like Marjorie fails to give up her belief that her NSEs are false.

Mismatches Between the Marjorie Case and Kripke's Pierre Case

Kripke's (1979) Pierre case involves ignorance about reference. Pierre is not aware that "London" and "Londre" refer to the same city. The puzzle, in the Pierre case, arises, in large part because of this ignorance. The Marjorie case does not involve ignorance about reference. It involves something else. Assuming the parallels between the Marjorie case and Kripke's (1979) Pierre case hold, we would still need to say that the Marjorie case involves Marjorie's psychological inability to access her insightful belief-forming network, even if she wants to. When making assertions about London in French, the beliefs formed on the basis of Pierre's English understanding of London are not accessible to him via his French understanding of London *because* he does not know that, when making assertions about London in each language,

he is actually talking about one and the same place. In the Marjorie case, Marjorie knows that "I, Marjorie" refers to the same person regardless of whether "I, Marjorie" is being used in the insightful network or the depressive network. Because Marjorie herself is aware that she is depressed, and she is aware that depression has a tendency to distort the way she normally thinks about herself and the world, she is presumably aware that this depressive belief-forming network exists, even if she would not describe it in those terms. Marjorie, given that she feels tension between her beliefs about her abilities as a philosopher, seems aware of the fact that the person she is referring to when making assertions about her abilities as a philosopher is the same person regardless of whether the assertion is generated by the depressive thinking patterns or by the insightful thinking patterns. If this is true, then the Marjorie case is not a puzzle about reference.

Furthermore, the idea that depression works in terms of these two belief-forming networks is speculative. But even if depression were to operate in something like this way, it is not immediately clear that the belief-forming networks are fully sectioned off from one another. Marjorie might use some of the same information or patterns of inference in each belief-forming network, which might suggest that that Marjorie's insightful thought patterns are not fully sectioned off from her depressive thinking patterns in the same way that Pierre's beliefs are sectioned off from one another by his lack of awareness that "London" and "Londre" refer to the same city. Thus, the proposed parallel between the Marjorie case and Kripke's (1979) Pierre case may be less plausible than it looks on the surface.

If there are disanalogies between a proposed solution and the details of the Marjorie case, then, as per the requirements and desirable features of an account laid out in the introduction, we have a reason to reject such an account as a solution to the Marjorie case.

Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that a puzzle that arises from certain cases in which a person, Marjorie, suffering from depression asserts negative self-evaluations in a sincere way whilst also judging that her relevant overall evidence supports the negation of her negative self-evaluations. I argued that the puzzle that arises from certain cases like this is a puzzle about Marjorie's beliefs, rationality, and belief-updating tendencies. I began by presenting and arguing for the puzzle in detail and specifying the scope and limits of my inquiry. After ruling out two potential solutions, I spent the rest of the paper focusing on various theories in the literature that may be able to offer a solution to my puzzle. For each potential solution, I described the view and attempted to map it onto my puzzle. I provided objections or challenges for each view's application to my puzzle. I began by discussing theories that reject the view that Marjorie straightforwardly believes that her negative self-evaluations are true. I provided objections and challenges to two such approaches, due to Tamar Gendler (2008a; 2008b) and Robert Noggle (2016). For Gendler's (2008a; 2008b) alief approach, I argued that there are several ways in which alief as a theory does not fit with certain key features of the Marjorie case. For Noggle's (2016) quasi-belief approach, I argued that there are shortcomings in terms of the view's causal efficacy. I moved onto discussing strengths and challenges for alternative accounts, many of which took a contradictory belief, or a related approach to the puzzle. Several of these approaches, I argued, did a less than ideal job at meeting one of my proposed desirable features of a solution – the 'respect for the authentic voice of Marjorie' feature, largely because many of these accounts placed Marjorie's depressive thinking patterns and NSE assertions on equal par with Marjorie's insightful thinking patterns in terms of their status as belief-indicators. My hope

is that this project will spark further inquiry into the connections between depression, judgment, rationality, and depression where Marjorie cases are concerned.

Several of the views discussed in application to the Marjorie case seem to do a fair job at accounting for some features of the Marjorie case while failing to account for others, or while failing to achieve all the desirable features of an account described at the beginning of the paper. Several views share common supporting reasons. Thus, it may be useful to combine various views with one another for a more comprehensive account where more desirable features for an account are met. For instance, where contradictory belief fails to deny a premise in the Marjorie puzzle, alienated belief can be brought on in order to do this. Where alienated belief fails to respect the authentic Marjorie, quasi-belief can be brought on in order to do this. Which particular combinations will do best at collectively accounting for the Marjorie case is up for debate and will not be discussed here. But it is worth noting that a combination of various accounts may be necessary in order to fully capture all the details of the Marjorie case.

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